

## Course Syllabus

THTR 452: Secondary Theatre Techniques

Instructor: Deb Currier

# THTR 452: Secondary Theatre Techniques

Instructor: **Deborah Currier**

**Texts:** Signs of Change: New Directions in Theatre Education by Joan Lazarus (revised edition)  
Theatre Games for Young Performers by Maria C. Novelly

## Departmental Goals and Assessment Outcomes

This course meets the following skills acquisition outcomes in the departmental assessment plan:

- *Analyzes and interprets dramatic literature and performance from the standpoint of designer, performer, director, playwright or critic*
- *Functions effectively as a member of a collaborative team in the preparation and realization of a public performance*

## Course Goals

Students who have successfully completed this course will be able to demonstrate their understanding of:

- The essential elements of directing a play for youth ages 12-18 years, including script analysis, design elements, audition procedure, rehearsal and performance.
- Approaches to designing, leading and producing student-written, devised scripts.
- Age-appropriate material for production at the junior high and high school level.
- Current theory and trends in the area of theatre for youth.
- Collaboration with peer artists, youth and schools to produce a workshop showcase.
- Service-learning as a connection whereby the needs of students and community are fulfilled through active participation in a thoughtfully organized service experience.

## Course Objectives and Assessment

Students who have successfully completed this course should be able to:

- Select and analyze plays available for junior high and high school age performers.
- To experience effective teamwork as co-directors with peers.
- Apply directing techniques and knowledge to a workshop showcase for junior high and high school age.
- Articulate personal Theatre for Youth directing philosophy within the guidelines of creation, performance and response.
- Articulate and discuss current TFY theory

### Assessment Method

- Play reports, class contribution
- Service-Learning project, wkshp/ref journal, Showcase
- wkshp/ref journal, rehearsal observation
- Wkshp/ref journal, class contribution, showcase summary
- Workshop/reflection journal, team meetings, class contribution

## Course Expectations

- Regular class attendance (1 “free” absence, but otherwise a doctor’s note/official paperwork is required)
- Full commitment and attendance at **all** scheduled workshops/rehearsals with your students
- Turning in all written portions of assignments typed and on time- **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.** No exceptions!
- All reading assignments are to be completed by class time on the date assigned in the syllabus

## Evaluation

*Please take the initiative to keep the instructor aware of your efforts and progress!*

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

### **Two (2) Play Reports: point value = 30 total (15 points each)**

Select 2 plays written for junior high/high school performers/audiences written **post-2010**. In a typed report, provide the following information for each, listed and bulleted as below:

- Title of play and name of playwright.
- Number of characters (indicate number of male and female roles also).
- Brief description of sets and costume needs.
- Brief discussion of what you perceive to be the theme of the play and/or the message intended by the playwright.
- Your personal responses to the play- would you direct it? Why or why not?
- What problems does it present to you as a director/producer?

### **In-Service secondary theatre educator observation: point value =15**

You are required to observe a junior high/high school theatre educator during the quarter. Your observations will be discussed during the observation seminar in the course calendar. These are open-ended observations, but be sure to address issues and ideas from class and your own research over the quarter.

### **Adapted scene: point value =15**

You will interview your students at your S-L site to locate a young adult book *they recommend* and you will adapt *one* 3-5-minute scene for the stage from the book you choose. The goal is to have your S-L students perform your scene at the showcase, but it is not required. As a S-L group, you do *not* need to choose the same book all together, nor is it a problem to choose to adapt a scene from the same book as someone else in your group- *just not the same scene*.

### **Service-Learning Community Project: point value = 70 total**

As a group, you will be leading a workshop series at a site assigned to you. You and your group will be in charge designing lesson plans, collaborating successfully as a group (meaning, no one person does more work than their peers), keeping individual journals and planning/leading a 30 minute “showcase” with your community group. The final showcase will include an overview and examples from each workshop, games and activities your group did with the students (with students demonstrating skills acquired).

You will need to create a workshop calendar, work with your community contact for students’ needs and limitations, and produce the showcase. Specifics will be discussed in class, but here is what you need to turn in on Canvas:

#### **Project e-Dossier (part of the overall SL project – 40 pts):**

You will create an electronic dossier of all the materials needed for your showcase including:

- Workshop calendar (workshop schedule, materials needed, final showcase “dress” rehearsals, performance date and time)
- Materials generated by your students during workshops (ex: any writing produced from an exercise, etc)- scan documents in original writing
- Workshop lesson plans – all lesson/activity plans, completed and typed -with learning objective(s) and a list of ALL materials needed
- Research and documents – any and all research done to generate workshop material; all documents including permission slips, photo releases, etc.
- Photos of the process and production

Keep your work current and be diligent about this process. Your team will turn in ONE eDossier on Canvas.

**Peer and self-evaluation (30 points) –** This will be completed and turned in on Canvas separately from the group eDossier to maintain confidentiality.

**Reflection Journal (on Canvas, ongoing)- 7 entries, 5 points each; 8<sup>th</sup> entry 10 points = 45**

There are separate reflection journals for each of you on Canvas under “assignments.” **It is expected that you apply knowledge from the readings** as well as the experiential learning happening in the practicum project in your reflections.

**Class Contribution (attendance/participation): point value = 25**

This includes the class discussions on the readings assigned as well as showing up – including the *required attendance* at the Outreach Tour on-campus show. After your service-learning projects start on-site, we will not meet as a whole class until the showcases. Attendance at each scheduled class meeting, your team times, and especially your scheduled workshops with your community group is mandatory. You are allowed a “free” absence from a *class* meeting before it will seriously affect your grade, *but* you will **lose 15 points for any unscheduled missed/cancelled rehearsal time** with your group.

**Grading**

Letter equivalents are determined by dividing the top half of the total points for any assignment into 4 equal lettered “zones.” The same is true for the final total, which is how I will ultimately arrive at a letter grade to report to the university. So...

200-176 = A range: 200-84 = A; 283-176 = A-  
175-151 = B range: 175-167 = B+; 166-151 = B-  
150-126 = C range: 150-142 = C+; 141-133 = C-  
125-101 = D range: 125-117 = D+; 117-109 = D; 108-101 = D-  
100 and below = F

***Academic Dishonesty Policy:*** Western Washington University students are responsible for reading, understanding, and following the policy and procedures regarding academic dishonesty as set forth in the *WWU Academic Dishonesty Policy and Procedure* (see Appendix D of the University Bulletin).

***Reasonable Accommodation Policy:*** It is the policy of Western Washington University to provide reasonable accommodation to the known physical, sensory, or mental limitations of qualified individuals except where such accommodation would impose undue hardship on the institution. To request accommodation, students must contact WWU Disability Resources for Students at 360-650-3844 or [www.drs.wvu.edu](http://www.drs.wvu.edu).

***Equality and Disability Statements:*** We in the Theatre Dept. are dedicated to establishing a learning environment that promotes diversity including race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, and physical disability. It is important that this is a safe classroom environment. We will practice being generous and respectful members of our classroom community.

Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodations, who have any emergency medical information of which the instructor should know, or who need special arrangements in the event of evacuation, should notify the instructor as early in the term as possible. Reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities may be arranged through the Office of Student Life, x3844.

**Community Partners:**

\*See Project Description below\*

**WORKING Course Schedule**

Subject to change, as can happen when working with community partners! ☺

Tues	3/28	Introductions: Syllabus, etc.
Thurs	3/30	Groups: contracts, roles, possible activities (brainstorm)
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T	4/4	Share group contracts and first day plans
R	4/6	<b>Reading:</b> <u>Signs...</u> Chapter 1
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T	4/11	<b>Reading:</b> <u>Signs...</u> Chapters 2 and 3- discussion and planning; Applied Theatre
R	4/13	Lesson Plans: How to write'm and how to use'm

**Thursday April 13th and Friday, April 14th at 7:30 p.m. Idris Goodwin and Brian Quijada “Hip Hop Weekend” – VU MPR – FREE!**

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T 4/18 **Reading: Signs... Chapter 4**  
**Play report #1 DUE**  
R 4/20 **Reading: Signs... Chapter 5**

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T 4/25 **Reading: Signs... Chapters 6 and 7**  
R **4/27 Start SL Projects!!**

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T 5/2 SL Sites  
R 5/4 SL sites **Play report #2 DUE**

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T 5/9 SL sites  
R 5/11 SL sites

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T 5/16 SL sites; **Teacher observations due**  
R 5/18 SL sites; **Book scene adaptations due**

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**Required Attendance! Monday May 22nd at 7:00pm Old Main Theater – MOTley on-campus show – free!**

T 5/23 SL sites  
R 5/25 SL sites

**May 25 and June 1: Final Showcase Days – During class time! You are required to attend the showcase of the other group in the class.**

**Final: Weds 6/7, 1:00-3:00pm- Production Journals and evals due!**

### **Reflection Journal Prompts**

*Your reflections are due on Canvas. Be prepared to discuss your reflections in team meetings during the week they are due. The completed reflection journal is then included (graded) in your final project. Please do not do the reflections ahead of time, as they are meant to be explored as the project unfolds.*

**4/4-6:** What is your teaching philosophy? What do you anticipate to be the biggest hurdles and/or challenges for you in directing jr high/ high school age actors?

**4/11-13:** What are the greatest gifts and assets you bring to your project team? In what one area do you feel you have the most room to grow?

### **During Residencies:**

**Week 1 (4/25-27):** What did you do this week with your group that was fun or satisfying?

**Week 2 (5/2-5/4):** Imagine/picture one or two of the students involved in your project. If you could ask them *any* questions, what would they be? What do you think they would answer? Try to become one of the students and write down a conversation between you two. Now, see if you can actually ask your students one of your questions... were their answers at similar to what you thought they would be?

**Week 3 (5/9-11):** Look back on your first rehearsal with the students. How did you feel that day, and how different is that from the way you feel now? What has changed? Why has it changed?

**Week 4 (5/16-18):** What do you think is the most frustrating thing in the lives of your student actors? What would it take to ease that frustration?

**Week 5 (5/23-25):** What critique have you received (from peers, adults at your site and/or student participants) and how have you responded to that critique? What compliments have you received and how have you responded to them?

**Week 6 (5/30-6/1) 10 pts:** What have you learned from the students involved in the project? What have they learned from you? What is your teaching philosophy *now*? Has it changed from the first entry? If so, in what ways? If not – what have you reaffirmed for yourself as an educator?:

**Theater Arts 452, TFY: Secondary Techniques  
Service Learning Project Descriptions  
Spring Quarter  
Faculty: Deb Currier**

**Project Description:** You will be assigned to one of the community partners. As a group, you will be in charge of directing a 30 minute “showcase” with your community group of junior high and/or high school age performers. You will need to create a workshop calendar, work with your community contact for students’ needs and limitations, cast and produce the showcase.

Students will contribute a minimum of 20 hours for the quarter. **Please identify a student contact from each group who will contact your site supervisor immediately to arrange for your initial orientation and project/planning timeline.** You must contact your site supervisor to discuss the project prior to the initial scheduled meeting with youth. The designated student contact person should arrange to communicate with the agency site supervisor on a regular basis. **It is your responsibility to get this assignment started.**