
This class is currently full. Please email our TA Alex Leondedis at alexleondedis@g.harvard.edu if you would like to be added to the waitlist. If any enrollment changes, we will be in touch to continue the process of applying for this class.

Course Description:

This is a directing class with an emphasis on personal story telling, and on how to create those stories with clarity and visceral impact. This course is designed both for students who have had no previous directing, acting, theater, film, or any arts class experience at all, while also providing a rigorous directorial workspace for advanced directors who are interested in a career of directing in theater and/or tv/film. The emphasis is on telling stories that the director has some kind of personal connection to, helping them to define for themselves the specific story points necessary to clearly convey the story, and on directorial techniques that can help them vivify the visceral impact of that story (staging, music, lights, acting values, etc.). Over the course of the semester each student directs 5 very short pieces (1-3 minutes) and then 3 longer pieces (5-8 minutes). Students may direct any type of material that is of interest to them, including their own writing if they'd like. The course includes how to work with actors, and/or how a director might direct themselves if that is of interest to them. Each student will be required to make at least one of the five very short pieces as a live theater event, at least one of the five very short pieces as a recorded and edited video, and one of the short pieces that combine the two forms to create a story/event that employs pre-recorded or live-feed video during a live theater event. After that, for the rest of the semester, students can either stick with one of those three formats, or go back and forth between forms. Absolutely no previous video experience is needed for this course. Students will use free video editing software to create their video work, and we'll provide each student with links that help each student get a quick handle on basic video editing techniques. For the video work, while we'll look at some ways that the camera and editing are used in the storytelling, this is not a technical filmmaking class – no instructions on how to use a camera is offered. Most students have used their phones to record their videos, but each student is welcome to use any video recording device that they may have access to. It's a fast-paced class in a very safe and warm environment. While a safe and warm environment, the class does require a great deal of outside work. Students should expect to spend 4-6 hours per week on their story making. Students' grades are only based on their individual effort, not on a comparison to work by other students in the class.

Course goals:

The emphasis is on telling stories that the director has some kind of personal connection to, stories that the students genuinely care about. When they do that, they're able to create really strong work. We help them clarify the specific story points they're interested in creating, as well directorial ideas that help them vivify the visceral impact of their story through staging, music, lights, acting values, etc.).

Course format:

Over the course of the semester each student directs 3 very short pieces (1-3 minutes) and then 3 longer pieces (5-8 minutes). Students may direct any type of material that is of interest to them, although most students tend to write their own material so that their stories can be tailor made to reflect their personal experiences in life. The course includes how to work with actors, and/or how a director might direct themselves if that is of interest to them. Each student will be required to make at least one of the five very short pieces as a live theater event, and at least one of the five very short pieces as a recorded and edited video. After that, for the rest of the semester, students can work in whatever forms they want. For the video work, no previous video experience is needed for this course.

Typical enrollees:

We always have a wide range of enrollees. In fact, most of the students are not arts concentrators. Our enrollees are from all over the campus, including Applied Math, African and African American Studies, Biomedical Engineering, Comparative Literature, Athletes, Environmental Science, Neuroscience, Statistics, Studies of Women, Gender and Sexuality, etc.

When is course typically offered?

Fall

What can students expect from you as an instructor?

Casual, safe, comfortable and protective environment so that students can do personal work they feel connected to. I move quickly in order to give a large number of notes for each story a student creates. I complement first and then do a "next steps" critique. I never compare one student to another. I work with each student wherever they are, whether they're complete beginners with no art class experience who are just taking the class out of curiosity, to students who have a fair amount of experience and are contemplating a possible profession in the arts. Although the class environment is very relaxed, I expect rigorous work from everyone and try to push each individual accordingly.

Assignments and grading:

Grading is individually based, never in comparison to another student. The final product of each assignment is not what I grade on, but rather the amount of effort a student has put in outside of class. 85% of the grade is based on this degree of effort when creating the work outside of class. 15% of the grade is based on being on time to class, not missing classes, participating in class discussions, and being kind and supportive to the other students.

Enrollment cap, selection process, notification:

We take 9 students each semester.

Enrollment is determined by the instructor after viewing student Introduction Videos. For those interested in taking the course, please submit a short 2-3-minute (approximately) Introduction Video. In the video, please include the following: 1) Your name, year, and concentration (if you have one). 2) Why you're interested in taking the course. What do you hope to get out of this course? 3) Please tell us two things that feel personally important to you in life as the class encourages students to make work on issues and topics that they feel personally connected to. Please upload your Introduction Video to the Google Drive on the course Canvas site no later than **5pm on Monday April 8th**. Please be sure to fill out the information sheet that's linked to the upload page, providing your name, year, concentration (if you have one) and your email address. Your email address is important, as we will use that to contact the students who have submitted an Interview Video. We will notify everyone about enrollment for the class by **5pm on Thursday, April 11th**.

Current syllabus:

Link to a Sample Syllabus [HERE](#).

Absence and late work policies:

Students should arrive to class at least 1 minute before start time. Being late can affect your grade, as can absences. However, if there's a good reason for being late, like you have a class just before this, or something comes up on a given day, just let us know. Same with absences. If you're sick, of course it's better to stay home, and if something comes up unexpectedly and you need to miss class, just let us know ahead of time. Getting extensions on work due is fine, as long as it's requested before the due date and time.