

Colleen McDermott

Curriculum Narrative Overview

For my curriculum project, I chose to create an Intro to Stage Directing course for 11th graders in their second semester. The goal is to give students a chance to explore directing, giving them the option to take on leadership roles behind the table during their senior year. The class would meet twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays for an hour and have 8 directors and 16 actors, with each director paired with two actors for the entire semester. This setup will keep the course self-contained and allow most rehearsal and project work to take place in class, helping everything run more efficiently.

The first unit is built around William Ball's *A Sense of Direction*. Each class would focus on one chapter, using study questions and discussions to explore the ideas and start thinking about the nuances and different directing approaches or styles. The second unit dives into blocking for different types of stages. Students will rotate through two-lesson sequences on proscenium, thrust, and arena, where one lesson introduces the blocking principles for that stage and assigns short scenes for each group to rehearse, and the next lesson is for presenting the short scenes and discussing them as a class.

The third and fourth units are small directing projects called Silent Tension and Sounds of Silence. Both projects focus on storytelling and stage composition without relying on dialogue, which will help students develop their visual and conceptual skills before they start working with text. After that, we will move into the script analysis unit. By this point, the directors will have selected their final scenes, and they'll begin analyzing both their scene and the full play it comes from. During this time, the actors in the class will also be doing their own script and character analysis so they can come into rehearsals prepared and ready to collaborate. The final unit is

dedicated to the culminating directing projects, followed by the last class session to wrap up, reflect, and debrief on the semester and their work throughout.

I scaffolded these units to help students build their understanding before jumping into their own individual processes. Starting with William Ball's book gives them a way to learn the fundamentals, question them, and start figuring out what resonates with them as directors. From there, each unit builds toward the final project, giving students a chance to grow their skills step by step.