

Instructor: Heather Lyle

Office Hours: 12:00pm to 1:00pm by appointment, but always feel free to schedule a time to meet me if you need me.

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Teaching Assistant or Assistant Instructor: Duncan Bohannon
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Course Description and Overview

Singing as an approach to the understanding and use of rhythmic and heightened language and text.

Learning Objectives

This voice class is designed for second year BFA students who have already had a foundation in voice work for stage. The class will take a deeper look at anatomy and physiology, support, tone, clarity, airflow, range and resonance and explore heightened language, extended voice use and singing. We will also explore rhythm, meter and pitch. Singing opens up the body and quickly exposes tension and holding, so it is one of the best techniques to free the voice as well as emotion. Through the use of Fitzmaurice Voicework, Linklater, Roy Hart Voice Work, Knight-Thompson Speechwork, Bel Canto Singing techniques and more, the student will gain a greater understanding of their voice and master control of the muscles of articulation and phonation. As well, the student will become comfortable with singing as an extension of their speaking voice, explore performance techniques and prepare a song useful for auditions. Many actors are called on to perform a song unexpectedly at an audition, so the actor needs to have one in their back pocket for such occasions.

Prerequisite(s): THTR140*b*; **Corequisite:** THTR215*a*, THTR220*a*; *b*, THTR215*b*, THTR220*b*.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Readings and Handouts will be on Blackboard, emailed or handed out in class.

What to bring to class

Singing makes you thirsty, so always have a bottle of water. Have a notebook or section in a binder for notes and a place to put handouts. Bring this to every class. There will be some writing in class, mainly notes to yourself of discoveries and to remind you of things you want to remember. This will not be collected, it is for your own use, but I may ask to look at it.

Have a few pieces of text available at all times. It can be poetry, something from a play, something you are using in another class. Also, you will need some text from Shakespeare after a few weeks.

DESCRIPTION OF GRADING CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS
SCHOOL OF DRAMATIC ARTS GRADING POLICIES:

1. No late papers, exams, projects, etc. shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher, or unless exceptional circumstances occur.
2. There are no unexcused absences allowed. See policy below for excused absences.
3. A grade of IN (incomplete) shall only be awarded under exceptional circumstances, according to

University Policy.

4. A BFA student can only be placed on probation once. A second term of probation shall mean that the student shall be permanently dismissed from the program. This criterion shall become effective once it has been printed in the USC catalogue.

5. There shall be annual reviews of the progress of all MFA and BFA students.

Grading Scale : **A** indicates work of excellent quality; **B** of good quality; **C** of average quality; **D** of below average quality; and **F** indicates inadequate work.

I use a points system that adds up to 1000. To figure out your grade drop the zero at the end and you will have your grade percentage.

94-100 A	4.0	74-76 C	2.0
90-93 A-	3.7	70-73 C-	1.7
87-89 B+	3.3	67-69 D+	1.3
84-86 B	3.0	64-66 D	1.0
80-83 B-	2.7	60-63 D-	0.7
77-79 C+	2.3	0-59 F	0

SDA Policies

1. ATTENDANCE and Participation: Attendance and participation in class is mandatory because acting is primarily a experiential process. According to School of Dramatic Arts guidelines, no unexcused absences are allowed. Each absence will deduct 50 points from your grade. **An excused absence is due to serious illness, grave emergency** or significant acting work with appropriate SDA leave of absence. Please inform the instructor of your absence. You are responsible for all work missed. An extended absence, even if excused, could seriously affect your work and grade in class. Please consult with instructor if such a situation arises. Missing more than four classes may result in failure.

2. TARDIES; Lateness is disruptive. If you enter after sign-in you are considered tardy. Do not sign other people in. Each of you is responsible for your own sign in. 3 tardies are a 50 point deduction from your overall grade. If a performance is going on, please wait outside until it is over. If you know you are going to be late, please text me.

3. PHYSICAL CLASS AND CONTACT: This class involves a certain degree of physical activity, and often involves physical contact between the students, and between the instructor and the student. If you have any physical conditions that you feel the teacher needs to be aware of, or have any concerns about physical contact, or any other concerns that might impact your work in the class, please contact your instructor privately.

Assignment	Points	% of grade
Class Participation	29 sessions x 5.17 points	150
Class take-home written projects and preparations for class participation.		100
Face Dance Assignment		75
Articulation exercise		25
Alliteration exercise		25
Omnish Oration		75

Warmups		75
Mid-Term Solo Performance		150
Resonance Modeling Assignment Tension Checklist		75 25
Short quizzes		3 x 25
Final Mock Audition Quiz		150 50
		Class total 1000

To figure out what your grades are deduct the 0 from the end of your points total and that is your grade percentage.

Assignment Submission Policy

Some assignments I will want you to bring to class by hand and some you can email.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

The following is a description of the items we will cover each week.

Each class will begin with a short body and vocal warmup led by a student.

Week One (Aug. 25, 27): Syllabus review. Needs of class. Working with accompanists and use of sheet music (6 versus 32 bar auditions). How to prep your music. Explore new musical theatre sources and sources for repertoire from contemporary music.

What is a voice. Voice box exercise. Know your nervous system. The autonomic nervous system response in singing performance. **Be prepared to sing 32 bars of a song for Aug. 27th.**

Week Two (Sept. 1, 3): Anatomy of breathing. Exploration of Darwin's theory of the sounding of early man. What part of the body comes alive with different sounds. Vocal tract exploration. Primal sounding. Face yoga. Continuants into vowels. Bring a piece of text with you to class. It can be a poem, monologue, sonnet, Shakespeare. It does not need to be memorized. **Homework: For next week choose some songs you might like to sing for the final audition song and bring them to the class Sept. 8 for me to look over (they can be pop, rock, musical theatre).**

Week Three (Sept. 8, 10): Exploring obstruents. Sound becoming language. Spoken and Sung Outlandish and Omnish. Obstruents into consonants. Explore the correlation of consonants to structuring (abdominal support). Notice which consonants naturally engage your abdominal support and look for a Shakespeare phrase or two that uses alliteration (words with repeated sounds) that core connects well for you. The released face muscles, throat, jaw, tongue. Discuss song choice for final audition. **Song ideas on Sept. 8.**

Assignment 1, Face Dance, due Thursday Sept. 10 by class so we can watch them.

Week Four (Sept. 15, 17): **Private Singing Lessons on Sept. 15.** Continue on support and consonants. Which consonants best connect tot the core. Core connection for singing versus speech. Explore yoga postures that naturally open the body for singing. Omnish performance. Removing tension from the body to allow the whole body to sing.

Bring Shakespeare alliteration exercise phrase to class on Sept. 17 for class use.

Assignment 2, Omnish Oration due Sept. 17.

Week Five (Sept. 23, 25): **Private Lessons on Sept. 23.** Opening the whole body to sound. The use of tuning forks to increase vibrations in the body. The differences and similarities between

singing and speech. Delaying the recoil forces of exhalation. **Assignment 3, articulation exercise creation due Sept. 25.**

Week Six (Sept. 30, Oct. 2): Find your best resonance for singing. Sound ladders. Tubes and resonance tools. Sundberg exercises and Lessac-Verdolini resonant voice exercises. Intonation. Resonance Modeling. **Watch Christina Bianco video. Quiz Sept. 30**

Week Seven (Oct. 7, 9): Mid Term Performances, and individual singing. The anatomy of the larynx. Build a larynx. Male voices versus female voices. Registers.

Week Eight (Oct. 14, 16): More resonance work. Roy Hart work. The latest in airflow exercises. Breathly versus pressed phonation. How to start sound with a clean coordinated onset of tone. Individual singing.

Week Nine (Oct. 21, 23): Partner teaching and identifying the unreleased places in each persons voice. **Assignment 5: Resonance Modeling Due Oct. 23. Quiz Oct. 21**

Week Ten (Oct. 28, Oct.30): Tension and the singer; the tension checklist that will corrupt tone. How to extend range and reach the high notes. Airflow and air spin, vocal flexibility. **Assignment 6: Bring in your tension sheet.**

Week Eleven (Nov. 4, 6): The pitfalls of the English language. How to sing the American R, diphthongs and Triphthongs.

Week Twelve (Nov. 11, 13) More singing techniques.

Week Thirteen (Nov. 18, 20): Delivering the lyric and arcing a song. Power performance tools and audition practice. Solo singing. **Quiz Nov. 18**

Week Fourteen (Nov. 25): Power performance tools and audition practice. Solo singing.

Week Fifteen (Dec. 2): Power performance tools and audition practice. Solo singing.

Final Exam (Tues. Dec. 15, 2015, 8:00am): **Mock Audition.**

Note that the University requires the final exam meet on the day scheduled, so don't plan for leaving school for any holiday plans until after your finals..

Note: (The instructor reserves the right to edit or adjust this calendar to meet the needs of this specific class. Notice will be given of any changes.)

Assignments

Assignment one: Wearing all black, find a piece of music, instrumental is the easiest, and without sound, move the muscles of your face to the music creating a face dance.

Assignment two: Omnish Oration with National Anthem: A short two minute political oration about why you should be elected to Omnish Office. Begin with a greeting and short joke, tell 3 main points of your campaign and then get the emotions of the group going by ending with singing the Omnish National Anthem. No more than two minutes.

Assignment three: Of the consonants that we explored, create a short (four phrase) articulation exercise using consonants that engage different parts of the lips teeth and tongue. Put together a series of articulations that you may need to strengthen. It can be a normal series of sounds or a scat with pitches.

Assignment four: Each person will have the opportunity to lead one or two warm-ups (body or vocal).

Assignment five: Pick part of a song and sing it with someone else's resonance. It can be a celebrity or you can make up a character that has a voice nothing like yours. 40 seconds to a minute.

Assignment six: Bring in a list of all the places where tension is affecting your singing.

The midterm: will be a self created solo performance with the use of a song. Singing reveals the real you, fully exposed, so include something personal about your life in it. Regarding song use: It can be a whole song, a part of a song, or a song or songs woven through the monologue. Or it can be sung text. Show articulation skills and structuring. The goal of the exercise is to be able to transition from speech to song, have clear articulation skills and supportive structuring.

Final: The final will be a mock audition of a song of your choosing that you would like to do for an audition and a short test.

There will be a few videos I want you to watch.

These are MRI's of the inside of the mouth.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nvvn-ZVdeqQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2OdAp7MJAI>

This is a great NYC cabaret singer Christina Bianco who impersonates other singers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1us197eB6gQ>

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/department-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/academicssupport/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.