

THEA 2885: Directing I (CRN 2254) – Winter 2021

MWF 10-11:50am – Byron Studio (NC 184) and Byron Theater – 4 credit hours

Instructor: Anne Penner, Associate Professor

Phone: (303) 947-0221—cell / Email: anne.penner@du.edu

Office Hours: MW 12-1pm & other times by appointment

The Actor's Mind website: www.theactorsmind.com

Syllabus, weekly assignments, readings, and grades will be posted on Canvas

Because we're in a pandemic:

Safe Behavior in Class: Teaching and learning have always required safe classroom environments, so the current requirements in light of Covid-19 simply extend some principles of behavior long established in higher education. But these requirements are vital extensions, given the debilitating and deadly threat of the Coronavirus. In choosing to attend DU, you've chosen to join a larger Community of Care, which means you've chosen specific responsibilities, which include:

- Not to attend class when you're sick.
- Not to attend class when you've been exposed to people who have or may have Covid-19.
- To practice social distancing always, keeping at least six feet from everyone else.
- To wear a mask—and wear it effectively—at all times.

Mask: This course will comply with University of Denver's COVID-19 Protocols for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Social Distancing in accordance with state and local orders and federal guidelines. See [here](#) for the complete policy. It is the expectation that students attending physically shall wear an appropriate face covering. Failure to comply with DU's protocols for face coverings constitutes a violation of the [honor code](#). If you are not wearing a face covering, I will ask you to do so. Refusal will result in my asking you to leave the classroom.

Attendance: As communicated by the registrar's office on August 3, 2020, "Students should note that in-person courses at the University of Denver for Fall 2020 were specifically designed to have an in-person component due to the high impact qualities of the course. Students who are able to attend in-person class sessions should do so in order to have an optimized experience." If you have opted to join this course, it is the expectation that you attend class in person as required unless you have made alternative arrangements with me prior to the start of class due to illness, medical reasons, or the need to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19. As in any in-person course, attendance and participation are crucial for a complete understanding of course material. In the event that you find yourself experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms, I request that you do the following:

- Stay home! This is best way to prevent spreading COVID-19 as supported by scientific evidence.
- Please provide a screen shot of the symptom monitoring response that asks you to quarantine and let me know of your absence.
- If you are self-quarantining/isolating, I will update you on class activities via conversations and occasional video recording of class time.

Land acknowledgement: We acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the Arapaho and Cheyenne People. The land that Denver sits on originally belonged to the Arapaho tribe, as laid out in the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie. When gold was discovered in the late 1850s, white settlers arrived in the area in large numbers and began asserting their right to the land, leading to the Treaty of Fort Wise in 1861 and cessation of land by some tribal leaders. In 1864, the Sand Creek Massacre resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Arapaho and Cheyenne people, and soon after these nations would be relocated out of Colorado. Other indigenous nations native to Colorado include the Apache, Comanche, Shoshone, and Ute. (I'm happy to share resources about honoring native land.)

Conversation between three stage directors: Daniel Sullivan, Anne Bogart & Scott Ellis

“I want to understand and completely respect the text and work from there. I don’t want to impose to begin with. I want the text to tell me what to do rather than me telling the text what it is. So that’s the way I approach a play. Any play. It’s the difference between ‘I want to understand this’ and ‘I want to fix this.’”

–Daniel Sullivan

“We shiver at the word concept There’s a way of approaching a play that if you decide what it is before you do it, then you have made the play smaller than you, and you actually want the play to be bigger than anything you imagine You should approach a play as a canvas much bigger than you, not something you can control.” –Anne Bogart

“I always think of it as it’s just removing those blinders You gotta remove that because there’s all this other stuff over here. Sometimes you think, ‘No, I know that, and I feel comfortable because I’m going in with that confidence.’ The fact is, it’s not gonna help you.” –Scott Ellis

Course Description:

This is a beginning stage directing course. It explores and defines the director’s responsibilities: understanding the play’s text, placing the story onstage using compositional and pictorial tools, and leading a group of collaborators in successfully communicating that text & story to an audience. This course identifies and develops necessary skills in script analysis, staging techniques, actor characterization, design elements, and production organization through applied practice. The first third of the course focuses on class exercises and readings to help you communicate with actors and determine how to organize them in time and space to tell a story. The middle third of the course allows you to practice these ideas using scene work from two plays: *Stop Kiss* by Diana Son and *Constellations* by Nick Payne. In the final three weeks you then will stage either a full 10-minute play or longer scene from one of the two plays we worked on earlier in the quarter.

Student Learning Outcomes: by the end of the course, students will be able to—

- 1) articulate their understanding of basic principles of directing through in-class discussions and exercises, journal writing, other written assignments, and scene work;
- 2) improve the ways in which they see theatrical work and think/speak critically about it;
- 3) demonstrate the work habits necessary as a director to successfully interpret text, tell a clear story onstage, and positively & efficiently lead a group of collaborators;
- 4) feel prepared to tackle both Junior Seminar and Senior Capstone processes.

Attendance & Participation:

Class begins on time. If you’re late twice, that counts as one absence. However, I would rather have you arrive to class late than not at all. If you’re absent three times, your final grade will drop 5% points; each additional absence drops your grade 5%. You will fail the course with 6 or more absences. This course requires large amounts of collaboration, every day. For you and your classmates to succeed you must commit consistently to all exercises, discussions, and assignments. The work demands from you:

Trust / Empathy / Patience / Willingness to risk failure & be wrong / Informed opinions / Curiosity / Preparation / Passion / Self-discipline / Focus & concentration.

You are responsible for the material we cover in class; if you miss a day, please ask another student what happened. Work turned in late will receive a grade one full letter below content grade; you are allowed to ask for an extension once during the quarter (and more often under extreme circumstances). Drinks are fine, but please don't eat during class. Also, please don't use your phones during class time to do anything, except to quickly hunt down some piece of pertinent information or to use as a prop. I will give you the opportunity to set your phone aside in "phone jail" during class time.

Tips for success:

- Arrive to class a little early and ready to work. Two late arrivals equal one absence.
- Wear clothes and shoes you can move in comfortably. Be prepared to be on the floor and/or barefoot. Water's OK, but otherwise no food or drink. Silence phones; if your phone makes a noise during class, please bring in a snack for everyone next class.
- Come to class with an open and willing attitude. Try all the exercises *before* you pass judgment on them. Have the courage to move out of your comfort zone.
- Participate in discussions. Your thoughts and observations are integral to our development in this class, and I expect you to share them. Ask questions.
- Be respectful of your classmates: listen to them during the exercises and in the discussions and respond thoughtfully, even if you disagree with their choices or comments. Be responsible for taking care of one another.
- Always communicate with me about any concerns or questions you have regarding the course, your progress, further areas of exploration, how this connects to other coursework you're doing, and so on. I encourage you to visit me during office hours or make an appointment for another time.
- Decide to have fun and enjoy the work we do together. Learning is a process, not a product that is simply delivered whole to you. You are the motor that drives your learning; I encourage you to ask tons of questions to help you deliberate, clarify, deepen, and expand your thinking.

Required Textbooks:

+*Notes on Directing: 130 Lessons in Leadership from the Director's Chair* by Frank Hauser and Russell Reich

+*How to Read a Play: Script Analysis for Directors* by Damon Kiely

Required Texts Located on Canvas:

+*Actions: The Actors' Thesaurus* by Marina Caldarone & Maggie Lloyd-Williams (there's an app, too)

+*A Sense of Direction: Some Observations on the Art of Directing* by William Ball

+*The Viewpoints Book* by Anne Bogart & Tina Landau

+*Stop Kiss*, a play by Diana Son

+*Constellations*, a play by Nick Payne

+A collection of 10-minute plays

Other Texts You Might Like:

+*A Director Prepares* by Anne Bogart

+*Moment Work: Tectonic Theater Project's Process of Devising Theater*

+*The Director's Craft* by Katie Mitchell

+*Fundamentals of Play Directing* by Alexander Dean & Lawrence Carra (ch. 6-8)

+*Backwards & Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays* by David Ball

- +*The Empty Space* by Peter Brook
- +*The Director's Voice*, 20 Interviews with Directors
- +*On Directing* by Harold Clurman
- +*Thinking Like a Director* by Michael Bloom
- +*Staging Story: Fundamentals for the Beginning Stage Director* by Bob Moss and Wendy Dann

Course Assignments & Assessment/Grading:

100% = 1,000 points

	93.5-100 = A	90-93 = A-
87.5-89 = B+	83.5-87 = B	80-83 = B-
77.5-79 = C+	73.5-77 = C	70-73 = C-
60-69 = D	0-59 = F	

Participation Grade – 10% (1% per weeks 1-10)

If you show up to class on time, ready to work and willing/able to participate in class activities (this includes reading discussions, in-class exercises, and presentations), then you'll have no problem earning the 10%. See the "Attendance & Participation" paragraph above for details. On any given day you could be a director, an actor, a critical observer, an audience member, a dramaturg or designer, or maybe something else, too.

Small Group Assignments, Weeks 2 & 3 – 10%

Picturization & Movement Assignments – each worth 5%

Music Story Assignment, Week 8 – 4%

Assignment will be handed out a week or so before it's due.

Concise Written Responses to Video and Plays – 14%

+Response to YouTube video, "Directors on Directing" – 2%

I will hand out questions to which I'd like you to respond after watching the video.

+Initial Responses after reading *Stop Kiss* and *Constellations*: 3% each = 6%

300 word response, due by start of class, emailed or hard copy. Please respond in the following two ways:
1) What are your intuitive, emotional thoughts about the play, immediately after reading it? What do you love, hate about it? What pulls you in? What confuses you? And 2) If you were tasked with directing it, what would you begin to think about in terms of staging, characterization, and clear storytelling?

+Responses to two plays you see (here are 4 options): 3% each = 6%

1) *Dog Sees God*, 2) *The Wolves*, 3) *Lonesome West*, & 4) I have a few online options as backups

300 word response, due by start of next class, emailed or hard copy. See 2 plays total; I'll give you extra credit if you see/write about a 3rd. Please respond in the following two ways: 1) What was your experience watching the play? And 2) in your opinion, what are some examples of strong directorial choices?

Mid-Quarter Directing Projects – 28%

+*Stop Kiss* Project 14%

Specific assignment guidelines TBD.

+*Constellations* Project 14%

Specific assignment guidelines TBD.

Final Projects: Rehearsal Rep & Play Presentations – 18%

During the final weeks of the quarter, I will observe you in rehearsals directing your final project. During weeks eight, nine, and ten you will each get equal time to rehearse in class; out of class rehearsal time will be necessary as well. I will assess your work based on your preparedness as a director, the care and compassion you take towards your actors, your productivity, and your management of people and time. Director presentations of Final Projects (week 8) = 2%. Each in class rehearsal = 2% x 3 = 6%. Final presentation during week 10 = 10%.

Directing Journal for Final Project — 16%

When you begin your work on your Final Project I will hand out a list of what to include in your journal. Some examples of the journal assignments are: daily responses to your rehearsals and the prep you do for them, including any ideas, goals, staging, characterization, time management; script analysis & plot worksheets; any dramaturgical research and design ideas you have; staging ideas and notation, a copy of your working script; and thoughts, wishes, goals regarding future application (directing senior capstone, assistant directing a mainstage, etc.).

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

Week One: Composition, Picturization, & “Lessons from the Past”

M 1/11 +Introductions, syllabus, power of space, begin composition work

W 1/13 **Due: watch “Directors on Directing” YouTube video listed below**
Due: concise response to video (use worksheet for guidance)
+Composition & Picturization / Picturization assignment handed out

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x27VXDCqJAg> (Type in “American Theatre Wing Directors on Directing” on YouTube. Also called “Working in the Theatre #362.” Also located at www.americantheatrewing.org)

F 1/15 **Due: read *How to Read a Play*, Foreword, Chapters 1 + 2 (through page 30)**
+Composition & Picturization / work on Picturization assignment

Week Two: Composition, Picturization, & “Survey of Current Practices”

M 1/18 *MLK Day; no class*

W 1/20 **Due: read *How to Read a Play*, Chapter 3, part #1 (pages 32-59)**
Due: read & discuss *A Sense of Direction*, pages 23-36, “The Cornerstones for Success” & pages 110-112, “Composition and Picturization”
+Composition & Picturization / work on Picturization assignment

F 1/22 **Due: Picturization Assignment**
Due: read *How to Read a Play*, Chapter 3, part #2 (pages 59-85)

+++F 1/22: See DU Theatre's staged reading of *Dog Sees God* @ 7:30pm on Zoom

Week Three: Adding Movement

M 1/25 **Due: response to *Dog Sees God* staged reading**
Due: read *How to Read a Play*, Chapter 3, part #3 (pages 87-106)
+Movement & Viewpoints

W 1/27 **Due: Read Ch. 1-3 from *The Viewpoints Book***
+Work on Movement Assignment

F 1/29 **Due: Movement Assignment**
Due: read & discuss *Notes on Directing*,
[I: Understanding the Script, pages 1-6 / II: The Director's Role, pages 9-14 /
III: Casting, pages 17-20 / IV: First Read-Through, pages 23-25]

Week Four: *Stop Kiss* (Diana Son) – Design & Staging (integrating Picturization + Movement)

M 2/1 **Due: read *Stop Kiss*, concise response**
Due: read *How to Read a Play*, Chapter 5, part #1 (pages 137-147)
+Receive scene & cast assignments

W 2/3 **Due: read *How to Read a Play*, Chapter 5, parts #2 & 3 (pages 147-154)**
Due: read & discuss *Notes on Directing*,
[V: Rehearsal Rules, pages 27-31 / VI: Building Blocks, pages 33-36 /
VII: Talking to Actors, pages 39-51 / VIII: Getting a Laugh, pages 53-56]
+Rehearse scenes

F 2/5 **Due: design & staging ideas for scenes (rough draft, ungraded)**
+Rehearse scenes

Week Five: *Stop Kiss* (Diana Son) – Design & Staging (integrating Picturization + Movement)

M 2/8 **Due: read & discuss *Notes on Directing*,**
[IX: Elements of Staging, pages 59-67 / X: Last Tips, pages 69-77]
+Rehearse scenes

W 2/10 **Due: Present all scenes / final design & staging ideas**

F 2/12 *No class. Breathe.*

Week Six: *Constellations* (Nick Payne) – Same Scene/Different Circumstances

M 2/15 **Due: read *How to Read a Play*, Chapter 5, parts #4-6 (pages 155-162)**
Due: read & discuss *Notes on Directing*,
[Epilogue & all Appendices, pages 79-102]

W 2/17 **Due: Read *Constellations* (on Canvas), concise response**
+Receive *Constellations* scene & cast assignments

F 2/19 **Due: read & discuss *A Sense of Direction*, pages 70-92, “Objectives”**
Due: read & discuss Introduction to *ACTIONS: An Actors’ Thesaurus*
+Rehearse *Constellations* scenes / receive script analysis assignment

+++Week 6: See DU Theatre’s production of *The Wolves*, February 17-20, Byron Theater

Week Seven: *Constellations* (Nick Payne) – Same Scene/Different Circumstances

M 2/22 **Due: emailed response to *The Wolves***
+Rehearse *Constellations* scenes

W 2/24 +Rehearse *Constellations* scenes
+Final Projects Introduced / Music Story assignment introduced

F 2/26 **Due: Present all *Constellations* scenes / *Constellations* script analysis due**

Week Eight: Final Projects

M 3/1 **Due: present all Music Stories**
+Organizational Day for Final Projects

W 3/3 **Due: Director Presentations of Final Projects (half)**
+Final Projects: Rehearsal rep & director check-ins

F 3/5 **Due: Director Presentations of Final Projects (half)**
+Final Projects: Rehearsal rep & director check-ins

Week Nine: Final Projects

M 3/8 +Final Projects: Rehearsal rep & director check-ins

W 3/10 +Final Projects: Rehearsal rep & director check-ins

F 3/12 +Final Projects: Rehearsal rep & director check-ins

+++Week 9: See DU Theatre’s *Lonesome West*, March 11-14, Byron Theater

Week Ten: Final Projects

M 3/15 **Due: emailed response to *Lonesome West***
+Final Projects: Rehearsal rep & director check-ins

W 3/17 **Due: Final Project Presentations + Director’s Journal for Final Projects (half)**

F 3/19 **Due: Final Project Presentations + Director’s Journal for Final Projects (half)**
Wrap-Up

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

As part of its commitment to diversity and Inclusive Excellence, the University provides reasonable accommodations for students' sincerely held religious beliefs or practices unless the University determines that such an accommodation would fundamentally alter the curriculum or academic program. For full details, including request process, visit the [Religious and Spiritual Life web page](#).

HONOR CODE/ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

(Additional academic integrity statements can be found [here](#))

All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. For the consequences of violating the Academic Misconduct policy, refer to the University of Denver website on the Honor Code (www.du.edu/honorcode). See also <http://www.du.edu/studentconduct> for information about conduct expectations from the Office of Student Conduct.

INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

In this class, we will work together to develop a learning community that is inclusive and respectful. Our diversity may be reflected by differences in race, culture, age, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and myriad other social identities and life experiences. The goal of inclusiveness, in a diverse community, encourages and appreciates expressions of different ideas, opinions, and beliefs, so that conversations and interactions that could potentially be divisive turn instead into opportunities for intellectual and personal enrichment. A dedication to inclusiveness requires respecting what others say, their right to say it, and the thoughtful consideration of others' communication. Both speaking up and listening are valuable tools for furthering thoughtful, enlightening dialogue.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

As part of the University's Culture of Care & Support we provide campus resources to create access for you to maintain your safety, health, and well-being. We understand that as a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug concerns, depression, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These stressful moments can impact academic performance or reduce your ability to engage. The University offers services to assist you with addressing these or ANY other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any challenges, you should reach out for support. You can seek confidential mental health services available on campus in the Health & Counseling Center (HCC) and My Student Support System (My SSP). Another helpful campus office is Student Outreach & Support (SOS).

Health & Counseling Services

[My SSP 24/7 confidential services for students \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

[Student Outreach & Support \(SOS\) and SOS Referrals](#)

TITLE IX

Gender violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, class, age, appearance, gender identity, or sexual orientation. The University of Denver is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex (gender), including sexual misconduct, sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking. [The Center for Advocacy, Prevention and Empowerment \(CAPE\)](#) provides programs and resources to help promote healthy relationships, teach non-violence and equality, and foster a respectful and safe environment for all members of the University of Denver community. All services are confidential and free of charge. For assistance during business hours, call 303-871-3853 and ask to speak to the Director of CAPE. After hours, please call the Emergency & Crisis Dispatch Line at 303-871-3000 and ask to speak to the CAPE advocate on call.

STUDENT ATHLETES

If you are a student-athlete, you should inform me of any class days to be missed due to DU sponsored varsity athletic events in which you are participating. Please provide me with an absence policy form by the end of the first week of class.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Access to the Internet can be a valuable aid to the classroom learning environment. You may be encouraged to use a laptop, smart phone, or other device to explore concepts related to course discussions and in-class activity. Keep in mind, however, that these technologies can be distracting – not only for you, but to others in the class. Please avoid the temptation of Facebook, texting, or other off-topic diversions.

RESTRICTION OF AUDIO OR VISUAL RECORDING, REPRODUCTION, AND DISTRIBUTION OF CONTENT IN ONLINE COURSES

At the University of Denver, we protect the intellectual property of all our faculty, and safeguard the privacy of all our students in online learning environments. To this end, students may not record, reproduce, screenshot, photograph, or distribute any video, audio, or visual content from their online courses. Keep in mind that if any student is identifiable in an online class recording, this may constitute a violation of the educational record protections provided under FERPA. Students who violate this policy will be reported to The Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities and may be subject to both legal sanctions for violations of copyright law and disciplinary action under *Student Rights & Responsibilities Policies*.

RESEARCH CENTER SERVICES

The University Libraries Research Center (<http://libraryhelp.du.edu>) answers research questions seven days a week by phone, email, in-person, chat/IM or text. One-on-one research consultations in the Anderson Academic Commons are also available on a drop-in basis or by appointment. Consultations help students at any stage of the research process, from refining a topic, to finding books and articles, to creating a bibliography. Telephone and Zoom video consultations are also available by request for distance students. Ask a question or make an appointment by calling 303-871-2905 or visiting <http://libraryhelp.du.edu>.

WRITING CENTER SERVICES

The Writing Center provides writing support for undergraduate and graduate students at all levels, on all kinds of projects, and at any stage of the process: from generating ideas to learning new editing strategies. Consultants take a collaborative approach, working with you to help you develop your writing in light of your specific goals and assignments.

The Writing Center provides online writing support for graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in online courses at all levels, on all kinds of projects, and at any stage of the process: from generating ideas to learning new editing strategies. In our Zoom video conferences, consultants take a collaborative approach, working with you to help you develop your writing in light of your specific goals and assignments. To make an appointment for a free, 45-minute Zoom consultation, call 303-871-7456 or go to MyWeb > Student > Writing Center. Visit our website (www.du.edu/writing/writingcenter/) for hours and additional information.