Courses for the Certificate in New Play Directing

Summer I

THEA 510: PLAYSCRIPT ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM (4)
Department
Intensive critical analysis of the playscript as a blueprint for production covering representative texts from a range of theatre styles, genres, and periods. Plays are considered in both their original historical/cultural context as well as implications for contemporary audiences. Course covers major approaches to dramatic criticism and the tools used in theatre research.

THEA 520: NARRATIVE THEORY AND DRAMATIC STRUCTURE (4)
Ristau
Introduction to the basics of storytelling and the creation of dramatic texts using both organic and formulaic models with an emphasis on the one act play. Students will learn to observe the world for meaning, build characters, place characters in settings, write monologues, create dialogue between characters, and lay the groundwork for longer, more substantive work.

THEA 524: DIRECTING NEW PLAYS (4)
Department
Focused instruction on directing and rehearsal techniques with particular emphasis on approaching the new play when the playwright is attending rehearsals. Students who complete this course will have the confidence to determine whether problems lie in the unfinished text or in the performer’s approach to the play and how to come up with practical ways to differentiate between them.

THEA 561: DIRECTORS AND PLAYWRIGHTS IN COLLABORATION (2)
Ristau
Guided instruction leading up to the reading of a new play in Festival, and also functioning as a production meeting with participation of the playwright and performers discussing process and progress toward the presentation of the work to the public. All students enrolled in the certificate in New Play Directing will be required to direct a reading in the Hollins Playwright’s Festival, which presents ten new play readings to industry professionals from all over the world. This course is designed to guide directing students through the process of collaboration from the initial read and interview with a playwright, development of concept in consultation with the playwright, and included practical exercises to ensure that when it comes to the test the playwright and director are on the same page. Monday meetings function as a kind of production meeting for the festival readings and will include Festival playwrights. Wednesday sessions are open only to the directing students to discuss their process and problems under the supervision and guidance of the instructor. Repeated each summer.

Summer II

THEA 517: DESIGN ON A DIME (4)
Department
An introduction to design principles as applied to the production and presentation of new plays. Design areas covered will include scenic, costume, lighting and sound design as well as graphic illustration. This course will also be an introduction to stage scenery and construction. As part of the course, students will use the ten plays selected for Festival during the summer term and create scenic and promotional design concepts for each taking into consideration a range of possible types of stages, styles, budgets and audiences. While the curriculum will focus on plays in festival, students will not be asked to design the reading, but rather imagine those texts as fully realized in production.

THEA 522: VIEWPOINTS AND COMPOSITION (4)
Department
A six week intensive in the ensemble building techniques of Suzuki and Viewpoints training as developed by Anne Bogart and the SITI company. This course is an introduction to a method of actor training which is primarily concerned with uniting the human body and the theatrical text by uncovering the actor’s innate expressive abilities through rigorous physical training to heighten their emotional and physical power on stage. The Viewpoints training grew out of the post-modern dance world and enhances the performer’s ability to deal with time and space by breaking those broad areas into six specific categories which facilitate ensemble creation of bold, theatrical work through strong physical, intellectual, emotional and artistic choices.
THEA 561: DIRECTORS AND PLAYWRIGHTS IN COLLABORATION (2)  
Ristau  
Repeated each summer.

THEA 576: COMPANY CREATION AND MANAGEMENT (4)  
Department  
An introduction to the structure of the non-profit theatre and how-to guide for creating a new company dedicated to the production and presentation of new plays. Concepts covered include arts administration, crafting a mission statement, forming a board of trustees, filing for non-profit status, legal issues and potential liabilities, fund raising, publicity, contracts, rental agreements, and other aspects of producing new work as part of a season or just a single showcase.  
Required texts: Theatre management and Production in America (Langley), How to Form a Nonprofit Corporation (Nolo Press), The Art of Governance (TCG), Outrageous Fortune (London), In the Intersection (Diane Ragsdale), Fundraising Basics: A Complete Guide; How to Run a Theatre (Jim Volz); Running Theatres (Duncan Webb).