

SYLLABUS

CTPR 476

Section 18572D

DIRECTING THE COMEDIC SCENE

Units: 2

Spring 2020

Wednesdays, 6-9:50PM,

RZC Stage D

Website: [barnetkellman.net](http://barnetkellman.net)  
password: classroom

Professor: BARNET KELLMAN

Office: SCA 425

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday by appointment

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(323) 819-3803

I will respond to emails within 48 hours

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(503)-752-5617

Course Description:

This is a course on the art of directorial interpretation. We focus on the dialogue scene, the director's work with actors, and the challenge of unlocking comedy from the text and in performance.

Students work with material not of their own creation, learning to shape a scene by breaking it down into component parts and uncovering its main event.

In addition, the course is designed to develop the director's ability to communicate effectively with actors in a way that brings forth their best work.

Finally, this workshop course will address the specific challenges of directing a comic narrative.

The scene is the basic unit of dramatic storytelling. The actor is the essential vehicle, carrying the narrative forward.

No matter how interesting the shots are or how sparkling the dialogue if the director does not identify, target and deliver the emotional payload of the scene - the "Event of the Scene" - the story will not move forward with emotional authority.

Likewise, no matter how good the other creative elements, unless the actors engage the audience as credible intriguing characters, the film will rarely succeed.

In class we explore the art of storytelling through the mounting and performance of the two-person scene.

As students do assignments, exercises and rehearsals that lead to the filming of a two-person scene, issues of casting, directing actors, scene analysis, point of view, shooting styles, shooting methods, staging and editing will be considered from the comedic perspective.

### **Learning Goals and Objectives:**

In this class you will learn that a good scene is far richer than you may have imagined. Even with two people sitting over a breakfast table - something must be *happening*, something important, something with emotional meaning. That "happening" is what we call the "emotional event" of the scene. Only scenes that have an emotional event are worth including in a dramatic narrative. Only such scenes are worth shooting.

In this class you will learn how to excavate a scene and uncover its emotional event. You will learn how to collaborate with actors, make them your partners in exploration, and enable them, through performance, to deliver the emotional event of the scene.

It is my hope that you will come to love working with actors and welcome them into your creative process.

Directors will complete a variety of assignments during the semester, designed to increase awareness, sharpen the senses of seeing and listening, clarify what the director wants from the actor, explore methods of getting it, and recognize whether it has truly been achieved. Emphasis will be on the communication between the director and performer, and the textual analysis of dramatic scene work. Through analytical preparation coupled with class exercises and rehearsal, the director should learn to collaborate with actors to realize the scene and capture the resultant vision on camera.

### **Full Disclosure:**

This class represents something of an experiment. Although classes exist and many books have been written on writing comedy, few (if any) take up the challenges of directing comedy. There are those who do not believe that such a thing can be taught. Carmen Ghia, an outrageous character in Mel Brooks' "The Producers," says about comic aptitude: "Or you got it - or you ain't". It would seem that the majority of comedy practitioners are satisfied to leave the matter at that.

Aptitude is an asset in the study of any subject and this one is certainly no exception. The ability to "get" a joke, a sense of humor and of timing will be needed to fully benefit from our work together. Still, I believe that there are underlying principles that pertain to comedy that can be studied and applied by all directors. This course will attempt to identify those principles and demonstrate their application.

I subscribe to, what for some might be, a broad definition of the comedy genre. Anton Chekhov described his great plays as Comedies. There are those who find that claim to be puzzling. I have always found it to be apt. The contemporary trend is toward such an encompassing definition. Television series such as "Atlanta" and "Orange is the New Black" compete for Emmy Awards with the more obviously comedic "The Big Bang Theory" and "Modern Family". In my estimation "Some Like It Hot" is a supremely great comedy, and "Sunset Boulevard" is as well. I have no problem placing "Austin Powers" and "American Beauty" and "The Death of Stalin" together on a comedy continuum, and will endeavor, in the teaching of this course, to demonstrate why.

### **Instructor's Statement:**

Comedy is corrective. Comedy addresses "life out of balance." Its goals are harmony and natural order. Comedy is not about nobility or aspiration; it is about survival. A classical tragedy ends in a death; a classical comedy ends in a marriage. While tragedy rails against fate, destiny, injustice and death, comedy is a negotiation with life.

A laugh is recognition of life's imperfection. It signifies the acceptance of a compromise between what is, and what ought to be. A laugh is an involuntary, reflexive recognition of a truth or contradiction. The ability to negotiate with, and make peace with existence through laughter is a uniquely human gift.

Fostering comic performance is the act of conjuring that reflexive laugh. The role of the director of comedy is like that of a conjurer. It is the director's job to conjure the laugh. I believe that skill can be taught.

### **Course Description:**

This class combines exercises, lectures, demonstrations, readings and written reflections as a means to prepare for directing a comedic two-person dialogue scene.

Each student will be assigned a scene from *50/50*, by Will Reiser to analyze, cast, explore through rehearsal and staging. At the end of the semester students will have the opportunity to shoot, edit and screen their scenes.

This is a workshop course - its subject is the process of directing. The assigned scene is a tool for learning. It is never to be considered a "product". Therefore in rehearsals and in the shot and edited version students may present the entire scene OR only a portion of the scene. (That portion must include the beginning) It is our understanding that the work you present is "work in progress".

During the first five weeks we will explore methods of auditioning, casting, scene analysis and breakdown, rehearsing, staging and shooting. Also during these weeks students will begin casting and rehearsing their scenes.

Each scene will be rehearsed outside of class and then brought into class for an in-class rehearsal. The director will then have the opportunity to repeat the process, rehearsing both outside and again in class, before filming and editing the scene for presentation and critique.

Through this process of exploration, and trial and error, it is expected that the student will learn practical principles and apply them to directing actors and comedy.

### **Class Philosophy:**

In this class, learning is a group endeavor.

I am well aware that most students will be new to the concepts and practices we are considering. I am not so much looking for results, but rather for participation and engagement with a process.

I expect students to learn as much from each other's missteps as from the triumphs. Those missteps are very valuable. I will appreciate your generosity in taking the risks to make mistakes, and your openness to sharing them with the class.

## **Course Notes:**

### **Rehearsal:**

Rehearsal is a critical tool in the making of comedy. This class will teach rehearsal technique and sharpen the students' appreciation for the use of rehearsal in the finding and rendering of comedy.

Students are required to rehearse for NO LESS THAN FOUR HOURS outside of class before bringing work into class. You may not bring an unrehearsed actor to class.

If an actor presents you with a sudden conflict that makes them unavailable to rehearse in class you must notify the instructor and your SA immediately. You may not bring a "surprise actor" to class.

### **Rehearsal Space:**

Creating a workable and expressive *mise en scene* is one of a director's primary tasks. (*Mise en scene* refers to the conceptualizing of the physical space in which an action is to take place). Scenes should be rehearsed in an open, flexible space that can be altered to suit the action. It is assumed that, through rehearsal, you will discover the needs of the scene, and your workspace should be flexible enough to accommodate that discovery. A stage is ideal. Though scheduling of stages may be challenging, directors are urged to make every effort to find suitable workspace.

### **Casting:**

Casting is crucial. Students MUST HOLD AT LEAST TWO AUDITION SESSIONS. You may cast someone you know -- you must, however, go through the audition process for the experience and to see what alternatives are available. As actors often drop out of projects, it is strongly advised that you be prepared with backup casting options.

You may not cast your relatives or lovers because you may be required to recast. If you have to recast you must notify the instructor and the SA before bringing a new actor to class.

Any RECASTING must be done with the instructor's knowledge and approval.

### **Casting Resources:**

You may use LA Casting, Breakdown Express and the various databases and websites available to find actors. You may also use any other resource at your disposal.

### **Actor Database:**

An Actor Database posted on the class website is made up of actors who have worked successfully in class. You are encouraged to take advantage of this resource.

### **School of Dramatic Arts Actors:**

You are strongly advised to cast students from USC School of Dramatic Arts when possible and appropriate. Students who have done so have found them to be well-trained professionals and reliable collaborators.

### **Actor Contact information:**

Prior to your first in-class rehearsal you are required to provide your SA with your actors' NAMES/ Preferred Contact info (cell phone and email)/Digital Headshot Photo - If you recast you must update this information.

**THIS IS NOT AN OPTIONAL REQUEST:** Supplying these materials to your SA is required for credit toward completion of the course.

### **Meetings:**

I am open to meeting with you at any point in the semester by appointment. Additionally, after your first in-class rehearsal, **you will be required to attend a 30-minute meeting with me.**

Initially these mandatory meetings were established to review your **Scene Analysis Worksheets in order** to make sure you understand the principles of moments, beats, and events. These are important subjects and I am happy to address them in the meeting. I have learned, however, that students have a variety of topics that they'd like clarified. So I leave the focus of the meeting to you. The important thing is that you come prepared with questions.

A handout - found on the class website - informs students of my expectations for this meeting. Meetings are scheduled in my office - SCA 425 - at a time selected by the student.

Occasionally a student will miss a meeting, or come to a meeting without having prepared. These meetings are important, time-consuming, and difficult to schedule. Students should not expect their missed meetings to be rescheduled - and should expect that missing a meeting or coming unprepared will negatively affect their grades.

## Shooting and Editing of Scenes:

This class is a WORKSHOP.

That means that SCA gives you a minimal amount of physical production support in terms of camera and sound package. The emphasis in this class is on the capturing of actor performances - not on production values.

There are many reasons why you might wish to have a nicely produced piece to show. However, be advised, you will not get credit for how well your scene is produced, how good the location was, the wardrobe, or even the editing or shooting. The course spends a minimum amount of time addressing these subjects.

To repeat: the emphasis in this class is on the capturing of actor performance, and not on production values.

We are concerned with the shape of the scene and the performances of the actors.

You are discouraged from making major expenditures on location rental. To me, a table in a living room is the same as a table in an iHop. I won't penalize you if you shoot your scene in your apartment. I won't reward you for doing it in an iHop. I won't penalize you if you shoot it in an iHop... ..unless I feel you put all your time into production values at the expense of performance. Nothing must take priority over good performance values.

In summary: **be advised that this class is not designed to produce a finished product suitable for your reels.**

## Camera Operation:

Your attention must be firmly placed upon your actors. You cannot do this if you are responsible for camera operation. **Students must not operate camera on their own scenes.** I urge you to partner with a fellow student from the class and serve as each other's operators.

## Final Presentation:

As a final presentation students will bring a recorded version of their work for class screening.

Students may choose - with the approval of the instructor - to present a third live rehearsal in lieu of shooting. You must get instructor approval before you can schedule a third rehearsal. This opportunity will be granted case by case, and may be on a first come first served basis.

### **Critique - Giving and Taking:**

Each time a student presents work it will be subject to in-class discussion, “critique” and revision.

In this course we share “work in process”. Artists “in process” feel vulnerable. One of the goals of this course is to help students learn to observe work in process, and share their observations in a way that is helpful to the director.

It is important that critique be received with a sense of openness.

Learning how to give and take useful criticism is by no means easy. It takes care, mindfulness and practice. I am still learning how to do this myself. I encourage students to give me feedback on my performance in this regard even as you make efforts in this direction yourself. Together we will endeavor to create an atmosphere that is conducive to good process.

### **Inclusivity:**

Comedy like language both brings us together and sorts us apart. It has the capacity to either divide or include. Like language, inclusivity is the central goal of comedy. It reminds us of what we have in common - our humanity - and assures us that we are not alone. In this class you are encouraged to raise any concerns you may have, either publicly or with me in private.

### **Disclaimer and Fair Warning:**

The purpose of comedy is not to be hurtful but to explore hurtful subjects in a safe way. Comedy is controversial by its nature. One of its functions is to test moral and social boundaries. Whatever the intention it is possible that material shown and discussed in class may offend. Be aware of this possibility before deciding to take this class.

### **Written Reflections:**

Your Written Reflections are important to me. They enable me to get a better understanding of what you are learning, and they help me customize my teaching to your individual needs. I consider them to be crucial communications and their importance is reflected in the weight I give them toward your grade.

Be advised that failing - through forgetfulness - to turn in reflections on time is the most common way students lose points toward their grades.



Reflections need not be long - one page is sufficient - and they need not be written according to formal rules. Think of it as a personal communication from you to me. Your reflection may refer to any aspect of your process.

Your first reflection must be your response to either the casting demonstration, the rehearsal demonstration or the “Brooks/Moss video” you will be assigned to watch. You get to choose which one of these experiences you want to write about.

Each time you present work in class - whether a rehearsal or shot and edited footage - you are required to write a “reflection” about it.

The reflection following your first rehearsal should include your reasons for casting each of your actors.

All Reflections must be emailed to me by 12pm on the Wednesday after each in-class rehearsal and after the final screening. This final Reflection may refer to either the Shooting/Editing experience, or to the Screening, or both.

All Reflections and other assignments must be in WORD, TXT, Pages or other editable form. No work turned in on PDF will be accepted.

**Students are required to submit a total of FOUR Reflections:**

1. On either the Casting Demonstration, the Rehearsal Demonstration or Brooks/Moss Video
2. First In-Class Rehearsal
3. Second In-Class Rehearsal
4. Shoot or Screening or Combination of the two

### **Facebook Blogs:**

The Class Facebook Blog is a space for sharing videos, articles and observations on the world of comedy, acting and directing sourced from the Internet, newspapers, magazines and other media.

All students are required to participate in the class blog. You may post as many times as you like, but a MINIMUM OF TWO POSTS - 1 made before mid-semester and 1 post after are required for full credit.

No partial credit will be given for fewer than the required posts per half.

**All students must be properly registered to be a contributor to the class blog on Facebook by the second week of class. Your SA will send detailed instructions on how to sign up. If for any reason you are having trouble registering with Facebook, you must contact your SA by phone or email.**

## Website:

The official class website at [barnetkellman.net](http://barnetkellman.net) contains all the materials and information necessary for this course including schedules, readings, videos and PDFs of class lectures, an actor database and other resources.

Log in with:

Password: **classroom**

Please consult the website for answers to your questions. If you need help finding the answer please ask your SA for assistance before contacting the instructor.

Consult the website at least once a week. Be sure to check the home page for announcements or new blog posts.

## Assigned Readings:

Mandatory readings are assigned throughout the semester. All reading material is available on the class website.

## Required Texts:

*50/50* by Will Reiser - available on the class website.

Available at the Campus store or Amazon:

*The Comic Toolbox* by John Vorhaus [http://www.amazon.com/Comic-Toolbox-Funny-Even-Youre/dp/1879505215/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1356230359&sr=1-1&keywords=the+comic+toolbox](http://www.amazon.com/Comic-Toolbox-Funny-Even-Youre/dp/1879505215/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1356230359&sr=1-1&keywords=the+comic+toolbox)

*Directing Actors* by Judith Weston <http://www.amazon.com/Directing-Actors-Memorable-Performances-Television/dp/0941188248>

## Delivery Requirements:

All Final Scenes should be delivered as a QUICKTIME FILE to the SA 24 hours prior to the start of the class in which it is to be presented.

A QUICKTIME copy of the scene must be given to each cast member. All QUICKTIMES must be watermarked as a USC Classroom exercise, and must not include the name of source material in the titles.

SAG cast members must be reminded that they are allowed to post no more than thirty seconds of the material given to them onto the Internet.

### Grading:

I appreciate your talent but I do not grade you on it. You are graded on your fulfillment of the assignments of the course, your engagement with the subjects and challenges we take up, your active participation and the growth evidenced by your work during the semester.

#### Grading Breakdown:

1 Blog-post by mid-semester	5 points*
Demonstration Reflection	5 points
First Rehearsal	10 points
First Rehearsal Reflection	10 points
Second Rehearsal	15 points
Second Rehearsal Reflection	10 points
Final Project (shoot or 3 <sup>rd</sup> Rehearsal)	15 points
Final Project Reflection	10 points
1 Blog-post by final class	5 points*
**Participation	15 points
TOTAL	100 points

\*2 posts are the minimum required - to receive credit you must post within the timeframe outlined. You are welcome and encouraged to post as many times as you like. Posting beyond the minimum will count toward your grade in Participation.

\*\*PARTICIPATION is the engine of Group Learning. It is a crucial element in your grade. It includes commitment to the class, involvement with other students' work, helping them in its realization, engagement with the material and contribution to

class discussion. Facebook Blog posts in excess of the minimum (for example) count toward one's participation grade.

## **Grading Scale**

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

## **Production Division Attendance Policy**

This course relies heavily on interaction between instructor and students, and your participation constitutes a significant component of the learning process. Your attendance is fundamental to the structure of this course and the objectives and goals, and is therefore mandatory.

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (IE: A becomes B). A third absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (IE: B becomes C). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence. There is a maximum of four absences allowed per semester. Any subsequent absences will result in a failing grade.

If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor and the SA prior to class or contact the Production Office at 213-740-3317

Such advance notice is helpful, respectful and appreciated, and will be noted. It does not however guarantee that the absence will be “excused.”

### **Late Arrival:**

15 minutes late constitutes an official late arrival. In cases where petty tardiness - i.e. of less than 15 minutes becomes chronic, I will give one “warning”, and then I will assign penalties. Your SA will keep track of late arrivals.

Reminder: Two late arrivals equals one absence.

### **Labeling of Assignments:**

Improperly labeling leads to your work getting lost or misplaced. For that reason I am very specific in my requirements for labeling. My system allows me to give you proper credit. I will not take on the clerical duties of relabeling your assignments.

All assignments must be labeled using the following format:

**Course #- Your Last Name-Assignment-Date.**

For Example: **476-Smith- First Rehearsal Reflection -10\_15\_19**

The label must be on the document itself...

It is not sufficient to label the email subject line and then attach an unlabeled document.

**I will not accept any assignment not properly labeled.**

**I will not accept any Reflections sent in PDF form.**

### **Due Dates:**

Missing deadlines is generally regarded as unacceptable in the Industry, and so it will be in this class. If you know ahead of time that unavoidable circumstances will prevent the timely delivery of your work you must notify me immediately, and the circumstances must be documented. Only genuine “emergencies” beyond your control will be accepted.

Unexcused missed due dates will result in reduction of 1/2 of the point value for each full class period past the original due date.

### **Unforeseen Circumstances:**

If you have life problems or circumstances that might affect your work, please let me know in advance. I want to be understanding and helpful if I can. See me to make arrangements for deadline extensions.

### **Grading Feedback:**

You may ask me for feedback about how you are doing at any time. If I notice that a student is at risk of falling below a B, I will reach out and bring this to the student's attention.

Be aware, however, that the majority of grade value is earned after mid-semester. This can make it difficult for me to give precise warnings early on. I urge you to take responsibility for your work and your grade and stay on top of things.

### **Notes Regarding Video Projects:**

IT IS REQUIRED THAT STUDENTS READ THE FULL SCREENPLAY FROM WHICH THEIR SCENES ORIGINATE. IT IS ALL RIGHT IF YOU HAVE SEEN THE FILM IN THE PAST, BUT YOU MUST NOT REVISIT IT UNTIL AFTER YOUR PROJECT IS COMPLETED.

DIRECTORS MUST PRINT OUT COPIES OF THE COMPLETE SCREENPLAY FOR THEMSELVES FOR THE PURPOSE OF NOTE-TAKING.

DIRECTORS ARE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE A PDF OF THE ENTIRE SCREENPLAY FOR THEIR ACTORS AND URGE THEM TO READ IT. ACTORS MUST BE INSTRUCTED NOT TO RE-VIEW OR STUDY THE RELEASED FILM.

DIRECTORS ARE REQUIRED TO GIVE THEIR ACTORS THE EDITED AND ADAPTED VERSIONS OF THEIR SCENES PROVIDED ON THE CLASS WEBSITE.

**YOU MUST REHEARSE ONLY USING THE EDITED AND ADAPTED VERSIONS OF YOUR SCENES.**

### **Workshop:**

**CTPR 476 is a Workshop Course, not a Production Course. As such we are more concerned with the impact of performance, storytelling, and the rendering of comedy**

than with the technical quality of the final product. It is more important to optimize the quality of the sound than it is to demonstrate artistry in lighting, costuming, location or other production values. Directors are strongly encouraged to keep shooting and editing styles simple and unobtrusive.

**NO SCENES MAY BE SHOT AS EXTERIORS** without prior approval.

### **Extra Credit:**

**I ENCOURAGE DIRECTORS TO RE-EDIT and RE-SUBMIT THEIR SCENES AFTER THE IN-CLASS SCREENING. THIS WILL RESULT IN ENHANCED LEARNING**

**AND MAY BE USED FOR EXTRA CREDIT.**

### **Use of School Equipment:**

**PRODUCTION NUMBERS** - Your SA will work to obtain production numbers for class members. Delaying the SA's efforts will earn a student a grading penalty equivalent to a late assignment.

Students will be responsible for payment of insurance for usage of school equipment. You may request permission to use additional equipment. If permission is granted you will be required to obtain insurance for that equipment through Joe Wallenstein's office.

Please review the [476 Class Overview Page](#) on the [SCA Knowledgebase](#) for workflow information.

School-provided video cameras may be reserved in the SCA Equipment Room, and you must reserve the week in advance, as you must with the sound department and grip/lighting equipment center.

Students may edit their projects in SCA post. You may edit on your own equipment, but equipment failure will then not be an acceptable excuse for missed delivery.

**IT IS ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL THAT GOOD SOUND BE RECORDED FOR EVERY SCENE. YOU MUST USE THE BOOM MIC WHEN FILMING.** It is not acceptable to only use the on-camera microphone for the scene you present in class.

### **Safety:**

All students are expected to abide by USC School of Cinematic Arts Safety Guidelines. Violations of any of the safety guidelines may result in disciplinary action ranging from confiscation of footage to expulsion from the University.

## **Students with Disabilities:**

Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the Instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday-Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. The office is in Student Union 301, and their phone number is (213)740-0776.

## **Stressful Times:**

These are stressful times in our country, and Graduate School in and of itself is stressful. I encourage you to take care of yourself and your fellow students. USC provides opportunities for Mindful Meditation <http://mindful.usc.edu> and Mental health counseling is available at the Engemann Student Health Center, 1031 W. 34<sup>th</sup> Street, 213-740-9355.

## **Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

***BY THE THIRD CLASS YOUR SA WILL REQUIRE YOU TO SIGN THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT. NO STUDENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO TAKE THIS CLASS WITHOUT A SIGNED ACKNOWLEDGMENT ON FILE.***

### ***STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT***

**I (print your name)** \_\_\_\_\_



**have read the syllabus for CTPR 476. I acknowledge the requirements and rules of the course, and agreed to meet and abide by them.**

**Signed,**

**(your signature)** \_\_\_\_\_

### 476 Spring 2020 Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Class 1 1/15

Topics: Introduction to 476 (presentation); Joke Telling (exercise); Jokes are Stories (presentation); Housekeeping (presentation)

Assignments:

1. Give Group Assignment Preferences to your SA
2. Sign on to class website - (find Syllabus under “Classes”) read 476 Syllabus - sign Student Acknowledgement and Agreement (find it under “Class Materials”) - hand in agreement to SA due by Class 3
3. Acquire textbooks: (available at the Campus store or Amazon)

*The Comic Toolbox* by John Vorhaus [http://www.amazon.com/Comic-Toolbox-Funny-Even-Youre/dp/1879505215/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1356230359&sr=1-1&keywords=the+comic+toolbox](http://www.amazon.com/Comic-Toolbox-Funny-Even-Youre/dp/1879505215/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1356230359&sr=1-1&keywords=the+comic+toolbox)

*Directing Actors* by Judith Weston <http://www.amazon.com/Directing-Actors-Memorable-Performances-Television/dp/0941188248>

4. Reading Assignments from Texts:

*Directing Actors* “Introduction” (pp. 1-12) “Result Direction & Quick Fixes” (pp. 13-47)

*The Comic Toolbox* - Chapter One “Comedy is Truth and Pain” (pp.1-8)

5. Reading Assignments from Website:

How to Approach This Course - BK (Class Materials)  
FAQ's (Class Materials)  
J. Cohen - How to Succeed in Barnet's Class (Class Materials)  
BK-What is Directing? (BK Handouts)  
Ed Catmull - Failure (Articles)

[Reading Assignments due by next class](#)

Class 2 - 1/22

Topics: Directing Actors (presentation) Casting Comedy (presentation) Audition Process (begin presentation)

Hand out Group Assignments

Assignments for Class 3:

1. Reading Assignments from Texts:

*Directing Actors* - Moment to Moment (pp.49-76) Listening (p.77-90)

*The Comic Toolbox* - Chapter Two "The Will to Risk" (pp. 9-18)

2. Reading Assignments from Website:

BK - Directing Actors (BK-Handouts)

BK - Doing: The Intersection of Writing, Acting and Directing (BK-Handouts)

BK - The Principle of Doing (BK-Handouts)

BK - Engaging Actors - The Value We Add (BK Handouts)

BK - Reading the Script (BK-Handouts)

50/50 Screenplay (Class Materials)

Grazer - Thin-Slicing Tom Hanks (Articles)

Levine - Real Actors (Articles)

Erica Fae - There's No Right Way (Articles)

Larry - Setting Up an Audition (Articles)

Class 3 - 1/29

Topics: Rehearsal (Presentation) 30 slides; Auditions (demonstration); Rehearsal Demonstration (demonstration)

Hand out Scene Assignments

Assignments for Class 4:

1. Begin Casting Process - schedule auditions Group A esp. begin auditions
2. Reading Assignments from Texts:

*Directing Actors* -Actors Choices (pp. 91-132) Casting (pp.235-244)

*The Comic Toolbox* - Chapter Three: "The Comic Premise" pp 19-29

3. Reading Assignments from Website:

BK - Casting (BK Handouts)

BK - How to Read and Use Stage Directions (BK Handouts)

Casting - Keep Your Eye on the Big Picture (Topics)

Casting and Comedy - Feeling No Pain (Topics)

What Actors Have Said About Working in this Class (Class Materials)

BK - Actors Drop Out at the Last Minute (Class Materials)

Blog Posts and Reflections - FAQs (Class Materials)

4. Screening Assignment from Website:

Brooks/Moss Workshop volume 1 or volume 2 (Materials/Videos)

Class 4 - 2/5

Topics: Rehearsal (complete presentation); Directing the Scene - Interpreting the Text (presentation); Moments and Beats (presentation); Scene Analysis (presentation);

Assignments for Class 5:

1. Begin Scene Analysis and Breakdown (using the Scene Analysis and Breakdown Questions - see below)

2. Group A begin rehearsals outside of class
3. Reading Assignments from Texts:
  - Directing Actors* - Script Analysis (p.163-234) Rehearsal (p. 245-279)
  - The Comic Toolbox* - Chapter Four - Comic Characters p 30-46
4. Reading Assignments from Website:
  - BK- An Approach to Directing The Scene (BK Handouts)
  - BK - Scene Analysis and Breakdown sept. 2016 (BK Handouts)
  - BK - The Search for the Event (BK Handouts)
  - BK - How to Answer the Scene Analysis Questions (BK Handouts)
  - BK - Scene Analysis and Breakdown Questions rev Fall '18 (Class Materials)
  - Beats and the Recipe for a Scene (Topics)
  - Beats as Decision Points (Topics)
5. First Reflection Assignment: **by email to me by 12pm-9/25 (Class 5 day)**  
 Write a reflection about one of the following -  
 your choice: a)Audition Demo  
                   b)Rehearsal Demo  
                   c)Brooks/Moss Video

Class 5 - 2/12

Topics: My Boys Beats (presentation); Spotting Maya - Scene Analysis Worksheet (presentation) Scene Analysis Questions (discussion); Directing Actors part 3 (presentation)

Assignments for Class 6:

1. All Groups rehearsing
2. Reading Assignments from Texts:
  - Directing Actors* - Appendix B&C Comedy and List of Action Verbs (pp. 296 - 307)
  - The Comic Toolbox* - Chapter Seven - The Comic Through Line (pp. 75-102)

3. Reading Assignments from Website:

BK - How to Rehearse (BK Handouts)  
BK - In Rehearsal Ask Yourself (BK Handouts)  
BK - Mining the Premise - Massaging the Frustrated Expectation (BK Handouts)

BK - Reminders for Rehearsers (Class Materials)  
In Class Rehearsal (Class Materials)

Understanding the Governing Social Obligation (Topics)  
Q&A - The Director's Relationship to Verbs (Topics)  
Does Woody Allen Rehearse (Topics)

Greenberg - The Discipline of Play (Articles)

Class 6 - 2/19

Topics: Group A In-Class Rehearsal #1

Schedule Group A Meetings with Barnet

Assignments for Class 7:

1. Group A 1<sup>st</sup> Rehearsal Reflection [due by noon, day of next class](#)
2. All Groups Rehearsing
4. Reading Assignments from Texts:

*Directing Actors* - Shooting (pp. 281 - 290)

*The Comic Toolbox* - Chapter Six Types of Comic Stories (pp.58-74)

4. Reading Assignments from Website:

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR MEETING WITH BARNET (Class Materials)

Coping With Critique (Topics)  
Flag on the Play (Topics)  
Comedy is Serious Business (Topics)  
Intellect-Observation-Balance (Topics)  
The Ticking Clock (Topics)

Class 7 - 2/26

Topics: Group B In-Class Rehearsal #1

Schedule Groups B Meetings with Barnet

Assignments for Class 8:

1. Group B 1<sup>st</sup> Rehearsal Reflection [due by noon, day of next class](#)

2. All Groups Rehearsing

3. Reading Assignments from Texts:

*The Comic Toolbox* - Chapter Eight - More Tools from the Toolbox (p. 103 - 115)

4. Reading Assignments from Website:

BK - 3-Part Checklist for Troubleshooting (BK Handouts)

A Slab of Ivory (topics)

Repetition (topics)

Words As Levers - Force Multipliers (topics)

Zinoman - Upright Citizens Brigade Writes Its Book on Improv (Articles)

Class 8 - 3/4

Topics: Group C In-Class Rehearsal #1

Schedule Group C Meetings with Barnet

Assignments for Class 9:

1. Group C 1<sup>st</sup> Rehearsal Reflection [due by noon, day of next class](#)

2. All Groups Rehearsing

3. [First half of semester minimum 1 blog due by noon, day of next class](#)

4. Reading Assignments from Texts:

*The Comic Toolbox* - Chapter Ten - Comedy and Jeopardy (pp. 117-124)

## 5. Reading Assignments from Website:

BK - To Comedy Scene Directors at Mid-Semester (BK Handouts)  
BK - Dramatization (BK Handouts)

Communication with Actors (Topics)

Dean - Habits of the Comic Mind (Articles)

Optional Reading:

Alan Alda - That's Funny but Why? (Articles)

## Class 9 - 3/11

Topics: Directing Comedy (complete presentation); Staging and Shooting (presentation)

## Assignments for Class 10:

1. All Groups Rehearsing

2. Reading Assignments from Texts:

*The Comic Toolbox* - Chapter Eleven - Still More Tools from the Toolbox  
(p.125 - 138)

## 3. Reading Assignments from Website:

BK - Hopes and Expectations at Mid-semester (BK Handouts)

BK - Are You Still Searching for the Event? (BK Handouts)

BK - Shoot Expectations (BK Handouts)

The Road to Comedy is Paved with Drama (Topics)

Adjectives and Why We Don't Like to Use Them (Topics)

Feeling (topics)

One Direction at a Time (Topics)

Optional Reading:

Political Correctness Isn't Killing Comedy (Articles)

Falk - Why it's Time we Stop Categorizing TV Comedies (Articles)

SPRING BREAK 3/16 - 3/20 NO CLASS ON 3/18

Class 10 - 3/25

Topics: Group A In-Class Rehearsal #2

Assignments for Class 11:

1. Group A 2nd Rehearsal Reflection [due by noon, day of next class](#)
2. All Groups Rehearsing
3. Group A Shooting Period
4. Reading Assignments from Texts:

*The Comic Toolbox* - Chapter Fourteen -Toward Polish and Perfection  
(p.162-173)

3. Reading Assignments from Website:

BK - Tips on Shooting Your Scenes (BK Handouts)

Justifying the Line Through Behavior (Topics)  
Obstacles (Topics)  
Advice for Shooting Comedy (Topics)

Lipsev - On Directing Comedy (Articles)  
Lickerman - Why We Laugh (Articles)  
Cinemoose - Tragedy is Close-up; Comedy, a Long Shot (Articles)

Class 11 - 4/1

Topics: Group B In-Class Rehearsal #2

Assignments for Class 12:

1. Group B 2nd Rehearsal Reflection [due by noon, day of next class](#)
2. All Groups Rehearsing
3. Group A/B Shooting Period
4. Reading Assignments from Texts:



*The Comic Toolbox* - Chapter Fifteen -Scrap Metal and Doughnuts”  
(pp.174 -185)

4. Reading Assignments from Website:

DCS - Final Assignments (Class Materials)

Dobkin - The Church of Comedy (Articles)

5. Optional Reading:

Corley - Can You Learn to be Funny? (Articles)

Class 12 - 4/8

Topics: Group C In-Class Rehearsal #2

Assignments for Class 13:

1. Group C In-Class Rehearsal Reflection [due by noon, day of next class](#)

2. Reading Assignments from Website:

Comedy Is Hard (Topics)

BK - Getting the Ten Thousand Hours (BK Handouts)

Class 13 - 4/15

Topics: 3rd In-Class Rehearsals; Group A Screenings

Assignments for Class 14:

1. 3rd In-Class Rehearsals Reflections [due by noon, day of next class](#)

2. Group A Screening Reflections [due by noon, day of next class](#)

Class 14 - 4/22

Topics: Group A & B Screenings

Assignments:

2. Group A/B Screening Reflections [due by noon, day of next class](#)

3. All Facebook Blogs Due by noon, day of next class

Class 15 - 4/29

Topics: Group B& C Screenings  
The Process (presentation)

PARTY

Assignments for Completion:

1. Group B&C Screening Reflection due by noon, 5/6

Note: Schedule and Assignments Subject to Change - check class website for weekly updates