Fayetteville State University  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Department of Performing and Fine Arts  
THEA 421 Play Production

I. Locator Information:  
Instructor: TBD  
Course # and Name: 421 Play Production  
Office Location:  
Semester Credit Hours: 3  
Office hours:  
Day and Time Class Meets:  
Office Phone:  
Total Contact Hours for Class: 3  
Cell Phone:  
Email address:

THE CLASS  
A seminar and laboratory in directing plays, with special emphasis on each student’s directing a one-act play for public presentation.

HOW YOU SHOULD THINK ABOUT THE CLASS

“Effort does not equal excellence.”

This statement means that, while hard work, determination, and completion of tasks are each necessary for success, *they do not guarantee success.* Success - academic, professional, economic, or otherwise - is not guaranteed, and the work you put in, while necessary, does not mean you will receive an “A,” or that the audience will applaud, that people will like you, or that they will buy the thing you’re selling, or make you any money. The statement also means that excellence - the “A,” the applause, or whatever your terms - is defined by conditions *that have nothing to do with the amount of work you put in, because it is assumed you put in the level of work necessary.* Rather, your achievement is based, simply, on whether your work meets the standards that lead to success, quite apart from the amount of work you put in.

FSU Policy on Electronic Mail:  
Fayetteville State University provides to each student, free of charge, an electronic mail account (username@uncfsu.edu) that is easily accessible via the Internet. The university has established FSU email as the primary mode of correspondence between university officials and enrolled students. Inquiries and requests from students pertaining to academic records, grades, bills, financial aid, and other matters of a confidential nature must be submitted via FSU email. Inquiries or requests from personal email accounts are not assured a response. The university maintains open-use computer laboratories throughout the campus that can be used to access electronic mail. Rules and regulations governing the use of FSU email may be found at [http://www.uncfsu.edu/PDFs/EmailPolicyFinal.pdf](http://www.uncfsu.edu/PDFs/EmailPolicyFinal.pdf)

II. Course Description:  
A seminar and laboratory in directing plays, with special emphasis on each student’s directing a one-act play for public presentation.

III. Disabled Student Services:  
In accordance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACA) of 1990, if you have a disability or think you have a disability to please contact the Center for Personal Development in the Spaulding Building, Room 155 (1st Floor); 910-672-1203.

IV. Textbooks:
No text books are required for the course, but the student will engage a number of texts – scripts, source material, and other resources as a condition of their work.

V. Student Learning Outcomes

This course meets the following student learning outcomes for the Theatre major:
Demonstrate competency in performing, producing and critically analyzing a theatrical production.

Demonstrate an understanding of how visual and audio design elements such as costumes, lights, scenery, and sound are integral to a script in performance.

Demonstrate understanding of the responsibilities of members of a theatrical production team and how they collaborate effectively as a production team.

Additionally, this course meets the following outcomes:

1a. Students will be able to construct a clear sense of how a performance script works.
1b. Students will be able to identify the essential elements of a script, and of the production process.
2. Students will be able to apply their understanding of the script and production process to convey clear meaning in a final performance or project
3. Students will describe connections between developing script, performance, and production, and assert some key differences between theater and film development.
4. Students will articulate value in the skills and dispositions they learn in working in the course.
5. Students will be able to see script and production as potential reflections of themselves and their communities.
6. Students will value the need to continually engage their learning in the course as part of a commitment to lifelong learning.

Learning activities necessary for these outcomes are include lectures, reading and independent work, closely mentored work with the professors, and in the major project of the course; these outcomes are assessed by the professor’s evaluation of participation in the class, by evaluation of work in the production process, by evaluation of the major project of the course, and by evaluation of and reflection on work in the course.

VI. Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

SYLLABUS POLICY
This syllabus serves as a contract between the professor and students. Students should adhere to this syllabus closely. Please be advised that the professor may not provide notice of a project due after a listing in the syllabus or on Blackboard. It is the student’s sole responsibility to turn in work on time.
The professor reserves the right to alter the syllabus at any time to benefit student learning or to account for necessary adjustments in how the course is administered. Notice of a change to the syllabus will generally be given in class, on the course website and/or via email. In all cases, the student is responsible for all revised or added due dates for each assignment as well as any adjustments in the course schedule.
COURSE WEBSITE & EMAIL CHECKING
A course website is maintained on the FSU Blackboard server. Students are required to check email and the course site daily and will be held responsible for changes made to the course, assignments, etc. via either of these methods.

Because FSU has open-access computer labs and almost universal wireless or wired access to the internet, and because it provides you with a free, secure, email address, it is understood that you will be able to access a computer, Blackboard, email, and other web-based resources necessary for this course. Inability to access FSU email or Blackboard is something that is your responsibility and will not serve as an acceptable excuse for missing or late assignments, or for missed communication related to the course.

Many course assignments and quizzes/discussions must be submitted via Blackboard. I do not accept emailed or hard copy assignments unless mentioned expressly in class; these will be counted as missing.

SPECIAL NOTE ON BLACKBOARD GRADES: Your grades as listed in Blackboard are not guaranteed to be accurate. They may be weighted differently and certain scores for in-class work and other projects will not appear in Blackboard. You may always contact me for your current grade.

LATE WORK, QUIZZES, & EXAMS
There will be no “make-ups” for late or missing assignments, quizzes, or exams, except for University-approved absences, such as athletics, performances and tours, or other sponsored activities.

You will not receive credit for an assignment you turn in if you are not present in class when the assignment is due; this means you cannot skip class but still turn in the assignment electronically or otherwise.

No assignments or assessments submitted via Blackboard will be accepted after the acceptance period closes. Email assignments are not accepted and will be treated as though they were not submitted.

ATTENDANCE & TARDY POLICIES
Attendance is mandatory. Each absence will result in missing assignments due that day.

Two tardies - defined as arriving late OR leaving early from a class OR missing more than 10 internal minutes of a class - equals an absence.

Multiple absences may be referred to your advisor and to Academic Affairs and may result in negative repercussions for your financial aid, enrollment, or other University concerns. Other action may be taken as allowed by the University catalog and the student handbook.

The professor reserves the right to issue a failing grade any student with 2 or more absences.

In extreme and documented cases only, such as a medical emergency or death in the family,
the instructor, at his discretion, may provide an opportunity for make-up work, or extend a deadline on an assignment, or may waive an absence penalty.

To receive this consideration, a student must apply for such consideration in an email to the instructor. At no time should the student assume that an application for consideration will or should result in the professor granting such consideration.

ASSUMPTIONS
Assume that good will is a currency. If you attend class regularly and are actively and positively involved in course work and discussion, an absence, computer issue, tardy, etc. might be more easily overlooked or the professor more amenable to working with you when life’s complexities arise.

STUDENT BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS
Student behavioral expectations are governed by the FSU Policy on Disruptive Behavior (see the FSU website) and by this syllabus. The following behaviors represent, but in no way limit, the kinds of behaviors that are unacceptable in this class:

1. Failure to respect the rights of other students to express their viewpoints such as repeatedly interrupting others while they speak, using profanity and or disrespectful names or labels for others, ridiculing others for their viewpoints, and other similar behaviors;
2. Excessive talking to other students while the faculty member or other students are presenting information or expressing their viewpoints;
3. Use of cellphones and other electronic devices, including laptop computers, iPads, etc., except with permission of the instructor.
4. Overt inattentiveness (sleeping, reading newspapers, answering texts)
5. Eating in class (except as permitted by the faculty member)
6. Threats or statements that jeopardize the safety of the student and others
7. Failure to follow reasonable requests of faculty members
8. Entering class late or leaving class early on a regular basis
9. Others as specified by the instructor (for this course, these include excessive or lengthy departures from class to use the restroom, wearing coats, bags, or headphones, engaging in outside-of-class behaviors such as aggressive or rude emails or personal confrontations related to the course, recording the professor in or out of class while at the University or engaged in a University activity, or issues in our productions or scene shop that disrupt the safety, security, or spirit of the work, and may include others as defined over the course of the semester)

Consequences for Failing to Meet Behavioral Expectations: The first time a student violates one of these rules, the instructor will warn him or her privately, either after class or before the next class. (Faculty members reserve the right to warn students publicly if needed.) The second time a student violates the guidelines, the instructor may deduct as much as a half letter grade from the final course grade. If a student violates the guidelines three times, the instructor will report the student to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action according to the FSU Code of Student Conduct.
In certain egregious, confrontational, or overtly disruptive circumstances, as defined by the professor, the student may be dismissed from the class for the day, or for a term specified by the professor, up to and including the entire course. In these cases, the student will be subject to an absence, tardy, academic, or other policies listed in the syllabus.

PLAGIARISM
Plagiarism is the willful, negligent, or accidental use of another person’s language, ideas, or intellectual property without permission or acknowledgment. It includes lifting or copy-pasting sources from the internet, books, movies, other students, or, for the purposes of this class, even from yourself in work you’ve produced for other classes. This course subscribes to the University policies on plagiarism and academic dishonesty printed in the student handbook. First offense results in an F for the assignment. Second offense results in removal from the class.

GRADING & ASSESSMENT
There is an assignment nearly every day in this class: it is either a project listed below, or it is an in-class activity and/or reflection, or it is an out-of-class reading assignment, journal, or activity. Too many absences will result in you losing points for this kind of work and may do irreparable damage to your final grade.

ASSIGNMENTS
PRODUCTION PROJECT - students will direct, assistant direct, produce, or manage a play for production (subject to faculty approval). Grade considerations include: overall quality of process and product, ability to meet deadlines, and professional disposition.

CRITICAL REFLECTION - students will journal/blog all rehearsals and submit a 12-page minimum critical reflection of their directing. Grade considerations include: quality of analysis and reflection, writing quality, and depth of insight.

Grades for the course will be scored holistically based on BOTH the production project and the reflection. In order to receive a passing grade, BOTH assignments must be completed fully.

Assignments will be graded based on expectations listed on assignment descriptions and/or rubrics provided in class and/or on the course website. All assignments with written material should conform to correct spelling, grammar, and appropriate style and to Dr. Cohen’s 39 Picky Rules for Writing, which is distributed on the course website.

EVALUATION CRITERIA & PROCEDURES
Judging creative effort is always a very subjective process. The philosophy underlying this class is that the contributor (manager, actor, director, writer, designer, technician) is in all senses a creative being - therefore, her work must be judged by creative standards. This means that the professor may grade your creative work for the class on subjective, as opposed to objective, standards.

SCALE: I assign grades based on a points system where 60 or higher is a D, 70 or higher is a C, 80 or higher is a B, and 90 or higher is an A.
General grading standards

- Proficient (A) - Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements. This work is superior in every respect, and represents the highest level of achievement. Its quality is so good that it would unreasonable to ask a college student to improve upon it.

- Competent (B) - Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements. **Not only were all the basic expectations met, they exceeded minimum expected quality levels.** This work probably showed one or more of the following characteristics: excellent understanding of the class material, excellent application of theory to practice, unusual thoroughness in thought and preparation.

- Developing (C) - Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect. **This score does not indicate any shortcoming.** All the work was done adequately and completely, and the work showed basic understanding and mastery of the course material.

- Emerging (D) - Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it does not fully meet course requirements. While there was merit to what was done, there were also deficiencies that meant the work did not fully meet the minimal expectations.

- Failing (F) - Represents work insufficient of credit because it fails to meet course requirements and/or violates guidelines for acceptable work.

VI. **Academic Support Resources** - Use of Smart thinking, Criterion, University College Learning Center, Writing Center is strongly encouraged.

VII. **Course Outline and Assignment Schedule**
The most up-to-date course and assignment calendar is available on the course website.

VIII. **Teaching Strategies**
This is a practical course where students will get their hands dirty in the craft of directing/producing/managing plays. The primary instructional methods are one-on-one mentoring with faculty, work with student actors, reflective blogging, and a major critical reflection paper.

IX. **Bibliography**


Other readings as listed on the course website.

STUDENT SURVIVAL GUIDE

ADDENDUM: Student Survival Guide
The following is a survival guide for all university students, but especially those in my classes. Please read it carefully so that you know what you’re getting yourself into and so that you know what to do if you run into trouble during your time at the university.

“Effort does not equal excellence.”

This statement means that, while hard work, determination, and completion of tasks are each necessary for success, they do not guarantee success. Success - academic or otherwise - is not guaranteed, and the work you put in, while necessary, does not mean you will receive an “A,” or that the audience will applaud, that people will like you, or that they will buy the thing you’re selling, or make you any money. The statement also means that excellence - the “A,” the applause, or whatever your terms - is defined by conditions that have nothing to do with the amount of work you put in, because it is assumed you put in the level of work necessary. A simpler way of saying this is that you can work harder than you’ve ever worked before on a project and still earn a failing grade.

SPECIAL NOTE ON CALLING/TEXTING FOR STUDENTS IN MY COURSES
You may text me at any time and I will respond if I am able. Do not call. I will call you back if it is necessary. Your texts should always include your name and the class you’re in.

SPECIAL NOTE ON WHAT TO CALL ME
FSU has many different kinds of faculty, staff, and members of administration. Faculty members are those who teach, or who have some other academic tie-in, staff members provide vital support to the programs and functions of the University, and administrators oversee and support a variety of academic and non-academic programs.

Faculty members are ALL “professors.” A professor is a person who “professes,” which means that they talk about or teach what they practice in a professional field. Some “professors” are also “doctors.” A doctor is a person who holds a specific kind of degree. Not all FSU professors are doctors, and it is a sign of respect to all of them for you to know the difference and to distinguish between them when you address each one.

I am a professor, not a doctor, and you can call me “Professor Fiebig” or, if you ask and I say it’s all right, “Jeremy.”

SPECIAL NOTE ON HOW TO SEND EMAIL
Email represents who you are. When you send an email to a professor, you are engaging in formal communication with them, which usually involves making a request of some sort. When you send any kind of formal email, you should engage the following steps:

HAVE A USEFUL SUBJECT HEADING
Make sure your email subject is clear and specific. Don’t use “Absent Tuesday” when you can use “Jane Smith’s Absence on 12/4/11.”

GREETING
Begin your email with “Dear [Person’s Title][Person’s Name],” Spell the person’s name correctly.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR READER MORE LIKELY TO GIVE YOU WHAT YOU WANT
a) Phrase your email professionally and politely. Sometimes tersely worded questions (i.e., questions that seem very short, too direct, or somewhat rude) can put your reader on the defensive. If you have any sensitive or “critical” words, phrases, or requests, simply request a time to meet or speak over the phone in the email - putting those things in an email is not a good idea.
b) Never put your recipient on the spot, such as “Professor Thomas, I came by your office earlier, but you weren’t there, so I’m emailing you.” This, again, puts the reader on the defensive and, with professors in particular, makes it seem like they were the ones who failed you (maybe they did, or maybe they don’t have regular office hours when you stopped by, or maybe there was an emergency—in any case, there is no need to issue the criticism in polite company).

c) Never send an email and then do an immediate phone follow-up. If the issue is urgent, call the faculty member’s office (or, in my case, text me). If the issue is not urgent, try to respect your professor’s time by letting them respond to an email when it is convenient for them.

d) Avoid drama.

HOW TO BE CLEAR

Use correct spelling (particularly of the person’s name and title), complete sentences, and correct grammar and punctuation. Avoid “text” spelling, run-on sentences, or using ALL CAPS or all lower case words in your email. This is especially tricky, but all the more important, to do when you are responding on a mobile device. You will not be taken seriously, you will be seen as not having the time, attention, or respect to treat the email/professor/class well, and you may not get what you want as a result.

HOW TO WRAP UP

Conclude the email in a formal way.

IN CONCLUSION

Use all of these rules on every single email you send, even replies and even when the person you’re emailing breaks all these rules.

A SPECIAL NOTE ON OFFICE HOURS

Professors usually teach between 4 and 6 classes per semester and serve the University and the community in a number of ways, such as committees, leadership positions, etc. This means professors do not typically keep a traditional 40 hour work week, and so it can be frustrating to try to track them down in their office if it is your expectation that “they should be there.” In reality, they probably shouldn’t be there if they’re teaching class or serving on a committee.

I have provided you my personal cell phone number so that you can text me at any time, and I am also pretty diligent about returning email within a day. I also have regularly scheduled office hours you can see posted on my office door. Almost all of your professors—and I certainly include myself here—are willing, able, and excited to meet with students for advising, help on course work, etc., but aside from regularly scheduled office hours, it is not expected that they will be in their office. It is also a sign of respect that you (a) schedule a meeting time in advance, and (b) if the professor is in his or her office and seemingly available, to ask whether the present time is convenient for them to meet.

Check their office hours ahead of time and plan ahead.

DOES SPELLING/GRAMMAR COUNT?

Yes. Spelling counts. Yes. Grammar counts. On every assignment, every journal entry, every test answer, every email, every text message. Spelling and grammar are the two basic things you have to do in order for your ideas to make it through to whomever you’re writing (or speaking) to. Spelling is like taking a shower in the morning and grammar is like fixing your hair and putting on deodorant. Your friends and family may forgive you, but no one else has to. More importantly overall, in the “real world” (which includes this university, I might add) most people will only know you for your work. They will not care about your makeup, your hairstyle, your designer clothes, your nails, your tie, your fraternity or sorority, or your cologne. They will care about your work. With that in mind, it’s a good guideline to spend as
much time on your spelling and grammar as it is on those other things, particularly since you are graded for your spelling and grammar and not for those other things.