

Stage Directing Certificate

Program Identification

Stage Directing, Undergraduate Certificate

Theatre Department

Peck School of the Arts

College of the Arts and Architecture

Proposed Timeline: beginning Fall 2026

Rationale:

A substantive number of students entering the Theatre Department over the last 5 years have indicated a significant interest or even an exclusive interest in the field of Directing. To date, we have only offered one upper division course in Directing and the occasional adjacent experience. This certificate brings the field of study into an organized structure that builds off contributing skills and ideas from various courses, focuses them through the Directing class and applies them in real world experiences, either within the Department or with our partnered professional theatre companies in the area.

As the Certificate utilizes pre-existing courses and has a crossover into other departments, it is anticipated that this may also serve multiple disciplines- e.g. filmmakers or performance artists.

This certificate is a tool for recruitment and for retention within PSOA and its primary emphasis with Theatre. There are virtually no other undergraduate departments in the mid-west that offer any significant training in this area.

Institutional Context

Relationship to Mission of Institution

The proposed Stage Directing Certificate addresses the following points from UWM Select Mission Statement directly.

- To develop and maintain high quality undergraduate, graduate and continuing education programs appropriate to a major urban doctoral university.
- To attract highly qualified students who demonstrate the potential for intellectual development, innovation, and leadership for their communities.
- To further academic and professional opportunities at all levels for women, minority, part-time, and financially or educationally disadvantaged students.

- To establish and maintain productive relationships with appropriate public and private organizations at the local, regional, state, national, and international levels.
- To promote public service and research efforts directed toward meeting the social, economic, and cultural needs of the state of Wisconsin and its metropolitan areas.

The proposed Stage Directing Certificate addresses the following points from PSOA Mission Statement directly

- To provide the highest quality education and professional training in the arts at the baccalaureate degree level.
- To recruit faculty, staff, and students who reflect the richness and diversity of artmaking in a variety of cultures.
- To encourage collaboration with community arts organizations and artists to provide professional experiences for its students.

The proposed Stage Directing Certificate addresses the following points from Theatre Department's Mission Statement directly

- To challenge every student to become an artist who can dream, imagine and engage the world
- To teach Theatre as a way of exploring and positively affecting society and the people in it.

Relationship to the Academic Plan

The proposed Stage Directing Certificate will be a potential add-on to the BA or BFA degrees within the Theatre Department. The coursework is flexible and can fit within the 120 – 130 credits that comprise the BA and BFA degree tracks. Theatre majors can take the certificate requirements and fit them into the existing degree plan as part of their required or elective coursework

Relationship to/impact on other UWM programs

This Certificate is designed to be able to be completed within the Theatre major if that is the students' desire, or they can take some classes in other departments or disciplines within the CAA if preferred. The number of students taking classes outside of the Theatre department as part of the Certificate would be minimal (~2-3 max) at any time. All faculty teaching those courses have been consulted, and their approval noted.

If a non-theatre major wishes to complete the certificate, there is room within the classes in Theatre for them to do so. Theatre faculty have also been consulted and have given their approval.

Need

There is a steady increase in enquiries from prospective students about this field of study. For some students, this is one of their primary criteria for selecting a school to continue their studies. We also have a steady number of theatre majors from all of our tracks that develop an interest in Directing through the pursuit of further knowledge in their individual fields of study.

It is anticipated that this certificate will have total enrollment at any one time of 15-20 students, although it could accommodate more. There are no other certificate programs in this area at UWM. It should also be noted that this area of study is not readily available in any other university in Wisconsin or the states surrounding it. A student would usually have to wait until Graduate School to pursue this with any rigor.

Program Description and Evaluation Description

1. Narrative Description

This Certificate aims to provide undergraduate students who express an interest in the field of stage directing an opportunity to explore the rudiments of the Art and Craft of Directing for the Stage. It is intended to be applicable to the medium of film but uses the stage as the training ground.

By giving students hands-on experience combined with a rigorous academic framework, it is intended that the students will graduate with an understanding that will allow them to start pursuing work in the field of Directing or to position them for further training.

Students enrolled in the Stage Directing Certificate Program are required to earn a minimum of 20 credits. The required credits are organized to be taken sequentially and range from 100-level courses to 600-level courses. Courses counting for the certificate may not be taken on a credit/no credit basis. Stage Directing Certificate students will direct or assistant direct as part of the certificate capstone requirement. Students must be aware of any course prerequisites. Credits earned at other institutions equivalent to courses in the certificate program may be accepted in partial fulfillment of the program requirements, subject to approval by the Coordinator of Certificate Program.

2. Nature of the Program

The Directing Certificate can either be an interdisciplinary program that pulls from core classes in Theatre and Visual Arts, with options in Architecture and Film, or it can be completed from within the theatre program alone. In combination with professional experiences, continuous advising and seminars, emerging directors progress from an observational paradigm to one independent application to produced work. It is intended to give an in-depth background study in the field with beginning level application experience(s).

3. Eligibility

This Certificate is not open to students who are not pursuing a degree at UWM. Once established, we could certainly look at the feasibility of opening this out to include non-degree seeking students.

4. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this Certificate, students will be able to:

- Text and Script Analysis
 - Analyze dramatic texts for structure, theme, style, and character to inform directorial choices.

- Interpret scripts with attention to historical, cultural, and social contexts.
- Directorial Vision and Concept Development
 - Articulate a clear and original directorial concept for a production.
 - Integrate thematic and aesthetic ideas into a cohesive production approach.
- Rehearsal Process and Leadership
 - Design and implement effective rehearsal schedules, processes, and communication strategies.
 - Demonstrate leadership, adaptability, and empathy in working with actors, designers, and stage managers.
- Collaboration and Communication
 - Collaborate productively with designers, dramaturgs, production teams, and performers to realize a shared artistic vision.
 - Communicate complex ideas effectively through verbal, written, and visual mediums.
- Production Techniques and Stagecraft
 - Apply practical knowledge of staging, blocking, pacing, and use of space to shape performance.
 - Demonstrate understanding of technical theatre elements (set, lighting, costume, sound, multimedia) in the service of storytelling.
- Critical and Reflective Practice
 - Critically evaluate rehearsals and performances using established and emerging theories of directing.
 - Reflect on personal growth, artistic challenges, and the evolving role of the director in contemporary theatre.
- Cultural Awareness and Ethical Practice
 - Direct with awareness of representation, inclusivity, and equity in casting, storytelling, and production practices.
 - Engage with global and diverse directing traditions and styles.
- Portfolio and Professional Development
 - Assemble a directing portfolio (scripts, notes, prompt books, design research, and performance documentation).
 - Demonstrate readiness for entry-level directing opportunities or graduate-level study.

5. Alternative Modes of Delivery

The certificate can be completed with all in-person classes

- Option class (Film 107) online only
- Option class (Architecture 111) in-person and on-line
- Required class (Theatre 213) in-person and on-line.

6. Curriculum Courses and Credits

The Certificate has a minimum number of credits of 20

REQUIRED COURSES:

THEATRE 260	Storytelling:	3
or THEATRE 110	Fundamentals of the Actor's Process	
THEATRE 230	Acting 2: Text and Performance	3
THEATRE 213	Play Analysis	3
THEATRE 410	Stage Directing	3
Electives		
Choose one of the following:		3
THEATRE 330	Acting Topics: Acting on Camera	
FILM 107	Digital Filmmaking for Non-Majors	
Choose one of the following:		3
THEATRE 236	Theatre Production and Design	
ART 109	3D Studio: Form, Idea and Technique	
ARCH 111	Design I	
Capstone		
Students must take one of the following for 2 credits. Students have the option to repeat one or take both of the following, but this is not required.		2
THEATRE 475	Rehearsal and Performance:	
THEATRE 685	Internship in Professional Theatre	

Total Credits 20

7. Admission Requirements and Procedures

There are no requirements for admission to this certificate. Students may declare this with the Advising office. It is required that they meet with the Certificate Coordinator before declaring it.

8. Continuation and Exit Requirements

Students must achieve a minimum of a C+ in their certificate coursework. Should any student fall below that, they would work with the Certificate Coordinator and the student's academic advisor to devise a realistic timeline to remedy/retake courses within their graduation target date. If a student elects to extend the certificate coursework beyond graduation, the certificate will need to be completed within 2 years of their graduation

9. Allowance for transfer credit

Credits earned at other institutions equivalent to courses in the certificate program may be accepted in partial fulfillment of the program's requirements, subject to approval by the Certificate Coordinator.

10. Assessment of Certificate

Student Learning Outcomes as demonstrated in the student's capstone production presentation and portfolio will be assessed using a standardized rubric. The data from these rubrics will be tracked along with student and faculty feedback from all courses included in certificate.

A Certificate program review survey for each student as they complete will serve as a final review point.

The Certificate Coordinator will meet with the Theatre Department Chair (Chris Guse) to discuss program effectiveness and development using all of the above metrics. This will be done on a per semester basis with revision points potentially at the end of each year.

Program Administration

Certificate will be administered by the Certificate Coordinator (initially Ralph Janes - Teaching Faculty III - Senior Lecturer) or another Chair-appointed faculty member with a terminal degree in the area of Directing).

The Committee responsible for review and development would be the Theatre Curriculum Committee appointed by the Theatre Department Chair.

Participating Faculty:

Ralph Janes
Robin Mello
Alvaro Rios
Steve Decker
Steve Koehler
Steve White
Lilly Warren
Katherine Martin-Meurer
Ryan Chester

Resources:

There are no additional costs or resources needed to implement and run this Certificate

Catalog Copy:

As above in Curriculum and classes

Suggested Plan of Study

Semester 1 TH 260 - Storytelling or TH 110 - Acting 1

Semester 2 TH 230 Acting 2

Semester 3 Design Class

Choose 1 of the following:

THEATRE 236 Theatre Production and Design

ART 109 3D Studio: Form, Idea and Technique

ARCH 111 Design I

Semester 4 TH 231 Play Analysis

Semester 5 Th 410 Directing

Semester 6 Capstone Option 1 - AD/Direct Short Play in Season (Th 475 Rehearsal and Performance)

Semester 7 Film/TV/Camera Course

Choose one of the following:

THEATRE 330 Acting Topics: Acting on Camera

FILM 107 Digital Filmmaking for Non-Majors

Semester 8 Capstone Option 2 AD/Direct Short play in Community (TH 685 Internship in Professional Theatre)

END