ABSTRACT

Directing and acting in television productions requires a broad technical background that differs greatly from stage productions. In addition to understanding the technical problems that are unique to television, the director and actor must be deft at script analysis, character development, and mood setting. To assist the aspiring director and actor to master these technical and artistic skills, two courses have been designed. The first, in advanced television directing, concentrates on the role of the director in script interpretations and dramatic visual effects. The second course concentrates on the basic principles of television acting with emphases on character development and acting techniques to represent different emotions. Each course includes a statement of objectives, an outline of daily lesson plans, and a reading list. (EMH)
NEW OBJECTIVES FOR THE INSTRUCTOR
OF
TELEVISION DIRECTING AND PERFORMANCE

by

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NEW OBJECTIVES FOR THE INSTRUCTOR
OF
TELEVISION DIRECTING AND PERFORMANCE

Students in radio-television-film departments can undertake a good number of professional courses for study. The course titles, though, don't always reflect the content. Television Directing, for example, might often be retitled: "Technology Today," or "Look Out For Boom Shadows." Television Performance could more accurately be retitled: "How to Smile Like Walter Cronkite" or "How to Read the Weather With Class."

How justifiable is it for a university to keep its sights on turning out local cameramen and switchers? Or baritone meteorologists? If that were the primary goal of the university, the department might as well go into the trade school business. The fact is, we have been turning out technicians, and we have been ignoring the development of well-rounded, creative television artists.

I must stress at the outset that "creative" does not necessarily mean "arty-craftsy" or "self-indulgent." My work with students is not abstract, and I don't condone the abstract. On the contrary, I deal with very specific problems which the director and actor face in the real world. The student must know how to communicate with crew and talent. He must know the field technologically and artistically in order to heighten his effectiveness and to make him more employable in a highly competitive situation outside.

As an executive with Columbia Pictures Television, I encountered an unusually large number of students who applied for jobs - and failed to get them. They simply were not trained for the realities of the profession. Perhaps the most glaring example was the case of a young man who was aggressive enough to get past my secretary by saying he was an alumnus of my school. He wanted a job as a director, and informed me that he was fully conversant with cameras.
and switchers. In college, he directed commercials, newscasts, and weather shows; now he's ready for the "big time." I asked if he ever directed talent, and he scoffed, "That stuff is for theatre. I'm talking about television directing!" He failed to realize that he was sitting in a major production company which produced thirteen hours of network prime time television shows each week - with live actors. That same student, by the way, left in a huff when I casually mentioned the "mailroom" as a potential stepping stone. A week later, he took out an ad in *Daily Variety* with the caption: "Hire me as your director, I'm the best young tech man in town." Obviously, the young man wasted a lot of time, effort, and money. The realities of the industry were far removed from his frame of reference.

Unfortunately, the industry already suffers from an influx of "tech men." These are the harried directors who simply call shots and block their cattle. They don't know the first thing about working with talent, and this lack of communication shows up on the screen. Performances are bland, interrelationships don't work, and the pacing of the show is adversely affected. The mood and motivation of characters are irrational and mercurial.

On the other hand, some directors are gifted television artists. They know how to get the very best out of their talent. Actors respond with full energies and subtle performances. The result is magic on the screen - in a short period of time, and within budget. These are the type of people we should train in our universities and colleges. Our students should know how to create the most visually effective and powerful show - whether it's comedy, drama, educational, or cultural. We need to offer creative and imaginative coursework for our students in television directing and acting.
I am suggesting that our coursework reflect reality; not shy away from it. It is significant, from an historical standpoint, that the director has always been concerned with guiding the actor – from classical Greek times, through Shakespeare's times (via his advice to the players in "Hamlet"), and through Moliere's time. By the late nineteenth century, the creative relationship became firmly established when pictorial realism flourished on stage in Europe and in America.

In the country, directors such as Augustin Daly took total control of all casu decisions, rehearsal situations, and production necessities. Another early director, Steele Mckaye, was not only a creator, but was a technological genius (he invented the elevator stage). Yet he was also very concerned about the effectiveness of his actors and opened the first acting school in America. His contemporary, David Belasco, achieved the ultimate in stage realism by directing such spectacles as BEN HUR, using live horses on a treadmill, and a moving panorama behind the actors. As a director, he was striving for a cinematic experience, without the benefit of television or film technology.

The twentieth century director became more aware of psychological realism, and its visual and emotional impact. Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theatre was touring America, and had a profound and long-lasting effect on our training of dramatic actors and directors. The Stanislavsky "method" was fully exploited by directors of the Group Theatre in New York (Lee Strasberg, Harold Clurman, Cheryl Crawford, and Elia Kazan). "The Method" touched every major actor and director who sought a technique for achieving a sense of spontaneity and believability in performance.

The television screen affords an exceptionally exciting vehicle for visual and psychological realism. The television director, in essence, has taken over
where Stanislavsky and Strasberg left off. That legacy of realism has special significance for us since television provides a more intimate medium for depicting characters and conflicts. The director must first decide upon a particular approach to a script, then must work with the actors to bring that vision to life.

We should be teaching our students how to achieve these goals. Once the basic tools of television production have been learned, we must offer techniques of script analysis. We must cover techniques of building character attitudes, motivations, and interrelationships. We must offer interpretive techniques for drama and comedy, dealing with the problems of pacing and mood. We must, in essence, provide a training ground which complements the technological approach, and reinforces the creative realm of television production.

As for the performance side of the picture, acting at the university level has traditionally been offered in theatre departments - "for majors only." This is an unrealistic situation, since acting for television is not the same as acting for the stage. The television environment poses unique and special problems for talent, specifically in relation to out-of-sequence shooting, reaction shots, camera blocking, pick-up shots, and close-up work. Acting for television requires a sophisticated ability to intensify emotional recall and concentration, while underplaying attitudes on a given moment-to-moment basis.

We must provide the training to student actors who are interested in exploring the television environment. Since we are dealing with a realistic and intimate medium, our class structure should be based on "Method"-oriented techniques.
OBJECTIVES

We can then build upon the fundamental concepts, and relate them to the specific problems and practices of the television studio situation.

I have provided sample course outlines for your consideration which include detailed objectives, requirements, content, and bibliographies for both directing and acting classes in radio-tv-film. I hope they will serve as tangible and useful resources, and that they will stimulate and encourage the educational-creative experience.

If we turn out students who can deal meaningfully and creatively within the media, we are, in fact, contributing to the needs of the industry as well as the professional needs of our students. We will, in short, be equipping them with the real tools of the trade.
MODEL COURSE OUTLINE FOR
ADVANCED TELEVISION DIRECTING

Richard A. Blum
Dept. Radio-TV-Film
University of Texas at Austin

CONTENTS: (pp. 7-13)
- COURSE OBJECTIVES & REQUIREMENTS
- COURSE OUTLINE
- READING ASSIGNMENTS & SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
- TV DIRECTING EVALUATION SHEET
ADVANCED TELEVISION DIRECTING:

(Course Outline and Objectives)

Richard A. Llum
Dept. Radio-TV-Film
University of Texas at Austin

Course Description: This course explores the director's traditional role in dramatic production -- from script analysis to actor interrelationships -- and applies these principles to the television environment.

Objective: The aim of this course is to have you produce and direct fully scripted material, with emphasis on script interpretation, actor-director interplay, and dramatically effective visual technique.

Prerequisite: Basic production. It will be assumed that you know the basic tools, and that you will utilize open lab sessions to gain more experience, as necessary.

Specific Requirements of the Class:

1. You will produce and direct a two-person scene which develops and builds character attitudes and relationships. Your use of camera should enhance all dramatic action, and your directorial efforts should enhance your casting and character choices. You will turn in a complete scene breakdown and character analysis, along with casting notices, blocking and lighting charts, and PAX requirements after the show.

2. You will produce and direct a longer, more complex scene, developing all nuances of character, mood, pacing, and conflict inherent in the script. Creative and total pre-planning is necessary, with script interpretation to camera blocking, set design, lighting, and audio effects. Your production portfolio is due after the show.

3. For your final project, you will produce and direct a considerably longer script of your choice (pending instructor approval of your presentation.) You must justify all elements of creative and technical decision-making. You will be responsible for project development, fidelity of performance and camera shots, pacing and timing of the show, and over-all production quality of the taped project. Once again, a production portfolio is due.

Production Portfolios:

No later than the first day following taping, you should submit your production portfolio to the instructor, including (a) general interpretation of script, with given circumstances and objectives; (b) character analysis and breakdown; (c) casting notices and requirements; (d) PAX, and production requirements (i.e., props, sets, graphics, etc.); (e) music and effects lists; (f) stage and lighting plots; (g) blocked script (for actors and camera); (h) your final shooting script; and (i) a self-evaluation of your directorial effort.
Project Evaluation:

Each production will receive two equally-weighted grades:
1. Preparation, as evidenced by the pre-production materials in your portfolio.
2. Production quality, which includes the overall effectiveness of the scene as a form of entertainment and emotive communication; realization of characters and their interrelationships; richness and effectiveness of scene interpretation; pacing and mood of the piece; visual unveiling of the story and building of conflict; motivated blocking and action; camera planning and shooting; audio and lighting effects; effectiveness of set, props, and graphics. In other words, you will be evaluated on your general preparedness and effectiveness as a producer-director of fully scripted material.
OBJECTIVES

ADMANCED TELEVISION DIRECTING:

COURSE OUTLINE

Session 3 meetings/wk

3 hrs/meeting

1 Lecture: Intro to class & requirements; Intro to Script Breakdown and Character Analysis: the super-objective, mood and pacing, character attitudes and interrelationships; conflict; blocking and staging; casting, rehearsals. //OPEN LAB (studio & tech orientation) Lab A

2 Lecture: Directing Actors; Acting technique & theory; moment-to-moment analysis of Character Attitudes (situation, self, others); analyzing "Given Circumstances". VTR Shooting script formats. // OPEN LAB - B

3 Lecture: Directing Comedy. Beats, Pacing, Timing, reactions, playing "against" the material, playing up the conflict; heightening actor energy levels ("spontaneity" of sub-text, and improvisation); exaggerating the sense of urgency, focusing on motivation; blocking and staging; camera considerations. ROTATION OF DIRECTORS on drama scenes. // OPEN LAB - A

4 Lecture: Directing Drama. Interpreting dramatic values; identifying conflict and point of attack (adaptation); mood and pacing; poignancy in motivation, action, and reaction; moment-to-moment analyses of situation, character, interrelationships. Heightening actor energy levels and concentration through effective memory (emotional recall); Underplaying for camera; blocking and staging; camera planning.

ROTATION OF DIRECTORS on dramatic scenes. // OPEN LAB - A

5 Lecture: The Casting and Rehearsal Situation. Conducting solo auditions and auditions; Casting Call; Setting the Given Circumstances; Motivational techniques in rehearsal: building energy levels, overcoming expressive and emotional blocks, creating a sense of the role, establishing interrelationships, and given intentions. Improvisation techniques for rehearsing character, situation, and conflict (e.g., through actor "blocks"). Problems in preparation for production. // OPEN LAB - A

6 Guest Lecture & Demonstration: Color Lighting Problems and Solutions; Lighting for the Boom; Night Lighting. // OPEN LAB - B

7 Lecture: Advanced Principles of Directing Drama: Visualization, mood, style. ROTATION OF DIRECTORS on selected scene. // OPEN LAB - C

8 VTR Screening & Discussion: A one hr. VTR drama; class discussion on casting, delineation of characters, development of action and conflict; visualization and build of mood, pacing, style. Blocking considerations. Problems of adapting to TV from stage; creative & technical choices; (Assgt.: Please read the script before the screening).
Session

9-10 VTR PROJECT I; PLAYBACK & EVAL.  
(Five minute 2-Person Scenes)

17 Lect: Employment in the industry (local, edctl., network affils., production companies, networks). Hierarchy in the industry; personnel and lines of authority. Who does what; how to break into the industry. Responsibilities of the producer, etc., prod. VTR taping order, seq rundowns, synch licenses. Screeners: "MAGICAM"; "THE MAKING OF A LIVE TV SHOW - DIRECTING THE LUMIERS".

18 Guest Lect. & Screening: Producing & Directing for Television.

19-20 VTR PROJECT II; PLAYBACK & EVAL.  
(Ten minute 2-person scenes)

21-22 Cast, Rehearse, Prep., and Consult - FINAL PROJECT (open lab)

30-40 FINAL PROJECTS; PLAYBACK & EVAL. AFTER TAPING

TBA: A RETROSPECTIVE SCREENING FOR INVITED GUESTS.
Advanced Television Directing

Reading Assignments

Required.


Area: Script Analysis - The Director's Primary Study

Given Circumstances and Dialogue, pp. 16-51
Dramatic Action and Characters, pp. 32-48
Ideas, Tempo, Mood, pp. 47-65

Area: Director-Actor Relationship

Communication, pp. 66-77
Helping Actors Intensify, pp. 113-134
Movement and Blocking, pp. 135-143
Scene Practice (including preparation, casting, rehearsing, improv, perf.) pp. 165-163

Area: Interpretation

Script Style and Individual Analysis, pp. 291-371

Recommended.

Cole, Toby, and Helen Krich Chinoy (eds.) Directors on Directing, Bobbs-Merrill Co., N.Y., 1963


Suggested Bibliography.


Suggested Readings (Cont'd)

SOURCE FOR SCENES:

Scenework should be contemporary rather than classical or stylized; it should emphasize your directorial skills with realistic materials (dramatic or comedic). Your scene may be from television, film, or the stage (or may be original). All scenes, however, must be approved in advance by the instructor.

As a guide to scenes, the following source books may be helpful (though they are obviously not exhaustive):

1. Source, Francis (ed.) Scenes for Student Actor, (many collections in different volumes), Samuel French, N.Y.


In addition, you might also look into the works of individual writers or read through various collections of contemporary plays (full or one-act) to make your selection (e.g., Neil Simon, Edward Albee, Eugene O'Neill, Woody Allen).
## TV DIRECTING EVALUATION SHEET

**DIRECTOR**

**PROJECT**

**PROP EVALUATION**

**PROP EVALUATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PRODUCTION</strong></th>
<th><strong>Very Strong</strong></th>
<th><strong>Good</strong></th>
<th><strong>Fair</strong></th>
<th><strong>Poor</strong></th>
<th><strong>Very Weak</strong></th>
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**OTHER COMMENTS**
OBJECTIVES
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MODEL COURSE OUTLINE FOR
TELEVISION PERFORMANCE

Richard A. Blum
Dept. Radio-TV-Film
University of Texas at Austin

CONTENTS: (pp. 15-19)

COURSE OBJECTIVES, REQUIREMENTS, & READING LIST
COURSE OUTLINE
TV PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SHEETS
Course Description: An examination of basic acting theory and technique, related to the television performance situation.

Objectives: The aim of this course is to offer a strong foundation in basic acting principles: action and relaxation, will and concentration, sense memory and affective memory; improvisational forms and techniques; script breakdown and character analysis; characterization and role fulfillment.

As these general principles are acquired, they will be explored in relation to the problems of acting in television and films: sudden and understudied; repeated takes; limited action on close-ups; reaction shots; business and blocking for the camera; working with minimal rehearsal and preparation time; building spontaneity in repeated scenes; heightened concentration and emotional recall in out-of-sequence shooting; actor-director relationships; cold readings and auditions.

Requirements: Student evaluation will be based on individual performance efforts in lab sessions and VTR tapes - (1) exercises and improvisations; (2) a one minute VTR monologue; (3) a five minute VTR scene; and (4) the ten minute VTR final scene. Additional scene work with the advanced TV Directing class is strongly encouraged.

READING LIST


Suggested Bibliography:


Chехов, Michael, TO THE ACTOR, ON THE TECHNIQUE OF ACTING: NY, 1963.


Suggested Bibliography (Cont'd.)

Stanislavski, Konstantin S.:
Hapgood (a collection of comments on a variety of aspects of an actor's art and life.)

A Few Source References for Scenes:
Cosgrove, Francis (ed.), Scenes for Student Actors, (collections in different volumes), Samuel French, NY.
Grumbach, Jane and Robert Emerson (ed.), Actor's Guide to Scenes (an index to 600 scenes); Drama Book Specialists, NY.

Source References for Monologues:
Grumbach, Jane and Robert Emerson, (eds.)
Monologues: Men (1976) (50 contemporary monologues)
Monologues: Women (1976) (50 contemporary monologues)
More Actor's Guide to Monologues (index to 500 monologues)
Actor's Guide to Monologues (Revised) (an index of 700 monologues)
TELEVISION PERFORMANCE

COURSE OUTLINE

Session 1 meeting/3 hrs. wk

1 Lect. Intro to class; Similarities and differences in acting for TV, Film, Theatre; Survey of Acting Theories -- Realistic (Stanislavski, Boleslavsky, Chekhov, Strasberg), Didactic (Piscator, Brecht), Ritualistic-transformational (Artaud, Grotowski, Brook, Schechner).

TV is an intimate medium, requiring realistic technique. Common approaches in realism: relaxation and concentration; emotional memory; script and character analysis; creating the role.

LAB: Relaxation Exercises (fostering control under simplest conditions); Physical Action Exercises (creating reality through logical action)

Assgt.: Rd. Moore, "Stanislavski System", 3-20; "Physical Actions", 1-26; Prep. Sense Memory; Improv situations (given circumstances)

2 Lect. Concentration and Will (a specific realm of concern in TV/Films). Strasberg Approach toward Sense Memory as aid in concentration.

LAB: Hierarchy of Sense Memory Exercises

Lect. Imagination and the Stanislavski "If" as Basics for Improvisation; Imagination and spontaneity; intentions, obstacles and adoptions; acting and reacting; given circumstances and motivations.

LAB: Improvisations with Given Circumstances.


Moore, (If, Given Circumstances, Imagination), 27-32.

3 Lect. Script Analysis. Organizing thoughts to analyze scene and character; Super-objective, throughline of action, given circumstances; obstacles, beats, motivations, attitude breakdowns, (FIWI technique: self, situation, others).

LAB: Create Given Circumstance and sub-text (underbelly) from scene with dialogue only (HANOUT).

Moment-to-Moment Analysis of Character (BASIC QUESTIONS FOR THE ACTOR - HANOUT).


ONE MIN. MONOLOGUE/AUDITION SUITABILITY.
4 Lect: The Emotional Realm of Training; Affective Memory; the Private Moment. Breaking through emotional and physical blocks.

LAB: Emotional Recall exercises; Affective Memory and Script Analysis; Rehearse Monologues for Camera.

Assgt.: Rd. Moore, Adaptation, tempo-rhythm, emotional memory, 44-53.

5 VTR MONOLOGUES / PLAYBACK & EVALUATION
Evaluation: character analysis; concentration and relaxation; realization of super-objective and throughline of action; realization of character (state of being, attitudes, motivations, transitions in thought), affective memory.

6-7 Lect: Cold Readings and Auditions; Working with the Director in Rehearsal. On-the-spot interpretation and selection of attitudes: situation, self, others, inner thoughts; Application of moment-to-moment analysis; actor-director relationships; Rehearsing for camera blocking and staging; Requirements in CU coverage, Master shots, out-of-sequence shooting; drama & comedy.

LAB: Cold Readings and Auditions: on the spot analyses.
Creating character and interrelationships with the Director.
Scene work.

8-10 VTR - TWO PERSON SCENE / PLAYBACK & EVALUATION.
Evaluation: depth of characterization and analysis; realization of the role (super-objective, throughline of action, interrelationships character attitudes and motivation, affective memory).

11 Lect. Acting as a Profession; Personality variables and industry realities; Guilds, Agents, Showcases; Commercials and Industrials; TV, Film, Theatre; Day Players, Week Players, Contract Players; New Talent Programs; Audition Tapes or Films. Discuss Final Project proposals.

LAB: Scene work.
Discussion of characterization, affective memory, interrelationships, motivations.

12-13 Lect. Acting Style and Interpretation in Comedy and Drama; analysis of conflicts, motivations, sense of urgency, mood, pacing, style; action and business; listening and reacting.

LAB: Cold Reading and Staging of Comedy Scenes; Cold Reading and Staging of Drama Scenes.

14-16 VTR - FINAL PROJECTS/PLAYBACK & EVALUATION
Evaluation: Overall interpretation of scene and character; Imaginative and forceful realization of attitudes, motivations, interrelationships, credibility of emotional recall and response.
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<th>PERFORMANCE PROJECT:</th>
<th>SCENE:</th>
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<td>ACTOR/ACTRESS:</td>
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**EVALUATION:**

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<th>Interpretation of Scene &amp; Character:</th>
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<td>Interrelationships:</td>
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<td>Energy level:</td>
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**COMMENTS:**

**Very Strong** | **Good** | **Fair** | **Poor** | **Very Poor**