

USC School of Dramatic Arts

Diction and Dialects THTR 541 Section 63194D
Fall 2015 Fridays 1:00-2:50 p.m.
MCC 107

Instructor: Kathleen Dunn-Muzingo

Office: Adjunct Office-McClintock Bldg.

Office Hours: Thursdays 3 to 5 / F 10 to noon

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Course Description and Overview:

A Guided Study of Diction and Dialect Acquisition. Utilizing the International Alphabet, Voice-Diction Exercises, Sensory Explorations, and Pillow Work the student will continue to develop clarity and specificity in voicing classical text as well as developing a personal process of acquiring dialects in support of performance projects.

Learning Objectives: Upon Completion of THTR 541, the M.F.A. theatre student will have:

- Acquired a working knowledge of the International Phonetic Alphabet and its application to phonetic writing, accent work, and ear training to aid in the specific demands of a particular text or accent.**
- Utilizing sensory explorations, movement explorations, and text explorations, the student will add to the repertoire of skills which aid in authentic and organic role creation.**
- Developed a process of acquiring an authentic and embodied accent culminating in a performance project.**
- Continued development of a vocal warm-up via Pillow Work and Vowel Ladder that is according to student needs.**

Required Reading and Class Materials:

Bringing Speech to Life by Claudia Anderson and Louis Colaianne

One Piece of Text (student's choosing) for the IPA Unit (see IPA Unit for suggestions)

The Anticipated Training Schedule for Diction and Dialects THTR 541 Fall 2016:

THE IPA UNIT

Material Suggestions –Choose a poem, Sonnet, or a piece of text from Shakespeare-something that speaks to you. This will be your material for the entire unit. Suggested Poets: Donne, Keats, Langston Hughes, Yeats, Emily Dickinson, Neruda, Wordsworth, Maya Angelou.

Week One to Seven: International Phonetic Training Process Begins. Sound and Movement Exercises into Drill and Symbol Work of the International Phonetic Alphabet. There a phonetic pillows that I will be bringing to class. Please be in the classroom five minutes prior to start time, so we can set up the room.

REMEMBERED VOICES

Week eight thru Nine: Choosing a voice form your past that speaks to you. This will serve also as a stepping stone into Dialect Donor Projects

DIALECT DONOR PROJECTS

WEEKS TEN THRU THIRTEEN

Applying what you have learned in Remembered Voices and Dialect Acquisition process, you will choose a dialect of interest, interview a live source that has that dialect of English, breakdown and demonstrate the features, and apply it to a text of your choice.

WEEK FOURTEEN; PERFORMANCE AND SHARING OF YOUR DIALECT

From your donor projects, you will have the opportunity to apply what you have learned to text or original work. This project will be on December 2nd during Class Time and done in a round-robin fashion. Voice Faculty will be invited to view.

Graded Areas and Their Breakdown:

<i>IPA UNIT</i>	<i>300 points</i>
<i>Drill Work-Workbook:</i>	<i>50 points</i>
<i>Journal Entries and Text Explorations</i>	<i>100 points</i>
<i>Vowel Ladder Demo onto Two Lines of Text</i>	<i>100 points</i>
<i>Transcription of 100 words of Text</i>	<i>50 points</i>

AREAS OF GRADING AND THEIR DESCRIPTION

Drill Work: Workbook: Completing your workbook is equal to prep and drill work that an actor does daily. It is just part of the process. Keep on top of the workbook pages. They will be picked up at the end of the IPA unit around week seven. It is recommended that you work with a partner/s as you can practice and drill and come with questions at the next class meeting. Workbook/Drill work will take an hour and half outside of class. I would cut it up into shorter sessions (45 minutes). The body will be able to digest sound easier and apply it in shorter sessions. It's like eating a great big meal at one setting; you get

stuffed with sound and its difficulty to process. So aim for two sessions of about 45 minutes twice a week. Come ready to drop the sound into your imaging center.

Journal Entries and Text Explorations: You will have two journal entries and two showings of your text. One entry and exploration will be focused on the vowel ladder and intrinsic pitch and how to marry that with emotional life using your text. The second exploration and journal will be the work with the consonants. And how the consonants resonate you into new meanings within the text.

Vowel Ladder Demo onto two lines of text: After completion of the vowel training, the student will be required to demonstrate a walk thru of the vowel ladder while bringing emotionality thru the sound. The student will be graded on how the sound moves thru the organically as well as their knowledge of symbol to sound. After walk thru of the vowel ladder, the student will have the opportunity to demo two lines of text incorporating the consonants as well as the vowels.

Transcription of Text: Upon completion of the Unit, the student will demonstrate his/her knowledge of the Phonetic Alphabet, by writing out a portion of their text in IPA, 100 words.

REMEMBERED VOICES:

This project prepares the student for Accent Acquisition. Taking a voice that resonates from your life, you will learn basic accent acquisition skills to recreate that voice. Grading will be based on bringing authenticity to the role as well as learning to use an accent chart.

DIALECT DONOR PROJECT:

PREP WORK:

Securing an Interview: Do not wait until November to get an interview. Choose now, so you can keep your eyes and ears open to that voice you wish to bring alive. The interview need only be five to ten minutes in length. Have the person tell a funny story, or share a favorite child's rhyme or song, or talk about a historical event that happened in their lives. Another good story for them to share, is tell a story about a person who changed their lives. I would give the questions ahead of time to them so they can think about it. Also, if you already know the text/story you will be doing, you may want to focus your questions around the era of the play, or the cultural pocket that the play takes place.

Transcription of the Interview: Once you have gotten the interview, it is time to break down the features. Write out the portion of interview you wish to practice. At least 100 words, and begin to slowly sound and write out phonetically in the IPA, what you are hearing. If you have a way of making the source talk in slow motion, that really helps. Note any changes in melody by arrows up and down above the words.

Transferring the Donor Voice to the Accent Chart: Next, you are going to fill in the chart with the noted new sounds and features of the donor's accent. By doing this, you will begin to have a way of breaking down the accent to teach a portion of it in class. If you leave some features blank, listen to the entire interview to see if there are any major changes in these areas.

TEACHING THE DONOR'S ACCENT

The Vowel Ladder and Consonants: Using your accent chart from your prep session, teach the new key features of the accent by constructing a new vowel ladder. You may create a new vowel ladder on index cards or use the pillows. Walk us through a few phrases of the donor.

Imitate and Share: The next step is to share your imitation of the 100 words of your donor; you may play the donor first to get your started or share the interview after your imitation.

APPLYING THE DONOR'S ACCENT TO TEXT/PEFORMANCE

Performance: The final step is to present your work in a piece of text/scene or original piece utilizing the new key features, and nuances of the accent in an embodied performance. Voice Faculty are welcome to attend. This will happen on the last day of class. December 2nd.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/departement-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

USC BLACKBOARD: Course information, announcement and materials will be posted on **BLACKBOARD**. Please check periodically for announcements. This program is new to the instructor, so have patience if there are glitches. **Grades, however, will NOT be posted on Blackboard. URL:** <https://blackboard.usc.edu>

Classroom Etiquette:

Classroom Etiquette makes a difference between a “plus” or “minus” at the end of the term. Know that I will not remind you of these things as these should be a part of respect for others and of your own learning.

PLEASE TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES PRIOR TO CLASS!

AN ABSENCE WILL RESULT IN A 2 PT REDUCTION EACH TIME YOU ARE LATE OR ABSENT THERE AFTER.

IF TARDY, ENTER CLASS RESPECTFULLY AND NOT DRAMATICALLY!

Final note about Grading in Art and Acting:

This is an art-form composed of research, application, knowledge and presentation of skills in an organic and truthful performance. One must embody the dialect as a whole person and not as a technical dialect. Following are descriptions of grades in this class and their meaning:

A: Exceptional

Exceptional means understanding and embodying all criteria of the dialect. The student has done exceptional research and homework, attended all rehearsals and participated in all class room exercises. This grade also represents truthful, creative and authentic embodiment according to the circumstances and style of the text.

B: Good

Clear understanding of the features of the dialect, basic features and all assignments handed in on time. Perhaps there is an element of lateness to one of the assignments and the performance is technically proficient, but lacking creativity and communication.

C: Average

General basic understanding of the features. However, paperwork is missing and a gap in performance due to careflessness of words or understanding of the dialect.

D/F: Lack of commitment/ No Show

I look forward to working with you,
Kathleen Dunn-Muzingo

Proposed Schedule for MFA Diction and Dialects Fall 2016

August 26th

Physical Awareness: Exploring the Natural Pain Relievers as Relaxer Energizers as Body Energies

Maluma Takatae: What's in name; absorbing sound and movement

Syllabus

Assign: Text of your choice. Double Space the Text and always bring to class. Be four lines memorized by heart.

Assign: Get the Workbook

September 2nd

W.U. with Body Energies

Into Sound and Movement into IPA

Simple Vowel Ladder: whispered, intrinsic pith, touch of sound, continuum, mirror work, qualities of Vowels: Tongue arch versus lip rounding

Assign: Drill work—The Simple Vowel Ladder * recommend working with partner

Assign: Voice Work-Be able to walk thru Simple Vowel Ladder

Assign: Text Work- ½ memorized by heart

September 9th

W. U. into Sound and Movement

Building the Simple Vowel Ladder

Finding the Complex Vowel Ladder

Games and Group Drills: Draw what we remember into River of Sound

Assign: Drill Work-The Complex Ladder Vowel *recommend working with partner

Assign Voice Work: Be able to walk thru the complex vowel ladder onto finding your monologue (one line) *work with partner

September 16th

W.U. into Sound and Movement: Drawn to sound into diphthong dialogue

Diphthongs and R coloring vowels

Individual Demo of Complex Vowel Ladder onto one line of text

Exploring your text for the music of the Vowels

Assign: Drill Work:-Workbook finish the vowels—diphthongs and R coloring

Assign: Journal Entry-Exploration of your text with the Vowels—due next class period

Assign: Sharing of your text exploration of the vowels, Round Robin Style

September 23rd

W.U. into Sound and Movement into Vowel Ladder Work

Sharing of Vowel Explorations Round Robin Style

The Vowel Universe Page/ and various Worksheets for Non-Regional Speech

Assign: Drill Work-finish workbook for vowels

September 30th

W.U. into the music, rhythm and sensation to the consonants and their symbols

Qualities of Consonants

Caveman into room as a mouth into Drawing what you remember into River of Sound

Finding your monologue in the mouth and share one line around the group

Assign: Drill Work: Consonant workbook pages;

Continuants: TH's, NG, L, R, V, F, Z, S, N, M Plosives: D, T, G, K, B, P

September 30th

W.U. into Inventing Language into Building and Sounding into Room as a Mouth

Finding your monologue in the mouth.

Blindfold/imagination work: Exploring your text via the consonants

Seated Work: resonating the other person via the consonants.

Assign: Drill Work: Finish any consonants of your choosing—Workbooks Due next Class Period

Assign: Journal Entry-Write a journal entry of your exploration of your text via the consonants-hand in next class period

Assign: Communicating your text via the consonants-Round Robin Style

October 7th

W. U. into Text Explorations: Exploring the text via the consonants- Round Robin Style

Wrapping up the Room as a mouth Work

October 14th Remembered Voices Workshop and Accent Chart Work Begin

Assign: Remembered Voice

Assign Accent Chart of your own accent and Remembered Voice

October 21st Sharing of Remembered Voices
Discussion of Accent Chart

Assign: Dialect Donor Project: Getting an interview of your source.

Choosing something that resonates with you, a culture, an accent you want to give time and justice to in developing, sharing, imitating, and applying to a story or text.

October 28th: Steps in Dialect Acquisition
Group Dialect: Sound Lab---Listening with your breath, into moving and Imitation
Transcription of the Accent in IPA –100 words
Accent Chart
Creating a new Vowel Ladder and walk thru Imitation
Text Application

Assign: Sharing of Dialect Donor Projects begin on November 4th and go through the 11th

November 4th Finish the steps in Dialect Acquisition

Begin Dialect Donor Project

Assign: Transcriptions (100 words of the interview) due next class

November 11th Dialect Donor Projects

Assign: Applying your new accent to a story, poem or play, be
Ready to do sight readings in accent

November 18th Sight readings and Rehearsal for December 2nd Presentations

From November 18th to December 2nd, book a rehearsal time with me outside of class.