

# Introduction to Directing 1

THEA 250 – WQ 210  
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 1-1:50  
Spring 2026

Instructor: David Little (dtliddle@bsu.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 12:00 – 2:00 PM (Or by appointment)



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*This course is worth three credit hours. Each hour of credit requires 50 minutes in-class as well as a combined 120 minutes out-of-class work per week, which will be divided between lectures, discussions, and activities as well as individual work (readings, projects, written assignments).*

## What You'll Explore in THEA 250

### Course Objectives:

1. To build on previous analysis class focusing directly on the idea of analysis in pursuit of understanding the action of a play.
2. To delineate how story works within a play.
3. To understand how the ideas of inclusion and representation impact a director's storytelling.
4. To recognize how a director guides the telling of that story with the actors and the production team.
5. To understand the basic concepts inherent in staging a play.
6. To garner a basic understanding of how a director functions through the production process.
7. To create short theatrical vignettes that effectively tell stories through action.
8. To practice collaboration and communication skills.
9. To explore the art of theatre through the role of the director.

## Required Texts

- *Backwards and Forwards*, by William Ball
  - *\*\*Backwards & Forwards* should be available at the campus bookstore, TIS, and Amazon.com.
  - *Far Away*, by Caryl Churchill (provided)
  - *Appropriate*, by Brandon Jacobs Jenkins (provided)



Additional reading will be provided by the instructor

## Grades are based on the following:

These nine focus areas are key steps to completing the learning outcomes for the class. All assignments add up to a total of 150 points for the entire course.

- 1.) **Concept project:** Using the first play we read, students will create an individual digital concept board expressing their approach to the play along with a requisite number of visual and aural support pieces. **(15 points)**
- 2.) **Blocking project:** 1) Students will be given a ground plan and a series of behaviors by two people in a space. Using the instructions, they will create a blocking pattern with given circumstances that fits both the space and the defined actions. 2) Students will be given a series of physical actions for which they will create circumstances that give context to the actions and then record those action using a video camera. These films will be presented in class and discussed. **(15 points)**
- 3.) **Song project:** Students will create a short vignette (30-90 seconds) inspired by a piece of music that must be incorporated into the vignette in some manner. The vignette must have a beginning, middle, and end. The vignette must have dramatic conflict. The vignette must have a character or characters that are dealing with the conflict. **(15 points)**
- 4.) **Art project:** Students will create a short vignette (30-90 seconds) based on a piece of art (painting, sculpture, photograph). The piece of art must have a somewhat realistic being in it. At some point the vignette must incorporate into the vignette the pose of the main character. The vignette must have a beginning, middle, and end. The vignette must have dramatic conflict. The vignette must have a character or characters that are dealing with the conflict. **(15 points)**
- 5.) **Open Scene project:** The class will be split into manageable work groups. Each group will be given a one- page open scene from which they will each create a vignette. The vignette must have a beginning, middle, and end. The vignette must have dramatic conflict. The vignette must have a character or characters that are dealing with the conflict. The students will act as each other's actors and these scenes will be presented in class with written critique to follow. **(15 points)**
- 6.) **Analytical Paper for *Far Away*:** For the first play read in the class the students will write an analytical paper that will include character analysis and the tracing of action through one scene using the method from Backwards and Forwards. **(25 points)**
- 7.) **Analytical Paper of *Appropriate*:** For the second play read in class, the students will do an analytical paper that includes exploration of the world of the play and how that might influence production, exploration of character development throughout the play, exploration of the arc of the play, and exploration of the story the director wishes to tell with the play. **(25 points)**
- 8.) **Class Participation:** Approximately 25-30% of class will exist as Discussions/Lectures. Students will receive grades based on their participation in discussions as well as a short answer to a question posed out of the discussion. **(15 points)**
- 9.) **Show Attendance:** You must see at least 2 on campus shows during the semester. You must upload a selfie of yourself at the show with your program to Canvas. These will be discussed in class. **(5 points for each show = 10 points total)**

**Total: 150 Points for the Entire Course**

## Late Work Policy

Late work will be accepted as it is important to me that you learn the required material for the course and I fully understand that unexpected things arise. However, I will strictly adhere to the following policy when scoring late work:

- Work received up to 1 week late will be eligible for up to 50% of the original point value
- Work received more than 1 week after the due date will not be accepted for points

## Grades

Your final grade will be a percentage of the total points accumulated in the class. Each assignment and test will have the total points possible listed in Blackboard.

A	94% - 100%	B-	80% - 82%	D+	67% - 69%
A-	90% - 93%	C+	77% - 79%	D	63% - 66%
B+	87% - 89%	C	73% - 76%	D-	60% - 62%
B	83% - 86%	C-	70% - 72%	F	0 - 59%

\*Please note that any “Extra Credit” points earned will be added above these totals, and percentages adjusted accordingly.

## Minimum Grade Policy

The lowest acceptable grade in a course for credit toward a major or minor in Theatre and Dance is a D-. Any student receiving a D- or lower must retake the course to receive credit towards a major or minor in the department.

## Office Hours/Communication

*E-mail* is the easiest way to ask any questions you have. I will do my best to answer all e-mails within 24-48 hours. I do not usually check my e-mail on the weekend so if you send something on Friday through Sunday, it will take me longer to respond.

*Office hours* are available if you need to discuss something that has arisen in class that you need clarification on. I will be holding regular, virtual office hours in a Zoom room for you to drop into if you'd like. OR you can just email me to schedule a time. See the link at the top for the web address to drop in for a meeting.

Please do not call my office as I don't use my phone there.

## Attendance and Punctuality

**Attendance:** For this class that meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, no student can miss more than three classes. If you miss more than three classes, you will be docked 1 letter grade for each additional absence until you drop to a “C”. You cannot miss more than 10 classes in a semester and still pass the class. You will be asked to withdraw from the class. In addition, no grade of “W” will be given to a student after midterm, unless he/she is earning a grade of “C” at the time of withdrawal. No grade of “I” will be given to a student who is flunking.

There is a second category of absences, including extended and documented absence related to illness or issues of physical health (mono, broken leg, etc.), and recurring absences due to mental health issues as documented by a letter from Disability Services. If this category of absences causes your TOTAL absences from the class to rise above 6, you will be deemed unable to fully complete the work required to earn credit for this course, and you will be asked to withdraw from the course. The instructor will be sure that such situations are remedied with solutions that do not impact your GPA

(an Incomplete or, in rare cases, a late withdrawal). The instructor will work with you to lay out clear expectations regarding how the course work will be completed.

Finally, the following absences are excused and no number of absences accrued under these conditions may affect the student's status in the class: religious holiday; pregnancy, jury duty, death in the family, travel for university business as documented by an official Ball State Travel Notice.

Attendance will be taken using Attendance Plus+, so you will need an electronic device at the beginning of class to input the code.

### **Work Space**

In order to foster an appropriate environment for our work, I ask that we treat our classroom as a focused, *working* space. Phones should be turned off prior to entering the classroom. The respect, dedication, and focus that I ask of you DOES NOT mean seriousness...a heightened sense of play is essential for our work as theatre artists.

### **Physical Interaction** (Physical Intimacy/Stage Violence) Between Students.

This class should not include scene work that involves stage violence or physical intimacy. If you feel your scene **MUST** have stage violence or intimacy, **PLEASE SPEAK WITH ME FIRST!** This material must always be approached with the priority on clear communication of expectations, clear consent of all performers, and a respect for student safety. At the beginning of the semester, you will be asked for your consent regarding stage violence or physical intimacy. If physical interaction with other students is not a part of your learning process or makes you uncomfortable, notify your instructor immediately so that accommodations can be made. Physical contact by anyone in the classroom should not and will not be used to demean you in any way and will only take place once clear and enthusiastic consent has been obtained. Any scenes involving violence or physical intimacy will be fully blocked / choreographed in class under instructor supervision. Any rehearsal of this material outside of class must follow the existing blocking / choreography exactly. If you are ever uncomfortable with a specific scene, exercise, or partner, notify your instructor immediately. If you are uncomfortable speaking with your instructor, contact departmental Associate Chair Tyler Smith ([tasmith2@bsu.edu](mailto:tasmith2@bsu.edu)).

### **Participation Policy**

You are expected to be an active participant in the course. This course is designed to include discussion and other forms of collaboration and communication. You should be willing and ready to regularly communicate with me and your classmates, both in person and online. You will participate in all weekly activities in your course.

You will need to log into your course 3 to 4 times a week and check your official BSU University email account daily. Doing so will allow you to view announcements, participate in class activities, prepare for and complete assignments and assessments. You are expected to complete all assignments and activities by the posted due dates.

# University Policies and Statements

## University Statement

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services Office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or [dsd@bsu.edu](mailto:dsd@bsu.edu).

## Freedom of Expression

In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's Statement on Freedom of Expression, the resources on Ball State's Freedom of Expression webpage, and Ball State's Beneficence Pledge.

## Title IX

Ball State University is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment—including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone. The University offers support services and resources. For more information or to report an incident, please visit [bsu.edu/titleix](https://bsu.edu/titleix) or contact the Title IX Coordinator at 765-285-1545 or at [titleix@bsu.edu](mailto:titleix@bsu.edu)

As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter under the Title IX policy and required to report any information I receive about possible sexual harassment. This includes information shared in class discussions, assignments, or private conversations.

What happens after I report? The Title IX Coordinator will email the person who experienced sexual harassment (complainant) and invite them to schedule a meeting. If the complainant chooses to meet with the Title IX Coordinator,

Title IX Coordinator will offer supportive measures (e.g., counseling, extensions on deadlines, course-related adjustments, changes to work or class schedules, and/or referrals to campus offices), review the policy, and discuss options to move forward.

If a complaint is filed by the complainant or the University, an investigation will begin following University policy.

## University Grade Appeal Policy

If you believe you received a final course grade that does not reflect your performance due to fairness or a procedural issue, you have the right to file an appeal within 5 school days after final grades are posted by the Office of the Registrar. Review the [University Grade Appeal Policy and Process.](#)

## Academic Integrity/Plagiarism Policy

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, we will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. Please review the University's [Academic Integrity Policy \(Links to an external site.\)](#). For all assignments, you must work independently. Sharing of files is not permitted for any reason.

## Academic Integrity/Plagiarism Policy: Violations

Examples of academic integrity violations include, but are not limited to:

- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Use or possession of a file created by someone else.
- Reusing work from another semester, course, or section.
- Fraudulent submission of work.
- Using unauthorized materials during Exams.
- Impersonating someone else or having them impersonate you.
- Making fraudulent or dishonest statements regarding your work.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.
- Posting course files and resources on study or content-sharing websites.

In some instances, this course may permit the use of AI. If any AI is suspected without a proper citation or on an assignment where it is not permitted, this will be considered plagiarism, and an Academic Integrity Report will be filed.

[The Plagiarism Tutorial from UNC Libraries \(Links to an external site.\)](#) provides you with a foundation in Academic Integrity.

### **Generative AI Statement**

All work conducted and/or submitted in this course must be your own, completed in accordance with the Ball State University's Student Academic Ethics Policy. You may not collaborate with or make use of ChatGPT or any other generative AI applications at any time to develop materials submitted in this course.

## Student Support Services

### The Learning Center

The Learning Center offers free Tutoring and Academic Coaching for many courses at Ball State. Students can make appointments for online (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit [myballstate.bsu.edu](http://myballstate.bsu.edu) and click on “Navigate” in the Academic Tools section, or just go directly to [bsu.navigate.eab.com](http://bsu.navigate.eab.com).

Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are available for students who have received the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Tests may be administered in the Learning Center.

Supplemental Instruction is available in select courses. If you have an SI leader for your course, that person will provide students with information the first week of school regarding weekly study sessions. For more information about Learning Center programming, visit [bsu.edu/learningcenter](http://bsu.edu/learningcenter) or call 765-285-1006. Follow us on Instagram: [BallStateLC](#).

### The Writing Center

All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center (in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays, Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings, or online during any of our regularly scheduled hours) to get additional feedback on your writing.

The Writing Center offers free planning, feedback, and accountability sessions (in person and online) to all students composing essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. To schedule a free appointment to discuss your writing, go to [bsu.edu/writingcenter](http://bsu.edu/writingcenter). Online and in-person appointments are available; however, plan ahead because appointments book quickly!

### The Basic Needs Hub

If you are having difficulty affording enough food, do not have a safe and reliable place to sleep, and/or experiencing an emergency or crisis, help is available through the Basic Needs Hub. The Basic Needs Hub has information, resources, and provides individualized support to students. To talk with a supportive staff member about your experience, receive one on one assistance, or learn more about resources, you can submit a Basic Needs Assistance Form.

### The Counseling Center

The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). The Crisis Line is a mental health resource for those who are struggling with any mental health concerns, including thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide.

At the Ball State Counseling Center, we see students for a variety of reasons, some of which include homesickness, relationship concerns, anxiety, and depression. At your first appointment, you will work with a therapist to create a plan that will connect you with resources that best fit your needs. We assist students with getting connected to therapy at our Center as well as connecting students to self-help resources, other on-campus resources, and community-based resources. All Ball State students also have access to several on-demand, self-help resources through a variety of different platforms. All of these resources, including a direct link to our website, can be found [here](#).

## The Speaking Center

The Speaking Center is a free resource available to all members of the BSU community wanting to improve their public speaking abilities. We offer personalized coaching designed to help you become a more confident and effective speaker. Our trained coaches provide constructive feedback and support throughout the entire speech preparation process, whether you are in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and organizing your thoughts, or you need to practice your delivery and refine your message.

The Center is in the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, room 302. To schedule an appointment, please access us through your Navigate app or use this direct link to sign up for a time. Appointments are available both in person and on Zoom. Appointments are available in person, on Zoom, and in virtual reality (VR) for those interested in practicing in an immersive speaking environment.

## Canvas and Student Privacy

### Canvas Accessibility

Canvas provides a user experience that is easy, simple, and intuitive. Special attention has been paid to making Canvas screen-readable. The Rich Content Editor encourages users to create accessible content pages (i.e. text formatting is accomplished using styles). Canvas is designed to allow limited customization of colors and schemes to be accessible for all users. The National Federation of the Blind granted Canvas the Gold Level Web Certification in 2010.

Find more information by visiting the [Canvas Voluntary Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT\)](#).

### FERPA and Privacy

As a student, your educational records are considered confidential. Under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), your records are confidential and protected. Under most circumstances, your records will not be released without your written and signed consent. However, some directory information may be released to third parties without your prior consent unless a written request to restrict this is on file. You can learn more about student rights to privacy by reading Ball State's FERPA and Privacy and Protection.

### Plagiarism Detection

The campus subscribes to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service, through Canvas. You may need to submit written assignments to Turnitin. Student work will be used for plagiarism detection and for no other purpose. The student may indicate in writing to the instructor that he/she refuses to participate in the plagiarism detection process, in which case the instructor can use other electronic means to verify the originality of their work.