

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: 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 an introduction to voice work for stage and screen. This course will create a seamless line from breath to voice to text to song. 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. The whole body will be looked at as being available for embodiment of sound. Through the use of Knight-Thompson Speechwork, Fitzmaurice Voicework, yoga, Asian sacred energy arts, Linklater, Roy Hart Voice Work, Bel Canto Singing, vocal improvisation techniques and more, the student will gain a greater understanding of his or her voice and be able to connect and master control of the muscles of support, phonation, and articulation. The student will become comfortable with singing as an extension of his or her speaking voice and marry the two. They will learn how to get inside a song as well as performance techniques 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 and bring kleenex.

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. This will not be collected, it is for your own use, but I may ask to look at it. Eventually you will need a binder for songs.

Class attire: Movement clothing. Be prepared to work barefoot. Bring a small towel if you need it. No jeans, trousers, skirts (unless over leotards) or dresses.

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, something you are using in another class is fine.

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, includes 3 lines of text each week	29 sessions x 5.17 points	150
5 in-the-song elements	5 x 20	100
Face Dance Assignment		75
Articulation exercise Alliteration exercise		25 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		150
		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 body warmup and vocalizations.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Week One (Aug. 23, 25): Syllabus review. Needs of class. What are the qualities required to be a good actor and an acting troupe. Set goals. Know your nervous systems. The autonomic nervous system response in spoken and singing performance. Rodenburg body alignment and its affects on the voice.

Week Two (Aug. 30, Sept. 1): Developing Dristi focus. Yoga balance poses. Anatomy of breathing and breath proprioception. 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 gurning. Continuants into vowels.

Week Three (Sept. 6, 8): Qi Gong warm-up. Muscles of face. Exploring obstruents. Sound becoming free 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. Learn gospel song. **Bring a piece of text with you to class. It can be a poem, monologue, sonnet, Shakespeare.** It does not need to be memorized. **Face Dance due Sept. 8**

Week Four (13, 15): Continue on support and vowels and consonants. Bring Shakespeare alliteration exercise phrase to class on Sept. 13 for class use. Define which best connect to the core. From Omnish to melody and the addition of airflow. Where did singing come from? Why sing? Core connection for singing versus speech. Explore yoga postures that naturally open the body for singing. **Omnish performance Sept 15. Bring a piece of text with you to class. It can be a poem, monologue, sonnet, Shakespeare.** It does not need to be memorized. For next week choose some songs you might like to sing and bring them for me to look over (they can be pop, rock, musical theatre).

Week Five (Sept. 20, 22): Energization exercises. Sundberg and Titze voice science airflow theory and exercises. The relationship between airflow and support. Opening the whole body to sound. The differences and similarities between singing and speech. Alternatives to pushing or throwing the voice since only 9% of your voice gets outside your body. **Articulation exercise creation due Sept. 22.**

Week Six (Sept. 27, 29): Find your best resonance for speech and singing. Sound ladders. Tubes and resonance tools. Resonance proprioception. The use of tuning forks to increase vibrations in the body. Sundberg exercises and Lessac-Verdolini resonant voice exercises. Intonation. Resonance Modeling. Watch Christina Bianco video. **Quiz Sept. 27.**

Week Seven (Oct. 4, 6): The complete body warm-up. The anatomy of the larynx. Male voices versus female voices. Registers. Register smoothing exercises. The falsetto. Inside-the-song elements 1.

Week Eight (Oct. 11, 13): **Mid Term Performances Oct 11.** More resonance work. Roy Hart work. Breathly versus pressed phonation. how to start sound with a clean onset of tone. Kriya push and pull exercises. Individual singing.

Week Nine (Oct. 18, 20): Vocal Improvisation and inside the song exploration. Assignment 5: Inside-the-song elements 2. **Quiz Oct. 20.**

Week Ten (Oct. 25, Oct.27): 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. Inside-the-song elements 3. **Resonance Modeling Due Oct. 25.**

Week Eleven (Nov. 1, 3): The pitfalls of the English language. How to sing the American R, diphthongs and Triphthongs. Inside-the-song elements 4.

Week Twelve (Nov. 8, 10): More singing techniques including Inside-the-song elements 5.

Week Thirteen (Nov. 15, 17): Culmination of inside-the-song. Power performance tools and audition practice. Solo singing.
Quiz Nov. 17

Week Fourteen (Nov. 22): Power performance tools and audition practice. Solo singing.

Week Fifteen (Nov. 29, Dec. 1): Power performance tools and audition practice. Solo singing.

Final Exam (Tues. Dec.13, 8:00am): Solo Performance.

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

Every Monday assignments: Bring 2 to 4 lines of text that you have written to class each Monday. They don't need to rhyme but imagine that they could fit into a song. Make them personal or not.

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.

Assignment seven to eleven: There will be five inside-the-song assignments between week 7 and 14.

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.

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/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.