THEA:340  Stage Management and Theatre Operations
Fall 2017
MWF  8:45 - 9:50       007 Steele Hall

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Office Hours:  10:00 AM - 11:00 MWF, or by appointment

**Introduction and expectations**

This course is a survey of stage management and theatre administration exploring the relationship between the artistry and the execution of theatre as a fine arts discipline. Topics to be studied include stage management, theatre administration, professional unions, production management, and ways in which publicity/marketing and box office and house management intersect with production operations.

Although this course is primarily an overview, it assumes the student has a professional interest in stage management and theatre administration. This class may serve as preliminary formal training toward becoming a stage manager or venue manager in the future, and skills and knowledge explored in this class may be applied many management and coordination activities in other disciplines.

Readings for each week should be done in advance so class discussions may be informed by the textbooks (and supplemental material as it arises). Students are expected to bring questions, insights and disagreements about the assigned readings to class for group exploration.

Students will complete weekly activity assignments relevant to the topics studied. The course includes midterm and final examinations.

Exam dates are unchangeable, and late assignments will not be accepted. Exceptions may be considered only due to a catastrophic personal or family event, with documentation from the office of the Dean of Student Life.

Any requests for learning disability special accommodations must be made during the first two weeks of class, and documentation is required from the university counseling center.

Cell phones and electronic devices should be switched to “off” for the duration of every class period. Non-academic use of such devices will result in drastic grade reductions.

Under no circumstances will the professor discuss a student’s grade or course progress with anyone other than the student or the student’s academic advisor.
**Learning Goals:**

Students will explore and analyze theatre operations from both artistic and management perspectives.

Students will be able to demonstrate familiarity with specialized artistic and administrative vocabularies and fundamental concepts, show an appreciation of how academic disciplines of management and theatre can supplement and reinforce one another in practice, and articulate an understanding of the complexities and ambiguities inherent in explaining issues from within the frameworks of at least two different academic disciplines.

**Grading**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly assignments</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm examination</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and attendance</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Your written work will be graded by professional academic assessment of grammar, spelling, insight, engagement with the material and clarity of expression. Easily avoidable errors including evidence of inadequate proofreading and editing will result in drastic grade reductions.

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions and activities, and the participation component of your final grade will be adversely affected by absences or late arrivals. Your attentive presence will earn a weekly participation grade of C, with questions, comments and discussion increasing the weekly participation grade. In-class participation work will be assessed by professional academic observation of your engagement with the material, your efforts to use critical analysis, and your cooperative interaction with colleagues during discussions. Efficient verbal expression will also impact positively on the participation component of your grade; for example, students avoiding unnecessary use of the word “like” will be rewarded for their precision and self-discipline. Please see the professor with questions about participation expectations.

**Textbooks**

The required textbooks are *Stage Management* (9th edition) by Lawrence Stern, and *A Sense of Direction* by William Ball. Students must also select and acquire a play script as a study text to be used as the subject of practical assignments (see details at end of syllabus). *Theatre Management* by David M. Conte and Stephen Langley is a recommended text for students serious about arts administration careers. Students with an advanced interest in theatre production are encouraged to buy *The Backstage Handbook* by Paul Carter (3rd edition, Broadway Press). A limited number of copies are available at the campus bookstore.
Supplemental material will be provided by the instructor, including union rulebook excerpts, management tools and other articles of interest.

**Class Topics and Schedule**

**Week 1**  Aug. 28 – Sept 1
Introduction to the course  *Stern chapters 1 & 2*
Art isn’t easy: management theories  *Conte & Langley chapter 1*
The Stage Manager defined and characterized

**Week 2**  Sept. 4 - 8
Theatre production organization  *Stern chapter 10*
Creative/effective working relationships  *Conte & Langley chapter 3-4*
Professional unions and networking  *AEA rulebook and handouts*

**Week 3**  Sept. 11 - 15
Script assessment for the stage manager  *Stern chapter 3*
Prompt book preparation techniques  *Ball pages 93-100*
Diagrams and Plots  *handouts*

**Week 4**  Sept. 18 - 22
Venue issues and equipment necessities  *Conte & Langley chapter 2*
Production timeline expectations and realities  *Stern chapters 4 & 5*

**Week 5**  Sept. 25 – 29
Production preparation and audition procedures  *Stern chapters 6, 8 & 9*
Rehearsal process: paperwork and peoplework  *Ball pages 37-69*
No class Friday due to conference travel

**Week 6**  Oct. 2 - Oct. 6
Backstage organization  *Stern chapters 11 - 12*
Technical rehearsals  *Ball pages 101-141*

**Week 7**  Oct. 9 - 13
Production meetings and company communication  *Conte & Langley chapter 5*
MIDTERM EXAMINATION Wednesday in class
Independent study Friday

**Week 8**  Oct. 16 – 20
Supervising performances as Stage Manager  *Stern chapter 13, 15 & 17, Ball pages 142-149*
No class Monday due to Mid-term break  *handouts*

**Week 9**  Oct. 23 - 27
Supervising performances as Stage Manager (continued)
Safety strategies  *Stern chapters 17 & 18, handouts*
Week 10 Oct. 30 – Nov. 3
Project assessment and technical coordination
Budgeting and expenses

Week 11 Nov. 6 - 10
Construction and expenses
Stern chapter 7

Week 11 Nov. 6 - 10
Budgeting and expenses

Week 11 Nov. 6 - 10
Production management
Costumes and wardrobe operations
Touring productions

Week 12 Nov. 13 - 17
House management and box office supervision
Marketing and publicity collaborations

Week 13 Nov. 20 - 24
Power dynamics in theatre: gender, race, age
No class Wednesday or Friday due to Thanksgiving

Week 14 Nov. 27 – Dec. 1
Ethical practices for management and collaboration
Management theories revisited in practice

Week 15 Dec. 4 - 8
Assessing production values

Final exam paper is due at the end of the official final exam session scheduled for our class (Tuesday December 12 at 10:00 AM). Early submissions welcome.

This schedule is subject to change on short notice.

Suggestions for practical study text (choice must be approved by the instructor):

- The Lion in Winter by James Goldman
- The Rainmaker by N. Richard Nash
- Dancing at Lughnasa by Brian Friel
- Translations by Brian Friel
- Arsenic and Old Lace by Joseph Kesselring
- A Thousand Clowns by Herb Gardner
- Long Day’s Journey Into Night by Eugene O’Neill
- The Foreigner by Larry Shue
- A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry
- Lend Me a Tenor by Ken Ludwig
- True West by Sam Shepherd
- Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? by Edward Albee
- Black Sheep by Lee Blessing
- Steel Magnolias by Robert Harling
- The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams
- Fences by August Wilson
- Two Trains Running by August Wilson
- Crimes of the Heart by Beth Henley
- Proof by David Auburn
- The Seagull by Anton Chekhov
- A Doll House by Henrik Ibsen
- Cat on a Hot Tin Roof by Tennessee Williams
- Night of the Iguana by Tennessee Williams