Drama 309.3 Theories of Acting/Directing

Acting and directing theory from the Enlightenment to the present day. Emphasis will be placed on the evolving roles of the director and actor, as conceived of by important theoretician/practitioners, and on the influence of accelerating technology and changing trends in social, political, psychological and cultural thought.

Instructor:

Moira Day
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moira.day@usask.ca

http://www.ualberta.ca/~normang/Pika.html
Office Hours: MW 11:30-1:30

Booklist


Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Contribution</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critiques</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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100%
I will be in class five minutes ahead of time for consultation, and begin and end lectures on time. I will also return quizzes within TWO class periods after giving them, and return exams within TEN DAYS after giving them. Exams, quizzes and papers not picked up at that class time can be picked up during office hours.

Class participation requires regular attendance. **A student who misses for more than three unexcused absences a term will be docked 50% of the participation grade for that term. If you miss more than 1/3 of the classes in any term for any reason other than certifiable illness you will, at minimum, lose the full participation grade for that term.** (Please review the Attendance Requirement in All Drama Courses.) Please phone or e-mail if you are unable to attend, preferably in advance of the absence.

Attendance at student class seminars is compulsory because (1) these are graded “live” performances that can be negatively affected by poor audience and participation. For this reason, **5% OF YOUR OWN INDIVIDUAL GROUP GRADE WILL BE DOCKED FOR EVERY UNEXCUSED ABSENCE FROM A STUDENT SEMINAR. IF YOU ARE ACTUALLY IN THE SEMINAR, YOU WILL LOSE 25% OF YOUR GROUP GRADE FOR AN UNEXCUSED NO-SHOW.**

Students are expected to be punctual and to submit all class work on time. Any requests for an extension must be submitted one week in advance of the formal deadline. Unexcused late assignments, except in the case of certifiable illness or death in the family, will be heavily penalized (10% per day deducted). **NO CLASS WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED BEYOND THE FINAL EXAM EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF AN OFFICIAL INCOMPLETE GRANTED BECAUSE OF ILLNESS OR DEATH IN THE FAMILY.**

Students should be aware that there is a $5.00 photocopy fee per term to be paid to the instructor by January 18.

If you find yourself in difficulties and are considering dropping the course late in the term, please come and talk to me first. If you decide to drop the course, please come and notify me so I can take your name off my record book. **Jan 17. Last day to change classes or withdraw without financial penalty. Jan 24. Last day to withdraw with 75% tuition credit. Jan 31. Last day to withdraw with 50% tuition credit. March 14. Last day to withdraw without academic penalty.** Instructors are NOT permitted to reschedule final exams at their own discretion. Please take heed of the final exam dates **(April 10-30)** and do not schedule other activities at that time.

**Welcome on Board!**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Tu 7</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th 9</td>
<td>Acting and Directing Prior to the late 19th Century</td>
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<td><strong>Jan</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Th 14</td>
<td><em>Stanislavsky</em> (1863-1938) (Hodge 11-36)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th 16</td>
<td>Stanislavsky</td>
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The Late 19th to Mid-20th Century

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tu 14</td>
<td><em>Meyerhold</em> (1874-1940) (Hodge 37-54)</td>
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<td>Th 21</td>
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Reading Week Feb 17-21

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Th 25</td>
<td>Continuing the French Revolution: <em>Copeau</em> (1878-1949) (Hodge 55-78)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th 27</td>
<td>The French Reformers</td>
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*Artaud* (1896-1948)

The German Reformers:


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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Th 6</td>
<td>1. The Method – Stanislavsky supreme or subverted?</td>
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<td>Th 11</td>
<td>The Eastern Traditions – <em>Reinhardt</em> (1873-1943)</td>
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<td>Th 13</td>
<td>2. The Actor as Mask and Marionette - Craig (1872-1966), Yeats (1865-1939)</td>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tu 25</td>
<td>The East Europeans: – <em>Grotowski</em> (1933-99) (Hodge 191-208)</td>
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<td>Th 20</td>
<td>4. The Europeans: - Recreating myth and magic - Barba (1936-) (Hodge 209-223), Mnouchkine (1934-)</td>
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| Tu 25 | 5. The British – Reinterpreting the Classics - Brook (1925-) (Hodge 174-190) Hall (1930-), Nunn (1940-), Miller (1934-)
| Th 27 | The British – Continuing in the Great Tradition – Gielgud and Olivier |

Apr Tu 1 The North Americans: The actor as marionette revisited

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Th 3</td>
<td>6. The North Americans: Beyond the &quot;Method&quot;- Beck (1925-85) and Malina (1926-) , Schechner (1934-), Foreman (1937-)</td>
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<td>Tu 8</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
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* Denotes critique
Important Dates

Exams
March 13 Mid-term

Critiques
Jan 14 Stanislavsky
21 Meyerhold
Feb 4 The Group Theatre (America)
11 Reinhardt
25 Copeau
27 Artaud
Mar 4 Piscator and Brecht
18 Grotowski

Group Projects
Group 1 The Method – Stanislavsky supreme or subverted?
Jan 30 Group meeting with instructor. Initial bib due
Feb 6 Seminar and Essay due
Feb 13 Wrap-up Interviews

Group 2 The Actor as Mask and Marionette
Feb 6 Group meeting with instructor. Initial bib due
Feb 13 Seminar and Essay due
Feb 25 Wrap-up Interviews

Group 3 Continuing the Social Revolution
Feb 27 Group meeting with instructor. Initial bib due
Mar 6 Seminar and Essay due
Mar 11 Wrap-up interviews

Group 4 The Europeans: Recreating myth and magic
Mar 18 Group meeting with instructor. Initial bib due
Mar 20 Seminar and Essay due
Mar 27 Wrap-up Interviews

Group 5. The British – Reinterpreting the Classics
Mar 18 Group meeting with instructor. Initial bib due
Mar 25 Seminar and Essay due
Apr. 1 Wrap-up Interviews

Group 6. The North Americans: Beyond the “Method”
Mar 27 Group meeting with instructor. Initial bib due
Apr 3 Seminar and Essay due
Apr. 8 Wrap-up Interviews
The Essay

The essay should not be a summary of the presentation, but elaborate on it or develop some aspect or angle of the topic you want to explore further than you were able to in the talk. You can also write on another topic, but clear it with me first. For specifics of style check the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (7th edition), or the Department of English Requirements for Essays. 50% of the grade is assigned for Content (breadth of ideas, depth of treatment, astuteness of analysis, accuracy and effective use of substantiating evidence.) 40% for style (coherence and organization, clarity of expression, spelling and grammar, proper documenting and referencing of sources) and 10% for overall effect. ESSAYS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED BEYOND THE FINAL EXAM EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF AN OFFICIAL INCOMPLETE GRANTED BECAUSE OF ILLNESS OR DEATH IN THE FAMILY

The General Critique

The critique should serve as a considered response to the material you are reading for class. It is meant to (a) clarify and focus your own thinking about the material you have read (b) help initiate class discussion (c) give the instructor feedback on areas of information you would like to know more about or feel requires further explanation and clarification before you are ready to be examined on them and (d) give the instructor feedback on what issues and areas of information you would like to be tested on since you view them as key to understanding the period and the theatre that comes out of it.

It should about 300-500 words long and not exceed two pages in length. It can expand on one point at length or deal with two or three smaller ones (much more than that and you may be spreading yourself too thin.) It should be submitted at the end of the class when it is due, and will be returned at the time of the next class. In the case of multiple authors in an area (i.e.: Piscator and Brecht), you may want to write on one author at depth with passing reference to the others, or write on themes or characteristics that distinguish the writers as a group.

Things you may want to comment on:

(1) how the reading illuminates or clarifies for you certain historical, literary or social themes and concerns we have raised in class.

(2) where you find interesting comparisons or contrasts between what you see here and what you have discovered in other of your areas of study or experience.

(3) how this reading sheds a new light on other literary material we have studied in the class.

(4) something about the reading that particularly excited or interested you and you would like to share with others.

(5) something that particularly intrigued or puzzled you and you would like to know more about

(6) something that particularly bothered you or that you disagreed with, and would like to see addressed by the class as a group.

At its best, it should read as an informal but short personal essay that develops your idea, thesis, argument, query or quibble in a clear, articulate and concise fashion. Humor and poetic or metaphoric personal touches are fine - it is a personal essay after all - but only as long as they support and advance the ideas you are trying to express and do not become a substitute for them. As with an exam or quiz, I may not put a high premium on formal style and mechanics, but I do expect the critique to be clear, neat and legible, and will pay close attention to how well you express, develop and argue your thoughts in writing.
Oral Presentations

Organization:

Seminar

The seminar part of the presentation should occupy no less than two-thirds of the period (50 minutes). The presenters should then be prepared to answer questions from the instructor and class, and lead discussion afterwards. The presenters should also make available to the class an outline of the talk, a bibliography and any other information (statistics, names, dates) they feel would help the presentation. If presenters feel that videos, tapes, slides, pictures, comparative readings and performances will help illustrate points they are trying to make in their talk they should feel free to use them.

The emphasis of the seminar should be on (1) the clear, knowledgeable presentation of an aspect of given actor/director’s theories, methods and practice, as revealed in writings, interviews, audio-visual recordings, photos and rehearsal and performance diaries and (2) the analysis and interpretation of that material in light of the actor/director’s larger philosophical, aesthetic and cultural concerns, his/her historical context, and the general themes, questions and concepts suggested by the topic and the rest of the course.

Practical

The practical part of the presentation should occupy 5 to 15 minutes in length and function as a practical demonstration of a given director’s approach towards text, design and actors in rehearsal and performance situations.

Grading:

Seminar 75%

50% of the grade will be assigned to content (accuracy, depth and comprehensiveness of material presented, ability to address questions well), 40% to presentation (effective organizing and structuring of the material, pacing of the presentation, and clarity, variety and expressiveness of delivery), and 10% to the handout (content, clarity, organization, form.)

Practical Demonstration 25%

The main emphasis of the marking will be on how well the group as a whole manages to evoke the time, atmosphere and style in question (25%), how well the presentation synthesizes and illustrates the research covered in the seminar (50%) and the technical effectiveness of the presentation (25%) (While a failure to completely realize the directing or acting style in question because of technical shortcomings is understandable, simple “ham acting” without direct reference to the research material, is not.)
**Practical Tip for Seminars:**

1. The same plethora of facts, figures, statistics, dates and names that may delight a reader, may leave a listener numb and reeling. These are often better included in the handout for quick reference, or chalked up on the board.

2. A "live" audience often has to be "cued" more clearly and more often as to where the presentation is going, than a reading audience. A reader can return to puzzle out obscure or difficult passages he/she missed on the first read-through, or was too hurried to absorb properly; a "live" audience has to "get it" the first time or it's gone. So organize well, making your key points or thesis clear early on in the talk, and don't be afraid to highlight or reinforce them as you go on. A final summary reminding the audience of the key points of the talk is also important to send them out with a clear final impression of what the presentation was meant to teach or illuminate for them.

3. Telling people WHAT they need to know is only half the job. Be careful that they also understand WHY the information is important and how it connects to the larger themes and concerns of the topic you are dealing with.

4. Practice READING your talk OUT LOUD (preferably before a sympathetic audience) before you give it, and be careful that you time it. Inexperienced presenters are often surprised at how fast the time goes. Also, let people know if questions are welcome during the talk, or if you would prefer them to wait until afterwards.

5. Humor is fine, but avoid flippancy; if you don't appear to take your subject and yourself seriously, your audience may not take it and you seriously either.

6. Maintain good eye contact and project from the diaphragm to give an energetic, engaged delivery that engages and interests the audience and pulls them into your talk. Enthusiasm and interest breed enthusiasm and interest.

7. Introduce yourself by name and identify your topic as soon as possible. Not everyone knows who you are or what you intend to cover in your part of the talk.

The instructor will:

- provide additional guidance and direction as necessary before the presentation
- give each student an oral critique, and letter grade on the seminar within a week of the presentation, and return the marked paper. Give each student a final written critique and formal percentage grade on the seminar by the end of term.
**Group Topics for 309.3 2011**

1. **The Method – Stanislavsky supreme or subverted?**  **Thurs. February 6**

   Seminar: While Meyerhold's' work slipped into increasing obscurity after 1930, Stanislavsky's achieved increasing acclaim and influence. The North American theatre from the 1920s through to the 1940s increasingly embraced his “method”, though not without significant alterations, omissions and distortions that often said as much about the particular aspirations, conflicts and conditions of the inter-war American theatre, and its own brilliant innovative interpreters as it did about Stanislavsky. Discuss in reference to the directors and actors of the Group Theatre, and the increasing legacy of controversy over ownership and interpretation of “the master” in the New World.

2. **The Actor as Mask and Marionette**  **Thurs. February 13**

   Seminar: The influence of Eastern philosophy, culture, and art began to influence European thought in the 18th century, and arouse a new interest in symbolic, formalistic theatre. By the closing years of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th, a group of visionary theatre reformers including Adolph Appia, Edward Gordon Craig, W.B. Yeats, Maurice Maeterlinck and Emile Jacques-Dalcroze attempted to find a viable alternative to acting methods and training grounded in gentlemanly melodrama or sensationalistic realism. They looked increasingly towards the performance traditions of both the classical Japanese theatre and that of the Greek theatre, now stripped of neo-classical dogma, for solutions. Discuss how the thought of the symbolist reformers and their practical experiments with the actor as marionette, puppet or masked figure - while frequently mixed or uneven - helped pave the way for more innovative acting methods stressing the actor as figure rather than character.

3. **CONTINUING THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION**  **THURS. MARCH 6**

   Seminar: Piscator and Brecht both had close early associations with Max Reinhardt, another innovative director whose experiments with stage design, theatre movement, and a variety of performance styles resembled some of Meyerhold’s work. However, by placing those experiments within the aesthetic framework of a radicalized political and social philosophy, Brecht, in particular, created one of the most influential theatre movements or genres of the 20th century – epic theatre. Yet, while drawn to the epic theatre as a basic model for their own theatre of social action, many non-continental directors soon felt a need to adapt the techniques and tactics of the German model to the needs and traditions of their own time and place. While some, such as Joan Littlewood, and her Canadian disciple, George Lacombe felt that surviving in a conservative theatrical milieu required them to develop theatre into a more powerful, flexible instrument of artistic as well as social change or reform, others, such as Augusto Boal, felt that if inspiring and implementing social reform was the primary purpose of the theatre, then acting and actor alike needed to be radically defined and changed beyond anything even Brecht had suggested. Discussing the lives, careers and times of Joan Littlewood, George Luscombe and Augusto Boal, explain how the ideas and practice of all three people helped further revolutionize early 20th century understandings of actors and acting beyond continental Europe.
4. The Europeans: Recreating myth and magic  
**Thurs. March 20**

**Seminar:** Picking up on aspects of the French tradition (i.e.: Copeau, Artaud) which place a very high emphasis on the development of the actor’s body in performance, going hand-in-hand with a very tough spiritual discipline and “stripping away” of the soul to achieve a unique fusion of meaning, movement, and community, Grotowski’s experimental work has proved essential to the development of the avant-garde theatre in England, North America, and Europe alike, and paved the way for other highly creative directors/playwrights like Barba, Mnouchkine, Staniewski and Fo who have also done strikingly original adaptations of myths, legends, and the classics. Discuss in particular regard to Barba and Mnouchkine.

5. The British – Reinterpreting the Classics  
**Tues. March 25**

**Seminar:** In England, partially because of the influence of Shaw, the English Theatre has continued to be dominated by the older tradition of beautiful or witty language well-spoken in a slightly heightened formalistic realism. It remained until much later in the century for such major “flagship” companies as the National Theatre or Royal Shakespeare Company, seen as traditional protectors of national culture and heritage, to follow the same course into radical experimentalism as Joan Littlewood. While NT and RSC have done striking work on original plays as well, their most famous productions have often involved striking new stage interpretations of older classics such as Shakespeare and Dickens, and have inspired other directors, like Lepage to also do transadaptations or translations of Shakespeare and mount them in innovative ways that set them in a new light. Discuss the post-modern directorial approach to classical scripts in the work of Peter Brook, Peter Hall, Trevor Nunn and Jonathan Miller.

6. The North Americans: Beyond the “Method”  
**Thurs. April 3**

**Seminar:** While there had always been some avant-garde work before then, the 1960s was the decade when a strong alternative theatre movement, influenced by both European and American political and artistic ferment, began to blossom in North America. In Canada, the movement led to the country’s first burst of alternative professional theatres. In America, it led to a strong off-off-Broadway movement and an acceleration of radical new companies with radical new mandates. By the turn of the 21st century, however, rebellion had also given way to post-modern complexity, irony and internationalism. There was also an increasing use of technology as well as the body to expand the language of the stage. Discuss in reference to Beck and Malian, Richard Schechner, and Richard Foreman.
### Marking Guide

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Content and Method consistently exceed the Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89%</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Content and Method consistently meet the Standard at a superior level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84%</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Content and Method consistently meet the standard at a very high level. Quality generally excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>Good/Very good</td>
<td>Much of the Content and Method meet the standard at a very high level. Quality generally very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Content and Method consistently meet the standard at a high level. Quality generally good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Much of the Content and Method meets the standard at a fairly high level. Quality generally higher than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Content and Method consistently meet the standard at an acceptable level. Quality average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>Fair/Poor</td>
<td>Much of the Content and Method meet the standard at an acceptable level. Some elements fail to meet the standard. Quality generally below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>Poor/Pass</td>
<td>Content and Method meet the minimum standard for a pass. Serious deficiencies in content and/or method. Quality generally poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>Poor/Fail</td>
<td>Content and Method have some merit but either or both substantially fail to meet the standard. Quality poor</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Under 45%</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Content and Method both substantially fail to meet the standard. Quality very poor</td>
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Departmental Attendance Requirements

All of the courses in the Department are in varying degrees developmental in approach and experiential in nature. That is, if classes are missed, there is no way that you can make up certain elements of the work by independent study. Looking at someone else’s lecture notes or reading the appropriate texts will not cover up the gap in a course that is based on direct experience of the practice problems and solutions at the next stage of development. If this is true of the academic courses in the department which usually involve a grade for regular class participation in seminar, project and discussion work, it is even more true of the performance-oriented courses which place a much higher emphasis on the practical application of data or theory within a laboratory context and on students learning the craft in the classroom through hands-on experience and experimentation. Thus, there is a more formal and exacting attendance requirement in all acting, directing, technical theatre and design courses. In these latter courses:

You will be permitted three unexcused absences per term. Any further absents without permission of the instructor (This is more than just telling your instructor that you will be absent) or proper documentation from your doctor, etc. will result in a 5% reduction in your grade for each unexcused absence. (In this particular course, you will instantly lose 50% of your participation grade if you exceed three unexcused absences and be assessed a further penalty of 5% from your own individual group grade for each unexcused absence from a scheduled in-class work session and/or group project presentation day.

Even with excused absences, there does come a point at which you have missed so much work that you are unable to adequately understand or satisfactorily accomplish the work of a course. A passing grade in a course is really an official accreditation that you have achieved a required level of competence in a particular area of knowledge and, for performance oriented courses, are at that level a capable practitioner of the art. If you miss too much, even for very legitimate reasons such as extended illness or family problems, you will not be able to gain the level of competence required to pass. As a department, we are sympathetic and try to accommodate those students who must miss classes despite their best intentions, but there does come a point at which we are unable to say that this student has done enough developmental work to be accredited by a passing grade. And so, if you miss more than one-third of the classes in any term or one-third of the classes through the year, for any reason whatsoever, you will be asked to withdraw from the class, if possible, or your teacher will have to give you a failing grade. (In this particular course, you will at the very least receive a 0% on your participation grade, and be asked to withdraw if you cannot fulfill your group project responsibilities.)

There are no unexcused absences from rehearsals. If you are called you must be there or you will detrimentally affect not only your own but everyone else’s creative work. If you must be absent for legitimate reasons, you should inform your stage manager at least 48 hours in advance, when possible. (In this course, note again that 5% will be deducted from your own individual group grade for each unexcused absence from a scheduled in-class work sessions and/or group project presentation day.)

For all classes in the department, including academic classes, habitual lateness will not be tolerated. If a student is habitually late in a particular class, he/she will be invited to discuss the problems with the Department Head. If the problem is not rectified, the student will be asked to withdraw from the class. (In this course, if you know you will be late let me know in advance and why. If it was unexpected, make sure that you let me know what happened. The same rules apply if you need to leave early for some reason.)