DIRECTING & DEVISING SYLLABUS
WEBSITE VERSION (subject to changes per semester)
Beth Cleary, Professor

SCHEDULE of READINGS & PROJECTS:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1</th>
<th>DEEP END OF POOL: Project 1, Director-Devised 5-Minute Scene</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M 1/27</td>
<td><strong>Course Introduction and Overview</strong> of Project 1</td>
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<td><strong>Also during class:</strong> space exploration and terminologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 1/29</td>
<td><strong>READ:</strong> Long Wharf Theatre/Director’s Notebook (find on Wk. 1, Moodle). Note: this reading assignment is for you to see how one director assembles inspiration for a <em>text-based</em> directing project at a major regional theatre. Note the <em>range</em> of his research, the creative reach of his questions. Directing is a big container…</td>
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**DUE:** in-class presentations on the following developments of your projects:

- **Picture Inventory:** show your picture, and read your one-page written meditation on the picture. Include questions, imaginings of their use, imaginings of their place, concerns about their dis- or under-use. Also include descriptions of color, texture, light, composition in the picture.

- **Accompanying Texts:** read out loud 2 texts that you have selected that will act as fellow travelers in your ongoing development of the piece, or perhaps sources or direct participants in any spoken text in your piece. These texts might be: poem; newspaper article; packing list; paragraph from novel; original text; other.

- **A short scenario:** completely revise-able, and maybe more than one…but a scene that comes to you from the image/texts/writing you’ve done…the “scene” should involve 2 characters, and begin to imagine the “why” of them being together in a staged scene.

**GOAL** of these Presentations: bring us into the “world” that you’re assembling, the questions you’re asking, the excitements you’re feeling, the worries. In other words, bare your creative soul. Be organized and proud of what you’re doing. Presentation time: 5-7 minutes. Note: **take notes** on each others’ presentations, especially on interesting questions and eloquences. *Everything is material.*

**ALSO IN CLASS:** discuss the whenSCALE/publicity of auditions & casting (note: this casting should be of people who are willing to stay with you through end-February, and cannot involve anybody who is in …*Arturo Ui* 

**Goal:** First rehearsal either Sunday or Monday.
1/31 **DUE:** in-class presentations on next circle of Research & Development:

- **Music and Sound:** play 2 pieces of music/sound, one or both of which are inspiring you on this assemblage journey (note: don’t play an entire 5-minute song, just a “flavor,” 20 seconds or so). If you know that one or both might appear in the piece, say so. Please cite sources for these sounds.

- **Spatial configuration of playing area and audience.** *Where* will you perform this? Show a diagram; even if it’s not high art, it should be *clear.* (Note: if not the Black Box, you need to factor in audience travel-time, weather, other-space access, etc. Don’t make more problems for yourself.)

- **Prop/Object list:** Read your list. What is in the material world of your piece? Warning: You must keep this simple. Dare to make meaning without a lot of *stuff.* Everything in your scene needs to be used/handled/referred to. *No* decoration for its own sake.

- **Gestural Experiments:** Even if they feel fumbly, show in your own body/movement any vocabulary that is coming to you. Limit your demo to 3 gestures/movements, and explain what they are connected to.

- **Following on that:** any revision of the “short scenario” from Wednesday.

Time of these Presentations: 6-8 minutes.

**Also in Class:** Logistics and Final Prep for Auditions.

**Goal:** First rehearsal either Sunday or Monday.

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**WEEK 2  MORE ADVENTURES in the DEEP END**

M 2/3 **READ** for IN-CLASS DISCUSSION: Heddon & Milling, *Devising Performance*, Intro. (Find on Moodle)

**DUE for DISCUSSION:** first rehearsal reports or plans. Consider: What/how will you present what you’re working on, working for, to your cast? Do you have a title or working title? What are your roles? What are their assignments, if any? Also, brass tacks: rehearsal schedule (*you must have <5 1-hour rehearsals*) and rehearsal spaces.

**ALSO PRESENT:** your binder, notebook, etc. How are you documenting what you’re doing? If you’re using a mostly-computer arrangement, bring that.

**NOTE:** you should be documenting and commenting on everything – a *modus operandi* that began in Week 1, but now shifts to include planning for and commentary on rehearsals.

**ALSO in CLASS:** Sign up for Directing History Research topics, for presentations Weeks 11 and 12.
**W 2/5**  **DUE in CLASS**: show what you’re doing, using your fellow directors as stand ins. Things to show: exercises you’ve been using; moments that you found hard to work on and you want to know why; transitions that are hard; problems. What is the *arc* of your 5 minutes? What are the important details that you want to get right? What have you already cut, need to cut?! [Note: there will be time to add to your rehearsal journal re: anything you find in today’s activities.]

**F 2/7**  **INSPIRATIONAL GUEST in CLASS**

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**WEEK 3  MORE ADVENTURES...TOWARD PERFORMANCE!**

**M 2/10**  **DUE**: read selections from your rehearsal journal, chosen for discussion. Do *not* be shy about sharing successes and revelations – they are helpful!

**W 2/12**  **NO CLASS MEETING;  PERFORMANCES 4:40-5:30**

**F 2/14**  **IN CLASS**: Discuss Performances  
**DUE**: All documents, nicely presented, including 2-page self-, process-, and Performance evaluation.  
**PLEASE NOTE: WHAT’S DUE MONDAY. Plan ahead** and have this meeting (you will need to present on Mon. 2/17 – group themes, questions, process, *inciting images or text*, etc.). *What does your group want to work on? What do you want to say and show? Why?* You can perform in this, if desired, but you still must “direct” it.

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**WEEK 4  DEEP END PROJECT 2: Truly “Devised” Super Fast Performance Project**

**M 2/17**  **DUE**: Present a Summary of the discussion you and your cast had about what you want to work on in a truly collaborative short project. Please consider this a show and tell. *What does your group want to work on? What do you want to say and show? Why? What strengths does each bring to the project? What will you learn from each other in order to create an effective performance and a meaningful experience?*

**W 2/19**  **READ**: fr. Eileen Blumenthal’s *Joseph Chaikin*, volume in the *Directors in Perspective* series (find on Moodle)  
**IN CLASS**: discuss Open Theatre approach; also, view *Terminal*

**F 2/21**  **READ**: TBA  
**IN CLASS**: film, TBA

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**WEEK 5  COLLABORATION PROCESS MOVES TOWARD PERFORMANCE**

**M 2/24**  **DUE**: See W 2/5.
W  2/26  **DUE:**  See M 2/17.

F  2/28  **CLASS TBA;  PERFORMANCES 4:40-5:30**

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<th>WEEK 6</th>
<th>SURFACING: APPROACHING DIRECTING TEXTS</th>
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| M  3/3 | **READ for DISCUSSION:** Intro., Chs. 1 and 2, *The Director’s Craft*
      | ALSO IN CLASS:  Film excerpt            |
| W  3/5 | **READ for DISCUSSION:** Mitchell, Chs. 3 and 4
      | ALSO IN CLASS:  Film excerpt            |
| F  3/7 | **READ for DISCUSSION:** Mitchell, Chs. 5, 6, 7 |

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<th>WEEK 7</th>
<th>MORE PREPARATION toward TEXT-AND-ACTORS…</th>
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<tr>
<td>M  3/10</td>
<td><strong>READ for DISCUSSION:</strong> Tennessee Williams’ <em>A Streetcar Named Desire</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>W  3/12</td>
<td><strong>READ for DISCUSSION:</strong> Elia Kazan’s Notes on Directing <em>Streetcar</em></td>
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<td>F  3/14</td>
<td><strong>VIEW AHEAD OF CLASS:</strong> Films on Reserve</td>
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<th>WEEK 8</th>
<th>SPRING BREAK</th>
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<th>WEEK 9</th>
<th>SELECTING and PREPARING the ONE-ACT</th>
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| SUN 3/23| **NOTE:**  *Playwrights’ One-Acts Available for Consideration for Final Projects*
      | NOTE ALSO:  Audition Planning this Week |
| M  3/24| **DUE:**  Presentations on 2 Proposed Plays (which can include one of the 3/23 plays, which you may state your interest in now). **Topics:**  Genre;  Number of characters;  playwright/period;  why does it speak to you?  What do you want to say and show by directing it?  Anticipated challenges?  **(Note:**  These should *not* be the first time Beth hears about your choices, unless you are pitching for one of the local one-acts.  Approval of your project will happen in class.  **THIS MEANS YOU NEED TO BE SEARCHING FOR 15-20 min. SHORT PLAYS DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE SEMESTER, AND RUNNING THEM BY BETH.)** |
| W  3/26| **IN CLASS:**  TBA, including audition planning and other logistics issues |
| F  3/28| **DUE IN CLASS:**  Presentations (5-7 mins.) using at least 2 of the techniques K. Mitchell describes in each of her chapters, in relation to your approved script.  Fall in love with |
lists -- !! Particularly important: early responses; scene analyses; big ideas; action analysis; characters and character relationships

**ALSO DUE:** Ground Plan

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**WEEK 10** **LAUNCHING your REHEARSAL PROCESS**

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<th>Day</th>
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| M   | 3/31 | **NOTE:** Today is Ideal Audition Day  
READ for DISCUSSION: Mitchell, Chs. 10 and 11  
ALSO DISCUSS: Casting… |
| W   | 4/2  | IN CLASS: Discuss Auditions and First Read-Throughs  
OTHER ACTIVITIES: TBA |
| F   | 4/4  | DUE: Preliminary Prop Lists, Furniture Lists, Costume Lists |

**WEEK 11** **INSPIRATION for the JOURNEY: WEEK ONE**

**NOTE:** Every day for 2 weeks, we will have 45 mins. of reports and problem-solving relevant to your rehearsal processes. You should use the Viola Spolin text as a research and reference during this period. We will also have related reports on rehearsal-attendance by me and “your rehearsal double.” For the remaining 40 minutes, we will shift to 20-min. presentations on your Directing History Research Topics, incl. video as appropriate.

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| M   | 4/7  | EVERYONE DUE: Outline of Directing History Research Presentation, including print sources (w/page numbers), web sources (video), bibliography of books by and about, list of significant works (selected), and your own estimation of why they are important in terms of directing history.  
Presentation #1: |
| W   | 4/9  | Presentation #2: |
| F   | 4/11 | Presentation #3: |

**WEEK 12** **INSPIRATION for the JOURNEY: WEEK TWO**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>4/14</td>
<td>Presentation #4:</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>4/16</td>
<td>Presentation #5:</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>Presentation #6:</td>
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NOTE: During this Week We will need to address publicity and poster needs, tech rehearsal logistics

M  4/21  Presentation #7:

W  4/23  Presentation by Beth

F  4/25  Presentation by Beth

FINAL WEEK of REHEARSAL, PREPARING for TECH

M  4/28  TBA

W  5/1  TBA

F  5/3  TBA

TECH WEEKEND

M  5/5  FINAL CLASS

DIRECTING FINAL PROJECTS IN THESE FINAL DAYS

FINAL DOCUMENTS DUE: FRIDAY, May 9, by 5:30

COURSE HOUSEKEEPING…

GRADING in this CLASS:

O  Commitment, tenacity, presence, collaborative zeal, keeping up  40%
O  Project 1, Director-Devised Scene  10%
O  Project 2, Truly Devised Scene  20%
O  Project 3, One-Act  30%

REQUIRED BOOKS (first two in Macalester bookstore; see note on third)


Williams, Tennessee. *A Streetcar Named Desire*. (This play is widely available in local used bookstores like Sixth Chamber, Half Priced Books – or through the library. Please procure and have a hard copy available by the time we need it in class.)
DIRECTIONS: DIRECTOR RESEARCH & PRESENTATIONS

Spring 2014 Directing & Devising course

**Premise A:** You should know a lot more than you present. What you present to the group should be a *selection* of material you have synthesized. You need to *refer to other material* even though you’re concentrating on a selection only. Seek to become an expert on this director, and on this one production you’re discussing in as much detail as possible.

**Premise B:** The work of a director goes through multiple stages: script analysis (a largely solo endeavor); rehearsal and design meetings (collaboration, though usually undocumented except for drawings); performance/production, which is public and where mostly the director “drops out” and the production is a “stand-in” for her/him, it’s her communication. You will be expected to acknowledge all 3 kinds of work, including if there’s zero-to-no documentation of one of the areas.

**Premise C:** Powerpoint Presentations; 20-25 mins each, weeks on original syllabus, with bibliography and other materials still due for everyone on Monday, April 7.

**Outline of 4-part Presentation** (approx.. 5 mins/section):

A. **Historical/Political Context of Director’s Work.** If I had Tadeusz Kantor on the list, you would need to acknowledge that his major work was in the 1950s through the 1990s in Poland – but that the driving concern of his life and art was the Holocaust that preceded those decades. In a case like this, it would be useful to communicate to your fellow directors the important *questions* to ask in evaluating Kantor’s work in different periods. If someone were doing Brecht and focusing on *Ui*, you would have to account for WWI as having the first major impact on BB’s *rage* and his desire to make art, and Berlin as a source for BB’s theories and work even before he left Germany (and wrote *Ui*). This section should *encompass biography*, but not focus exclusively on biography. Discuss your director as *produced by her/his period*.

B. **Working Methods.** Collaborative deviser? Wrote own material then directed? Started as painter, always started with visual images and built from there? State how you know this: interviews, journals, videos? Provide hard copy or video example. Discuss one particular method or set of methods that this director invented or deployed in new ways. (Example: Joseph Chaikin and the Open Theatre developed “the chord” exercise, which was a way for him/them to create a vocal exploration of harmony and discordance at the beginning of every rehearsal. Eileen Blumenthal documents this in her book on Chaikin, and provides pictures.)
C. **One Major Production In-Depth.** If it’s of a play, please provide a written synopsis of this play via e-mail ahead of time. This way you won't have to do much synopsis-giving during the presentation. In your presentation: state where/how this production falls in the person’s career: early/breakthrough? Controversial and therefore infamous? Mature, full mastery of techniques? Discuss why the production is important, and cite several sources on this: reviews, director’s own accounts, scholarly treatments, etc. Show a clip, if possible, or production photos. As much as possible, match photos to a scene or section you’re discussing in detail.

D. **Director’s Significance and Impact.** How has this director influenced other directors? Other artists? The communities where they have worked? How does this director inspire you? You are welcome to be enthusiastic and emotional here, but I’m also interested in theory. What does this director do through her/his work that shows you how ‘X’ is done? By ‘X’ I might mean: Brecht’s vergremdungseffekt; certain theories of gender in performance; staging Marxist critiques of the state; political theatre in the sense of defying censorship; other. If the director has had a major influence on certain communities’ theatre canons (I’m thinking of Luis Valdez and latina/o theatre), discuss that contribution and politics.

Be Vigorous! Engage! Directing can be researched, and we can learn from this work which is so variously documented!