

Syllabus THEA 440A, Advanced Voice FALL 2013 (rev 09192013)

Instructor: Patricia Bahia
Office Hours: by appointment
Phone: 310-963-5183
Email: patriciabahiamusic@gmail.com
Office Hours: by appointment
Class Days/Time: Monday/Wednesday 9:00 – 10:50 am
Classroom: PED 202
Pianist: Cassandra Nichols

Voice Objectives:

This course is designed to give you a foundation in the techniques of singing and to enable you to sing with healthy vocal technique and free creative expression. For the non-singer: the goal is to develop the confidence and technique to sing, and to view singing as another viable voice use. For the singer: the goal is to expand and refine vocal skills. The course will cover the fundamentals of vocal technique and performance.

Performance Objectives: To gain a proficiency in performing and interpreting a song. To know how to choose repertoire, build your book, prepare your music, work with accompanists and successfully audition. You will be assisted in finding two new songs that will get you a callback.

This class is substantially experiential. We will review the anatomy and physiology of the vocal mechanism and explore the techniques of singing. I truly believe the saying “If you can walk, you can dance; If you can talk, you can sing.” We will view the voice as a musical instrument that you can learn to play. Throughout the course, the student will participate in singing in ensemble and solo performance. An integral part of the class is exploring the preparation and process of performance. The class will culminate with the preparation and performance of two “audition ready” songs in a final “mock” audition.

Suggested Texts/Readings

Vocal Technique book: *Adventures in Singing*, 4th Ed. by Clifton Ware. ISBN: 978-0-07-297759-2

Rock the Audition: How to Prepare for and Get Cast in Rock Musicals, by Sheri Sanders (2011) ISBN 978-1-4234-9943-5;

Get the Callback: The Art of Auditioning for Musical Theatre, by Jonathan Flom (2009) ISBN 978-0-8108-6398-0 (Amazon.com has a free 1-year Amazon Prime membership for students.)

Other Readings: As assigned.

Other equipment / material requirements: Please bring a portable audio or video recorder, or use your phone to record your individual singing. You will also need: notebook, writing utensil, water, course materials, small hand mirror, and written music as described below.

Music

Written/printed music in sheet music format (containing melody, lyrics, chords and notated piano part) **is required for your performance songs**. Songs choices must be approved by the instructor, and need to be new songs for you (not songs you have already rehearsed and made acting choices for, etc.) You are required to deliver a copy of your music to our pianist in advance. A week in advance is recommended, and a minimum of 48 hours is required. You must make a **minimum of three copies of the written music**. One for the instructor, one for our pianist and one for yourself. Never give away your only copy of your music.

Classroom Protocol/Attitude

You are not in competition with anyone in the course. Individuals vary in rates of growth in different areas. Patience and lack of judgment towards others is expected. You are expected to arrive on time and ready to sing. As singing is a very personal act, students will be respectful and attentive when others are singing. All cell phones must be turned off (except for recording purposes) during class. Laptops and tablets may be used for note taking and recording ONLY, not for Facebook, I.M. Web surfing, or other disruptive activities.

Attire

Make sure you have a loose waistband so you can freely breathe. Exercise clothes such as sweats, warm-ups, leggings, stretch pants, exercise shorts are all fine. Avoid tight jeans or short skirts/dresses that will make it uncomfortable to be on the floor.

Practice

It is expected that you will devote 20 minutes a day to singing. Just by singing every day, you will gain strength and dexterity

Attendance, Tardies and Absences:

Attendance, in-class participation and assignments are a substantial portion of your grade. You will not be successful in this class if you do not attend and participate. **If you must miss class, you must email the instructor in advance. Late assignments will not be accepted.** You are responsible for turning in your assignments on time, even if you must miss class. If, for some reason, you are not in class when an assignment is given, it is your responsibility to get the information from one of your classmates so you are prepared when it is due.

You may have up to three undocumented absences during the semester for any reason, no questions asked. Any absences greater than three will need to be discussed in advance with the instructor, in consultation with the Assistant Dean's office, and will be considered only for serious, verifiable emergencies or comparable situations. Arriving more than 20 minutes late to class, or leaving early may be counted as a half absence. Once again, you will not be successful in this class if you do not attend and participate.

Grading Scale:

There are a total of 1000 points for this course as follows:

Class Participation and Preparation	300 points	30%
Written Assignments	300	30%
Midterm performance	200	20%
Final performance	200	20%

The final course grade is determined by the average of all points accumulated, based on the following scale:

A = 4; A- = 3.7; B+ = 3.3; B = 3; B- = 2.7; C+ = 2.3; C = 2; C- = 1.7; D = 1; F = 0.

When the average falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted toward the positive end of the scale for students whose attendance and participation in class has been good, but will be weighted toward the negative end of the scale for those with poor attendance and participation.

A = 96-100%

A- = 91-95%

B+ = 88-90%

B = 85-87%

B- = 81-84%

C+ = 78-80%

C = 75-77%

C- = 71-74%

D+ = 67-70%

D = 61-63%

F = 60% or below

Academic Integrity

Dishonesty in any form harms the individual, other students, and the School of Theatre. Therefore, USC policies on academic integrity will be enforced in this course. Papers suspected of containing plagiarized material (the unacknowledged or inappropriate use of another's ideas, wording, or images) will be verified for authenticity by the

School of Theatre through internet services. I expect you to familiarize yourself with the academic integrity guidelines found in the current SCampus (www.usc.edu/dept/publications/scampus).

Disability Services

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is 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 me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 am to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

Final Examination Date:

The final exam date is Monday December 16, 2013 at 11am.

Assignments and Grading Policy

You are not in competition with anyone in this course except yourself. You will be graded on your individual growth from the beginning of the semester to the end.

Evaluation Parameters

1. Development of skills in listening and responding
2. Preparation and completion of assignments
3. Ability to focus/concentrate in class
4. Willingness to try new skills
5. Progress using vocabulary and vocal tools introduced in class
6. Contribution to in-class discussions

Performances

Performances will be graded using the evaluation parameters covered so far in the class. For example, if your performance is in week two (2) after we have covered posture and breathing, your performance will be evaluated by how well you implement the posture and breathing techniques we covered in class. Your performance in week six (6) will be evaluated by how well you implement the skills we have covered by week six, namely song choice, posture, breathing, sound production, use of vocal registers, and diction. Your final performance will be graded on all skills covered in the course. Remember you are not in competition with anyone but yourself, and you will be evaluated on your individual progress in the semester.

Written Assignments

All written assignments except those done in class, must be 1 page, typed, double spaced, and must contain your full name, Student ID, course number, date and assignment name. Assignments are worth 50 points each. **No late assignments will be accepted.**

1. Personal Vocal History Due September 4

Using the following questions as prompts to get you thinking, write a 1-page description of your vocal history. What image do you have of your basic singing voice? Do you like it? Do you wish it were more like someone else's voice? If so, whose? What feedback have you received from others regarding your singing? Have you ever been encouraged or discouraged from singing? What are some vocal qualities you would like to develop as a long term goal? (Again, it is not necessary to answer these questions directly, they are just to get you thinking)

2. In Class Performance/Audience Reflections:

In class after the performances, **write a ½ page to 1 page of notes on your performance.** Include one thing you wouldn't change that you want to retain and repeat. Include one thing about your performance you want to improve.

Also write a ½ page to 1 page of notes on your colleagues' performances. How did you feel when they were singing.

3. Personal Assessment and Goals Assignment Due 10/09

With regard to your in-class performances so far, describe one aspect of your performance you want to keep and one you want to change/improve (your goal). Write out your plan of how you will make progress toward your goal over the next month between now and the mock audition on December 6. Include a realistic practice plan/schedule.

4. Lyrics Exercise Due 10/21

Three separate parts:

A: Write out the lyrics (by hand) to the song(s) you are learning as though they are your own words. Write them at least three times and read them out loud as prose.

B: On one set of the handwritten lyrics, notice and mark where the natural (spoken, not sung) stresses of the words fall (underline stressed syllables), note where the natural breaths and pauses occur with single quote (') for breaths, and commas (,) for pauses, and notice the inherent musicality in the words themselves.

C: In two separate paragraphs of typed prose, 1. Write a paraphrase of the lyrics in your own words. And 2. Write your subtext for the lyrics. What is the story behind the lyrics. Who is the character singing the song? Who is the character singing to? Why is the character singing? What action, if any, does the singer want to happen?

5. Listening and Observing Exercise Due 11/13.

Attend a live vocal performance (a concert or a theater production) on or off-campus. ***The performance must be a live vocal performance with singing.*** Concert DVD's or YouTube videos are not appropriate for this assignment. Write a one to two page review of the performance with your observations of the performance, including 1. Presentation—general effectiveness, communication, story telling; 2. Posture and Breathing; 3. Vocal quality—intonation, quality, use of range/registers; 4. Musicianship—rhythm, pitches, phrasing, style and 5. Diction—pronunciation, clarity, appropriateness for role/repertoire. Include the day of the performance, the venue and the name(s) of the performer(s).

6. Final Self-evaluation, Thoughts and Reflections on the Course, Due 12/16

The final written assignment is a 1-2 page paper, containing a self-evaluation of the final mock audition, and your thoughts and reflections on your experience in the course. Include a description of your audition pieces, your key artistic choices in the preparation of those songs, and your assessment of the effectiveness of those choices. Also include your general "take-aways" from the course. What skills or knowledge did you gain that will serve you in your future career?

THEA 440A Advanced Voice Fall 2013

The following is a description of the items we will cover each week. In addition, each week we will begin with a body warm-up, practice vocal exercises and engage in ensemble and individual singing. Please note that this schedule is subject to change, and the instructor will provide oral notice in class as well as email follow-ups to your official email address when feasible regarding any changes to the schedule.

Copies of sheet music and lead sheets must be provided in advance to our pianist for the class, ideally one week prior to your performance, but no later than 48 hours.

Table 1 Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Assignments, Deadlines
1	M 8/26 W 8/28	Introductions; Needs of class, goal setting. Preparing the body for singing. Body alignment and breathing for singing. Vocal warm-ups. Improvisational Circle Singing Mindset—answering ‘the call;’ why sing? why act? the joy of singing, of living a creative life. What makes a good audition song. Musical theater repertoire—what’s overdone, what’s fresh. New sources and ideas for repertoire. Improvisational circle singing. Assignment: Personal Vocal History for next week, and begin looking for songs.
2	M holiday W 9/4	More on song selection. More on posture and breathing. How to work with an accompanist. How to choose a song key. Discussion of “type” and how to research. First individual singing (can be a song you already know); In-class writing assignment; Assignment: Choose four possible songs and bring them to class next week. Personal Vocal History Due 9/4
3	M 9/9 W 9/11	Sound Production—How the Voice Works (Phonation). Vocal anatomy and function. Aspirate/breathy, glottal/pressed and coordinated/clean production. Bring in sheet music for four possible songs you are considering Due 9/9. Be prepared to sing at least one. In Class Performances; In class writing assignment.
4	M 9/16 W 9/18	Vocal Registers; <i>Passaggi</i> , Bridges and Breaks; Connecting/Bridging Vocal Registers; The sonic and emotional qualities of chest, head, mix/mixed/middle, falsetto, belt. Different flavors of mix (chest mix vs. head mix etc.) In-Class Performances; In-class writing assignment; Circle Singing.
5	M 9/23 W 9/25	Resonance: Tone Quality; “Dark and light” another way to enhance story-telling. Resonance styles for different styles of music. In-Class Performances
6	M 9/30 W 10/2	Mindset and the inner critic; Audition and performance etiquette; More on working with an accompanist. In-Class Performances Midterm Mock Auditions on 10/2; Industry Guest Speaker: Amy Englehart
7	M 10/7 W 10/9	More on mindset. Review of mock auditions—successes and growth areas. Self assessment and building on what went well, rather than self-flagellation. Personal Assessment and Goals Assignment Due 10/09
8	M 10/14 W 10/16	Diction/Articulation; Consonants as condiment to the main course of vowels. Character-and story-telling diction choices. Speech v. Singing. In Class Performances
9	M 10/21 W 10/23	Lyrics; Story telling and “delivering” a lyric. Monologuing a lyric. Speech v. Singing. In-Class Performances Lyric Exercise Due 10/21

10	M 10/28 W 10/30	Intonation; Expanding Pitch & Dynamic Range; In-Class Performances.
11	M 11/4 W 11/6	Vocal health and good habits for singing. In-Class Performances.
12	M 11/11 W 11/13	Wardrobe, photos, resumes, other elements involved in auditioning Listening and observing exercise due 11/13
13	M 11/18 W 11/20	Power performance tools and audition practice Industry Guest Speaker: VP Boyle
14	M 11/25 W holiday	Power performance tools and audition practice
15	M 12/2 W 12/4	Power performance tools and audition practice Mock Auditions. Be prepared to sing two contrasting songs, 16-bar cut, 32-bar cut, and/or entire song. Industry Guest TBA
16	M 12/9 W 12/11	Study Week no class meetings
Final Exam	M 12/16	Final 11am – 1pm. Group discussion of mock auditions. Turn in Final Self-evaluation, Thoughts and Reflections on the Course re your development over the semester and the mock audition. I will bring snacks.

Partial List of Resources:

Musicnotes.com
Sheetmusicdirect.com
Sheetmusicplus.com
Freehandmusic.com
Colonymusic.com
Musicdispatch.com
Hollywoodsheetmusic.com

The Belt Book (thebeltbook.com) (There is also a book)
musicalnotesmore.com
www.ibdb.com
musicals101.com
auditioningforcollege.com