

Instructor: F. Owens; Bliss #2010; 941-1855 (YSU, voicemail); fowens@ysu.edu
Hours: T/Th, 11-1, as announced.

Text: Hickman, Harold R. *Television Directing*. McGraw-Hill, 1991 (most recent).
Various handouts.

Cost items: graphics, hand properties, products, set pieces, etc., for personal projects

Cautions: (1) Class will not meet if YSU classes are officially canceled. Nor will we meet if **BOTH** Rayen **AND** Ursuline are closed (but not "delayed") because of weather conditions. Unless ... the scheduled activity cannot be made up, such as a taping or final exam. Spend time thus liberated on class projects or other course assignments. Implications are messy, and we'll sort them out on a case-by-case basis. (2) I might attend a couple of conferences during the term. (3) You will be expected to take on more operational supervision of class/production sessions as the term progresses. Producing/directing involves supervising others: if I'm there to supervise, you're not! Producing/directing assignments are always a function of how many students enroll in this course; enrollment can change over the semester. (4) Don't miss class.

Grading for this sort of course is fundamentally a matter of my good faith professional judgement, not a counting of objective "points." Each production assignment will be graded, and grades will be assessed cumulatively. Build basic skills, then use them on advanced productions. So latter productions are "comprehensive" demonstrations of your earlier study and practice. Obviously, if a production falls apart (when you should have kept it together), that's not good. If a production is completed but is too weak to air, that's still not good. If a production has the right pieces in the right places, but significant errors or weaknesses, that's a C. If a production has all the right pieces in the right places, that's a B. If you do a "B" show with a sense of style and grace, that's an A.

You might also be called on to serve as production crew for each other's projects, depending on enrollment and circumstances. Expect to submit one or more of your productions for airing on local PEG channels. Such programs must be produced for real PEG audiences and must feature content appropriate for public channels and public audiences (not for an "insider" audience of YSU students).

Within this general model, here are specific points of interest:

Production Processes	40% (approximate weighting)
Production Products	20%
TD Talk	20%
Directorial Style	20%

Production Process refers to how you as (producer)director nurture a production challenge from its inception to final taping and strike. You will do this according to a time schedule which, if you are the producer, you will determine based on the instructor's advice. Your production "tools" are the skills of the people in your production crew. All people have unique strengths and weaknesses, and your task is to identify those of each person and to work around or to overcome the weaknesses. Some of your effort will be readily apparent to the instructor, but your thinking and other activities will be privately done. Similarly, your "medium"

is television, by which you will aim to create sensations in the viewer. The ways in which you conceive television as a tool to affect a viewer also is private, although partially apparent through the programs you create.

One particularly important factor in "Production Process" is your operational mastery of all production equipment. There will be many opportunities for you to display your working knowledge of the production positions, and the crew members will make initial assessments of your directing competence based on what you display.

Production Products refer to the actual results of planning and studio sessions which may be seen and heard on videotape. Products will be reviewed without consideration to limitations of planning or studio time, of studio crew abilities, of equipment which might not be available, or to inadequacies of hosts or guests. In short, if they look good, sound good and feel good, they are good.

TD Talk. Your calls will be recorded on the videotape, and we will review them for clarity, precision and control. Master them immediately.

Directorial Style refers to a number of specific behaviors which are expected of a director. A director should be calm, gentle and task-oriented. This is vital because nervousness and uncertainty detected in a director spreads to all. A director is expected to show awareness of what each production crew member is doing at every moment during a production. A director is expected to have a clear vision of the intended "production product" so that questions are easily answered. A director is expected to make calls clearly and correctly. A director is expected to welcome guests and make them feel as relaxed as possible. In general, a director is expected to show self-confidence, competence and friendliness. The instructor will conduct performance evaluations based on personal observation and discussions with crew members and guests.

Other course requirements are included in the syllabus for Tcom 3782, which is incorporated here by reference.

Productions: A rolling production schedule will be finalized about one week in advance. Here's a general summary of what you'll be working on, based on full enrollment in 3782 and 4884:

Week #	Project type	Producer/Writer
1	(Introduction)	
2	(Proficiency Tests)	
3	Practice Scripts	Faculty
4	Practice Scripts	
5	Spots (Short forms)	3782
6	Spots (Short forms)	
7	Interviews/Demonstrations	4884
8	Interviews/Demonstrations	
9	SPRING BREAK	

10	Artistic Performances	3783
11	Artistic Interviews	
12	Newscasts	3783
13	Newscasts	
14	Newscasts	
15	Entertainment Shows	4884
Final	May 12, 8-10AM	

But. We will integrate direction assignments for Homework Express. Ideally, by midterm you will be taking turns in directing this **live, multiple-camera** production.

Visits. We will try to arrange for you to visit a production done at a local commercial TV station. Details will be worked out.

Do's & Don'ts

1. Read "Essays on Technical Directing" immediately. It is vital that you speak the proper words in the proper way at the proper time.
2. Be organized. There will be huge amounts of information thrown at you, and it's easy to become confused. Be sure that each recording is properly logged on the tape. Be sure that test recordings are made. Be sure that you don't use up another person's studio time. Be sure that scripts are neat and that you have requested enough copies of each.
3. Be careful of the Character Generator and Switcher. They require a couple of hours of study to perform basic operations; don't let crew members become frightened, frustrated, or avoid them. Be sure each person knows how to use them.
4. Be careful also of the teleprompter, if it works. It is simpler to operate than the CG, but it must be approached methodically. Be sure your crew understands it.
5. For this course, I refer to "environments" which means the real or apparent setting in which studio action takes place or objects are shot on camera. The environment of an interview (the action) normally is a set comprising flats, plants and chairs. The environment of a bag of potato chips might be a picnic tablecloth, some hot dogs, buns and condiments. Every shot must have an appropriate environment. Most need to be created by you in the studio.
6. Do use non-shooting class time to take care of pre-production and post-production duties.
7. Do put everything "in ratio."
8. Watch television, especially talk shows. Figure out where the cameras are and when cuts will be made among them. ("Take" in live/live-on-tape production, "cut" in single-source production)
9. Remember, live/live-on-tape is the top of the Television Production food chain.
10. Expect to take charge of an empty studio: no sets, no lights, no mikes. You need to decide what action your production will include and how that action will "play." Then you need to figure out what staging areas you'll need and what set elements you'll need to have put together within them. For this course, you should aim for very simple staging that doesn't require lots of "building" time. Then you'll work out how you want the areas lighted and miked. All this information you must convey to your studio crew so they can start the setup. In half of occasions, you'll follow someone who already has done this, and some residual might remain for you. While it might be easier to use an interview set

that someone has already set up for you, it reduces the amount of direction you will be able to do. The extreme case is (commercial) newscasts, which involve almost no actual directing.

11. When others are directing, you are expected to watch and listen. Do not kibbutz, sleep or leave. Put yourself in a corner, get small, and learn from what goes on around you. Model correct behavior.
12. Regarding expectations: Television production is a labor-intensive enterprise. Only talent stay clean and pretty. If everyone understands that productions take time, effort, and sometimes expense, then everyone will have a happy experience. But when crews try to take shortcuts, try to use other crews' setups, or try to hang back and look busy while not sweating, everyone loses. In this business, nodding the head does not row the boat.
13. Review studio rules with your crew.
14. Be ready: we might do a real interview show early in the semester, with Dr. Crawford as producer, me as director, you running crew, and 3782 people watching you. Be sure you remember how to do everything.