

## THEA 304: Directing



*Cleansed*, by Sarah Kane, directed by Katie Mitchell, National Theatre 2012, photo by Stephen Cummiskey

### Trimester 2 2016

11 July to 13 November 2016

**30 Points**

#### IMPORTANT DATES

Teaching dates: 11 July to 16 October 2016

Mid-trimester break: 22 August to 4 September 2016

Last assessment item due: 16 October 2016

Withdrawal dates: Refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds).

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test in the last three weeks of teaching, or an examination, it may instead be possible to apply for an aegrotat (refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats)).

## CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

### Lectures

Tuesdays and Thursdays                      12 noon – 3.00pm                      KP93 101

Performances of all directing projects will occur in **Week 9** [Wed 21 - Sat 24 September] of Trimester 2 in 93 KP, with tech rehearsals on Sat 17 – Sun 18 September and mandatory dress rehearsals for each season Mon-Tues 19 - 20 September.

## NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

**Course Coordinator:** Megan Evans      [megan.evans@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:megan.evans@vuw.ac.nz)      463 9793                      FT77 303

Office Hours: By appointment

**Course Administrator:** Cathy McCullagh      [cathy.mccullagh@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:cathy.mccullagh@vuw.ac.nz)      463 5359                      FT83 202

All students will be supported by a mentor for their directing project.

## COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Any additional information, or changes to the course, will be announced in class, sent by email and/or posted on Blackboard. It is the student's responsibility to check Blackboard and their email regularly. If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, you **must** set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you *do* use. Frequent access to communication is essential in this course.

## PRESCRIPTION

A practical study of fundamentals of theatre directing, with particular emphasis given to script analysis and working with actors.

## COURSE CONTENT

During the **class** components of the course, each student will:

- i) explore a range of approaches to theatre directing
- ii) gain practical experience by directing scenes from selected playtexts
- iii) present their research work on twentieth century directors to the class

Students should wear comfortable clothing, which allows movement, to all classes. Cell phones are to be turned off during classes.

During the **production** components of the course, each student will

- i) direct a selected playscript, in all aspects from casting to final public performance, over an intensive rehearsal period

- ii) collaborate on production work for the season as a whole (planning & paperwork, design and production support, publicity, organising their actors' contribution to technical management, etc.)
- iii) compile a workbook to document and analyse creative and production work.

### COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

Students who pass this course *should* be able to:

1. realise a theatre piece from play text to full production in front of an audience
2. analyse their own directing practice in order to improve their work
3. collaborate on technical aspects of theatre production
4. examine, contextualise and analyse the history and methodologies of theatre directing, with an aim to apply this analysis in their practice

### TEACHING FORMAT

The course consists of two practical workshops per week. In addition to this students are expected to rehearse outside of class time leading to their production of a 10 minute directing project. Students serving in the Production Management role will oversee booking and equitable allocation of rehearsal space for this project. Students will also serve as 'directing support' for THEA 203 solo performance projects in weeks 10-11.

### WORKLOAD

Due to the intensive, collaborative, logistically complex and practical nature of class activities, a very high level of attendance is expected—all missed classes should be justified by exceptional circumstances and communicated to the Course Coordinator as soon as possible (ideally *before* class so that alternative arrangements can be made). Note also, students are expected to catch up on decisions made and/or material covered during their absence through their own initiative. To facilitate clear communication, students serving as Stage Managers will take turns producing 'minutes' of class activities and group decisions which will be posted on Blackboard.

The expected workload for a 30-point course is 300 hours over the trimester or 20 hours per teaching week. However, the intensive practical nature of this course means that there will be periods during production work (in particular, the weeks just prior to week 9 performance season) when this will be concentrated. **YOU SHOULD THEREFORE TAKE SPECIAL CARE WITH YOUR TIME MANAGEMENT**, making sure you can balance your workload on this course with your work on other university courses and other commitments. In this regard, please keep in mind the following:

- as you were notified via email from the course coordinator sent 26 May 2016, **no** theatre work outside of your theatre courses may be taken on without prior consent from the course co-ordinator

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- Please prioritise your time carefully around all courses, particularly during production
- It is normal to experience an emotional dip in the days immediately following a production so you should build in some recovery time to your planning for your other course work
- **Do not use the workload of this course as reason for requesting extensions in other courses, particularly papers outside the Theatre Programme**
- In building the skills expected of you in the theatre industry, you should also take particular care with your general health and wellbeing and encourage the same for your actors

The ethos of this course will be cooperative and collaborative – a small production company operating over three months. For much of the time, each individual will be reliant on group support, and will need to offer the similar support and cooperation to others, to ensure the success of all the creative objectives.

The time estimations for assessment completion listed below can only be very rough estimates.

### ASSESSMENT

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
The time estimations for assessment completion listed below can only be very rough estimates. Consider your own individual working process and adjust accordingly.				
1	Research presentation on a major theatre director: 10 minute presentation plus 5 minutes Q & A time [= approx. 10 hours' work]	10%	4	In class on: Tue 19 July OR Thu 21 July
2	Directing Project: planning and rehearsing 10 minute play for production plus... Written component: Why this play? Why this scene? [500-700 words, 10%] [TOTAL = approx. 130 hours' work]	40%	1, 2	Written component DUE 9am Mon 25 July Practical work completed by pack-out in week 9 [Sat 24 Sept]
3	Production work: production tasks towards the performance seasons, as required [15%] Written reflection [200-300 words, 5%] [= approx. 70 hours' work]	20%	3	Practical work completed by pack-out in week 9 [Sat 24 Sept] Written component DUE 9am Mon 3 Oct
4	Director's workbook: Documentation and analysis of your directing project [maximum 5,000 words—	30%	2, 4	

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<p>additional instructions and marking criteria will be provided in class and posted on Blackboard]</p> <p>[= approx. 90 hours' work]</p> <p>Installment one: detailed script analysis, casting decisions, floor plan, rehearsal plan [10%]</p> <p>Installment two: rehearsal journal, reflective practice [15%]</p> <p>Installment three: reflection on directing support for THEA 203 solos [approx 500 words, 5%]</p>	<p>Workbook instalments:</p> <p>#1 DUE 9am, Mon 22 Aug</p> <p>#2 DUE 9am, Mon 3 Oct</p> <p>#3 DUE 11:59pm, Sun 16 Oct</p>
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### GROUP WORK

While the course is highly collaborative, you will be assessed individually on your work, particularly in your ability to reflect on and articulate productively what you have learned. Some of the production tasks will be completed in close-working teams, but again your assessment will be based on your individual efforts, written reflection, and input from mentors.

### SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF WORK

Work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by Turnitin the online plagiarism prevention tool.

All assignments for this course are submitted via Blackboard. Electronic assignments are submitted as a MS Word file OR a **legible** scanned pdf of handwritten journal material through Blackboard. How to name your file and step-by-step instructions can be found on Blackboard in the "Assignments and Turnitin" section.

Your marked assignment will be found on Blackboard in the same section.

### EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

#### Extensions

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. To apply for an extension, email your Course Coordinator before the assignment is due and propose a realistic new deadline. If granted, your Course Coordinator will inform you of the new due date. Mentors cannot grant extensions.

**No assignment with or without an extension will be accepted after 9am Monday 31 October 2016.**

#### Penalties

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

## SET TEXTS

Any version of Chekhov's *The Seagull*, link to Project Gutenberg edition available on blackboard/Talis

Mitchell, Katie. *The Director's Craft: A Handbook for the Theatre*. London: Routledge. 2009

You can order textbooks and student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz).

## RECOMMENDED READING

### Practical advice on directing and creativity:

- Twyla Tharp, *The Creative Habit – Learn It And Use it For Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003.

### Examples of key directors' practice:

- Maria M. Delgado and Paul Heritage, *In Contact with the Gods? Directors Talk Theatre*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996.
- Rebecca Schneider & Gabrielle Cody, eds: *Re: Direction*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Shepherd, Simon. *Direction: Readings in Theatre Practice*. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.
- Anne Bogart, *A Director Prepares*. London & New York: Routledge, 2001

### History and styles of directing

- Christopher Innes and Maria Shevtsova, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Directing*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

## CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

## STUDENT FEEDBACK

In 2015, the in-class presentations on Major Directors occurred at the end of term, following the performances of the Major Directing project. Students unanimously agreed that they wished they had done this research in time to integrate their learning into their own directing project. The course has been restructured accordingly.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at

[www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

In week six or seven of the trimester your class representative will be invited to a meeting with the Programme staff. In week five your class representative will ask the class for any feedback on this course to discuss at this meeting.

### **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism)
- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades)
- Special passes: refer to the Assessment Handbook, at [www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter)
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Terms and conditions: [www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract)
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure)
- Victoria graduate profile: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)

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THEA 304 COURSE PROGRAMME		TU / TH NOON-3PM
<b>Week 1</b>	12 Jul	Introduction + Site-specific compositions
	14 Jul	Script Analysis (before class <b>READ</b> <i>Seagull</i> Act One; after class <b>READ</b> Mitchell Ch 1-2).
<b>Week 2</b> This week only- Different Rooms!!	19 Jul	***Noon-1pm in 77 FT 205; 1-3pm 77 FT 208*** Presentations on Major Directors (1 - 9) READ Shepherd OR Cole
	21 Jul	***noon-3pm 83 FT 201*** Presentations on Major Directors (10 - 18)
<b>Week 3</b>	26 Jul	[Mon 25 Jul 9am <b>DUE</b> 'Why this play/scene'] Auditions & Casting (READ Mitchell Ch5+7) /Planning Rehearsal Schedule;
	28 Jul	Directing practice: Starting Points—World of the Play: <i>Seagull</i> (READ Mitchell Ch3 and the rest of <i>Seagull</i> ) + World of the play (your scene/collection work)
<b>Week 4</b> (evening auditions tbc)	2 Aug	[Mon 25 Jul 9am <b>DUE</b> 'Why this play/scene'] Directing practice: Starting Points—World of the Play (your scene/pitch)
	4 Aug	Setting the Seasons/Production Roles + Script Analysis 2 (READ Mitchell Ch4)
<b>Week 5</b>	9 Aug	Directing practice: Methodologies (Inside $\leftrightarrow$ Outside) ( <i>Seagull</i> : Review Mitchell Ch4+5; READ Mitchell Ch9 + 14)
	11 Aug	Scenography & Production Problem-Solving [JD & APB] (READ Mitchell Ch6) Directing practice: Methodologies (your Scene—floorplan testing)
<b>Week 6</b>	16 Aug	Directing practice: Methodologies (your scene; READ Mitchell Ch10 + 11)
	18 Aug	Organisation for intensive rehearsal / Methodologies (your scene-continued)
<b>Mid-Trimester Break: 22 August to 4 September</b> [9 am Mon 22 Aug: FIRST INSTALMENT OF DIRECTOR'S WORKBOOK <b>DUE</b> ]		
<b>Week 7</b>	6 Sep	Directing practice: Shaping performance (character + rhythm)
	8 Sep	Directing practice: Shaping performance (clarity + contrast)
<b>Week 8</b>	13 Sep	Managing Tech & Performance Processes [JD & APB] –Prod Paperwork <b>DUE</b> Lighting for/with directors (wash and specials rigged, time to play/test)
	15 Sep	The Director's Role After Opening + Tech Weekend Prep (READ Mitchell Ch 12+13)
	<b>Sat /Sun</b> <b>17/18 Sep</b>	<b>Tech Rehearsals – times tbc</b>
<b>Week 9</b>	20 Sep	Class meeting tbc (tech troubleshooting) – Mon/Tues Evening Dress Rehearsals 19-20 Sep
	22 Sep	No Class – Evening Performances
<b>PERFORMANCES WED 21 – SAT 24 SEPTEMBER</b> <b>Pack-out Sat 9:30pm until done....all called</b>		



### THEA 304 COURSE PROGRAMME (CONTINUED)

<b>Week 10</b>	(re)READ Mitchell pp. 221-222
27 Sep	Production Debrief [Season A] + planning for THEA 203 support
29 Sep	Production Debrief [Season B] + planning for THEA 203 support
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>DUE</b> 9am Mon 3 Oct: Production task written reflection
4 Oct	No class meeting, directing support for THEA 203 solos—times tbc
6 Oct	No class meeting, directing support for THEA 203 solos—times tbc
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>DUE</b> 9am Mon 10 Oct: Director's Workbook Installment #2
11 Oct	Revisit site-specific compositions + Course Wrap-up
13 Oct	No Class Meeting, attend 203 solos if possible (M 2-5pm/W 9am-noon)

**DUE Sun 16 Oct @ 11:59pm: Director's Workbook Installment #3—Reflection on support for 203 solos  
(submit via Blackboard)**

### Quick overview of Mitchell Chapter Topics

Part One—Preparing for Rehearsal

- 1) Organising your early responses to the text
- 2) Organising information about each scene
- 3) Investigating the big ideas of the play
- 4) Analysing the action of the play
- 5) Deepening work on character
- 6) Building relationships with your production team
- 7) Selecting actors and testing starting points for rehearsals
- 8) Preparing the rehearsal environment (not assigned, recommended before your first rehearsal)

Part Two—Rehearsals

- 9) The initial few days of rehearsal (incl. info re working with actors and giving feedback)
- 10) Building the world of the play
- 11) Working on the scenes of the play

Part Three—Getting into the Theatre and the Public Performances

- 12) Technical and dress rehearsals
- 13) The public performances

Part Four—Context and Sources (recommended)

- 14) How [Katie] learned the skills the book describes  
(including info about Stanislavsky & Research into biology of emotions)