

MFA DIRECTING BENCHMARKS

INTRODUCTION

Students are accepted into the MFA Directing Program with the understanding that they have a fundamental grasp of the directing process, some practical directing experience, evidence of the ability to be an artistic leader, and a commitment to honing their craft.

The goal of our program is to prepare students to direct professionally and/or on the college level in an academic situation. For some students this will include a focus on pedagogy and intersections between directing and teaching. With this as our basic focus, the progress of each student will be measured against the benchmarks listed below. In addition, each student must meet regularly with their primary advisor for ongoing informal evaluation; meet once for a midsemester review with selected advisors; and once more for an end-of-semester review with their full committee during each semester they are enrolled.

It is expected that by striving toward the prescribed benchmarks, regularly communicating with advisors and participating in the review process, each student will generate a body of information that will enable both the student and his/her committee to determine if reasonable progress toward the goals of the program are being made.

BENCHMARKS

Each student must be able to demonstrate a satisfactory proficiency with regard to the following directorial responsibilities:

I. Action & Storytelling

- Identifying and illuminating “what happens” in the text and making it “happen in front of us” by creating a structure of information, impressions, images and ideas through the manipulation of all available theatrical elements.

II. Analysis & Conceptualization

- Breaking down the text, understanding its dramaturgical structure and significance, how it works as a live event, and conceiving a vision for presentation of discoveries.

III. Organization & Preparation

- Extrapolation and planning of the rehearsal process, the moment-to-moment life of the event, and the overall experience for actors and audience.

IV. Working with Collaborators

- Exchanging images, ideas and intuitions with performers, designers and other members of the production team in a manner that enables those involved to contribute fully as creative partners.

V. Solicitation of Support

- Enlisting the energy, resources, creativity and “buy-in”, of performers, production team, granting organizations, and anyone else capable contributing to the success of the project.

VI. Expanding & Sharing Knowledge

- Continuing to expand knowledge of the various theater arts, the Humanities, areas of specialization, and the world at large. Imparting an understanding of text, related material, process, and techniques in a clear, concise and repeatable manner.

VII. Networking & Marketing

- Presentation of professional/artistic self for colleagues, employers, granting organizations and audience in various formats and settings including portfolios, interviews, letters, press and advertisements.

VIII. Measurement

- To ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to demonstrate “satisfactory proficiency” in the above areas, students will be asked to do the following:
 1. Direct one project each semester they are enrolled. (Details and substitutions for this project are to be worked out with the student’s primary advisor.)
 2. Submit all supporting materials for their semester project including, but not limited to, production plan, director’s prompt book, directorial notes, post production observations, grant and publicity materials (if applicable) to their primary advisor.
 3. Discuss and present work from semester projects in Directing Studio prior to publicviewing.
 4. Complete **all** directing assignments in DirectingStudio.
 5. Fulfill their teaching assignments or other assistantship and open their class to their primary advisor for observation; as well as submit course materials for evaluation.