**THTR 342A Basic Voice**

**Section 62934R**

**Fall 2018-T/TH 8-9:20AM**

**Section 62932D**

**Fall 2018-T/TH 9:30-10:50AM**

**Location: MCC 106**

**Instructor: Anne Burk**

**Office Hours: by appointment**

**Contact Info:** [**aburk@usc.edu**](mailto:aburk@usc.edu) **310-446-8036 (landline/no texts)**

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**Course Description and Overview:**

Examination of the individual voice centering on resonance, tone, flexibility, and support through dramatic selections for transmitting meaning and emotion of character. Training in the fundamental vocal skills necessary for the actor, through a combination of exercises, skills development, journaling, homework, tests, and performance. Identifying the expressive potential of each student's voice and developing the techniques and discipline to refine and realize that potential. Exploring the relationship between voice and self, in such a way as to free the barriers that separate the two, and allow for a free expression of the self through the voice. This course is appropriate for any student concerned with the use and health of the vocal apparatus in a public and/or private setting.

**Learning Objectives:**

To enhance student’s performance skills by:

1) Understanding the physiological mechanics of breath and sound

1. Discovering an ease and economy within the physical self
2. Increasing vocal range and power
3. Enabling a richer use of color and texture
4. Creating a deeper awareness of the articulation process

**Required Readings and Supplementary Materials:**

1. Linklater Freeing the Natural Voice(Instructor will provide excerpt)
2. Mayer Voice & Diction (Instructor will provide excerpt)
3. All articles at www.fitzmauricevoice.com (Student must purchase online)

In addition, you are responsible to study the handouts provided by the instructor. You should place these in a binder and bring them to every class period. You will be tested on this material.

# Supplies:

Folder for handouts, note paper, highlighter pen (any color but yellow,) pencil, and loose comfortable clothes to move in. (Ex. sweats, t-shirt, and socks. Be aware that you will be removing your shoes and lying on the mats. Short skirts, low rise jeans, and extremely tight clothing are not appropriate.) You may choose to bring a towel, blanket, or pillow for mat work.

**Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments:**

Performance Pieces

There will be 4 Performance Pieces. You are allowed to select your own material, however, please consult with the instructor if you have any questions about content. The pieces are to be memorized, fully staged, and no longer than 1 ½ minutes. You will be given the opportunity to rehearse in the class before the allocated performance date.

On performance days you must bring a LARGE font (20+) double spaced typed copy of the text.

1) Telegram or “Six Words”

Think about a very important event in your life. Select six words that are the distilled essence of this event, where each word embodies an entire range of feelings, emotions, thoughts and sensations. The six words should not make a grammatical sentence; rather they develop their own internal logic based upon your under lying inner life. The purpose of the exercise is to explore in detail the subtle connection between impulse, breath, feeling and thought: the goal is to have the words ‘speak through you’ rather than you ‘speaking the words.’

2) Personal Poem

A poem written about a significant event in your life, or expressing your thoughts/feelings about a particular aspect of life. The poem could be a further exploration of the Telegram, or it could be about a new experience. The poem could either be rhymed, or in free verse. The purpose of the exercise is to explore more deeply the connection between impulse, breath, feeling and thought: the goal is to begin to deal with the demands of more complicated text, and more varied breath rhythm.

3) Group Happening

A further exploration of the Telegram and Personal Poem. Pre-assigned groups will develop a performance project that incorporates the elements that have been required thus far. Stillness, alignment, non-literal/interpretive movement, vocal variation in “power” words, and breath sounds are to be implemented.

4) Song

Performance of a song acapella. (i.e. without accompaniment) Choose a song that moves you, that expresses something very personal to you. Keep the song to 1 ½ minutes in length, so you may only do a part of the song (i.e. verse and chorus, or two verses and chorus, etc.) The purpose of the exercise is NOT to teach singing technique, nor to ‘sing perfectly’ in a conventional sense, but to explore a deeper emotional connection with the additional elements of resonance, tempo and rhythm. The goal is to maintain free and dynamic breath and a dynamic range of pitch and resonance, while allowing for a deeper emotional connection, this time using someone else’s words instead of your own. Authenticity of expression and commitment is more important than aesthetic perfection.

Written Assignments

Journal Entries/Report

Your journal is a very important part of monitoring your progress. You are responsible for at least 5 pages per submission. Two of these pages (single spaced no larger than 12pt. font) must be dedicated to a Report on your assigned readings. These should not be a summary of the books, (I’ve read them!) but instead a discussion of what you found of particular interest, what you had questions about, and how what is discussed in the texts relates to your own personal journey through the voice work. In addition, if I ask you to journal on a given topic please make a note to do so. The journals will be collected three times during the quarter. Please do not re-cap the material we cover in class. (I was there, I know what we did.)

3 of the 5 pages may cover topics such as:

Daily application of your voice in communicating with others

Discoveries of how your breathing and voice react to stress

1. How you feel this work is changing the use of your voice at work, in an artistic medium, or at play
2. Elements of your voice that you feel need change and how you will develop those areas in the future
3. Observations about dialects and accents
4. Vocal health
5. Your Body Story: a description of how you see and experience your body and voice
6. Passions Gallery: collect various pictures, quotes, random items that express what you are passionate about, who you are and what personas you can express in the future
7. Touchstones: utilize pictures, quotes, notes, items that remind you of your past and present; significant elements of your life
8. Dream Journal: write down your dreams, both daydreams and night dreams.

Show Report

A typed 3 page report (single spaced no larger than 12pt. font) on a live event that you attend outside of class time. I suggest attending one of the SDA Department productions, although other choices may be acceptable. (Please consult with the instructor before attending your chosen event.) The report must discuss the following topics. The presenter’s, actor’s, or cast’s vocal use in relation to:

1. Vocal and physical energy
2. Vocal and physical ease
3. Variety in Rate, Inflection, Pitch, Placement, Dynamic, and Quality
4. Believability as the character
5. Use and connection to material
6. Dialect/Accent (If you choose a play in which the performers use a dialect or an accent please also be prepared to discuss authenticity, continuity, and appropriateness.)

Be specific and give detailed examples and quotes for each topic. No plot summaries or production notes, please!

**Exams:**

(We will spend class time reviewing the material before the exam.)

Written answer and fill in the blank format

**Grading Scale for SDA:**

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

**The SDA GUIDELINES on GRADING as published are:**

* Each course shall contain at least three assignments, projects, exams, papers or exercises which shall be evaluated during the semester and which shall provide an analytical record of each student’s progress in the course.
* Attendance shall be weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines. Studio Courses must delineate how participation will be graded (in class exercises, scene study, etc.)
* There shall be no unexcused absences.
* No late assignments, (performance) projects, exams, papers, or exercises shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur.

**Grading Breakdown:**

**Assignment Points % of Grade**

**Daily Exercises (Attendance &Punctuality) 10 10**

**Journal Entries (3x10 pts each) 30 30**

**Performance Pieces-(4x10 pts each) 40 40**

**Midterm Exam 10 10**

**Show Report 10 10**

**Total possible 100 100%**

**Assignment Submission and Performance Policy:**

If for some reason you are unable to attend class on the day a written assignment is due, the instructor will only accept the assignment via email during that class period on the due date. Emails sent after the official class end time 9:20AM PST (62934R) or 10:50AM PST (62932D) on the scheduled due date will not be accepted for credit. There are no make-ups for missed performances unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher.

**Additional Policies:**

Attendance and Punctuality. You are responsible for signing yourself in at the beginning of each class period. Failure to do so will result in an absence on the roll sheet. Attendance and participation in class is mandatory because voice work is an experiential process. According to the School of Dramatic Arts no unexcused absences are allowed. Each unexcused absence will lead to a reduction in your grade. You are responsible for all work missed. An extended absence, even if excused, could seriously affect your work and grade in class. Tardiness is disruptive and should be avoided; failure to do so will result in a reduction in your grade. If you come to class while a performance is going on, please check through the window in the door and wait outside until that student is finished. In addition, I highly recommend finding at least two “study buddies.” Please exchange contact information with your fellow students, so that you can obtain any notes or assigned homework from a class that you may have missed.

**Study Buddies**

**Name Phone # Email**

**Daily Exercises:**

As previously mentioned, you are responsible to come dressed to move. We may be working on the floor or exploring the use of our voices when transporting our bodies through space. You must inform the instructor in advance if there are any limits to your mobility or if you have any concerns about engaging in physical contact with the instructor or your fellow students. This work is meant to be an exploration of the physicality of sound. This work should be approached with a positive spirit of cooperation, commitment, and professionalism. However, it is also important not to push yourself beyond your own personal limits.

**Weekly Course Schedule:**

Week 1: Tues. 8/21 First day of class

Thurs. 8/23 Start reading Linklater excerpt on “Breath and Bodywork”

Week 2: Tues. 8/28 Anatomy/physiology

Thurs. 8/30 TBA

Week 3: Tues. 9/4 Alignment and breath exercises

Thurs. 9/6 Bring in Telegram words

Week 4: Tues. 9/11 Rehearsal

Thurs. 9/13 1st Performance Project Telegram

Week 5: Tues. 9/18 Bring in Personal Poem

Thurs. 9/20 1st set of Journal Entries due/Rehearsal

Week 6: Tues. 9/25 Start reading Mayer excerpt on “Resonation and Vocal Quality”

Rehearsal

Thurs. 9/27 2nd Performance Project Personal Poem

Week 7: Tues. 10/2 Resonation Exercises

Thurs. 10/4 Articulation exercises

Week 8: Tues. 10/9 Review Midterm Exam/Group division

Thurs. 10/11 Midterm Exam

Week 9: Tues. 10/16 Group Happening Rehearsal

Thurs. 10/18 Group Happening Rehearsal

Week 10: Tues. 10/23 3rd Performance Project Group Happening

Thurs. 10/25 2nd set of Journal Entries due/Speech drills/Tongue twisters

Week 11: Tues. 10/30 Start reading Fitzmaurice articles/Destructuring

Thurs. 11/1 Destructuring

Week 12: Tues. 11/6 Restructuring

Thurs. 11/8 Show Report due/Review warm up work out

Week 13: Tues. 11/13 Bring in Song

Thurs. 11/15 Rehearsal

Week 14: Tues 11/20 3rd set of Journal Entries due/Rehearsal

Thurs. 11/22 No class Thanksgiving

Week 15: Tues. 11/27 4th Performance Project Song

Thurs. 11/29 Final day of class

**Final Examination Dates:**

62934R (8-9:20AM session) - Tuesday Dec. 11 4:30-6:30PM

62932D (9:30-10:50AM session)-Thursday Dec. 6 11AM-1PM

**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 Standardshttps://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.htmlprovides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis:**

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.

**Final Note:**

Please note that the instructor reserves the right to change the curriculum or scheduling at any time. You are responsible to review the Fall 2018 Schedule of Classes if you have any conflicts with the Final Examination, concerns about dropping this class, or choose to change grading options.