

USC School of Dramatic Arts

ADVANCED VOICE & DICTION 540A LECTURE & LAB

Where: PED 202
Instructor: Brent Blair / Natsuko Ohama
FA 2018 — M — 3:00 – 5:50 PM
Lauren Murphy Yeoman
FA 2018 — F — 10:00 – 11:50 AM
Office: Brent Blair / MCC 101b
Natsuko Ohama, Lauren Murphy Yeoman / JEF
By appointment only
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Course Overview

In this second year, we will be working more deeply and specifically on the voice work. Continued work on freeing and strengthening the actor's instrument will involve review, exploration, and specificity. There will be text work, and support of the performance projects.

Brent & Natsuko will be focusing on the voice and text (in lecture section) and Lauren will be focusing on the phonetic pillow work of speech and dialects (in lab section). We have a tremendous amount of work to accomplish as this is the inaugural year of two plays for the semester as well as preparation for the Macbeth production in the spring. Brent & Natsuko will start to include extra work, rehearsal time for individuals.

Course Objectives

Work for the semester will further the personal investigation of vocal freedom from Year 1 through building vocal power and versatility, and application to text. Strengthening connection, flexibility and range of the individual voices. There will be a particular emphasis on the three-octave speaking range and the resonating ladder, deepening breath capacity and responsiveness, and articulatory freedom. Incorporation of voice work more strongly in warm-ups. Independent understanding of vocal warm-ups, and deeper connection to language and text. There must be considered awareness and consciousness of the ensemble as we work on separate productions. Our goals are to move into using tools you have to create character and connection in performance.

Attendance, Tardiness, Absences

The highest level of commitment is expected from MFA actors. Lateness is not tolerated without prior notice. Unexcused absences are not permitted. Communication with the instructor is essential in case of emergency or illness. Violation of these requirements will result in disciplinary measures.

Grading Policy

- A - excellent
- B - good
- C - fair
- D - poor
- F - fail

Grading and Evaluation

Class work- 65%

Mid term-10%

Final exam- 25%

Class Meetings

Mondays 3:00-5:50 PM, Fridays 10 – 11:50 AM Location: PED 202

Final Exam

Final exam will be scheduled in coordination with other teachers.

Class Schedule - subject to change

Weeks 1-3:

In lecture: Review and check-in. Vocal warm-ups and exercises continue. Focus and rigor are required, paying particular attention to ensemble building and working as a group. We prepare for building character explorations.

In lab: Introduction to the Joy of Phonetics pillow work and the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Weeks 4-6:

In lecture: There will be clarification of the voice work as it applies to each class member and consistency of connection. We will be using the work of Shakespeare preparation in tandem with the voice exploration. Processes supporting exploration.

In lab: Initial exploratory work of vowel sounds in speech and writing phonetic symbols.

Weeks 7-9:

In lecture: Continuing strengthening. When rehearsals for *Detroit '67* and *The Receptionist* begin, we will look at rehabilitated reading for script work, and naturally the work on these shows will be a framework to support for Shakespeare. Groundwork laying for production will be our goal. There will be flexibility with our needs, things that come up are hard to predict, so fluidity of work will be our watchword.

In lab: Continuing to find free release of vowels, and beginning to explore clarity and facility of consonants through both voicing and writing.

Weeks 10-12: (Natsuko Returns week 11)

In lecture: Classes will continue as in the prior weeks. This is just part of building stamina, drilling, practice and checking in on the text projects. Rehearsal support for *Detroit '67* and *The Receptionist*. Personalization and text exploration examining sensory, imaginative, emotional connection to language and imagery. Supporting the voice in heightened emotional states. We will adjust our needs based on the process, as with needs of Shakespeare play.

In lab: Everyone will do a Dialect Donor Project: breaking down and demonstrating the features of a chosen dialect using a human source.

Weeks 13-15:

In lecture: Group exploration continues. Detail work on issues that may be arising on text projects will be addressed. Staying in vocal tone, building stamina, deepening and refining text and character connection. Looking at playing in the space of the Carrie Hamilton Theatre (Pasadena Playhouse) as *Detroit '67* and *The Receptionist* prepare to open. Focus will be on the productions during the performance week. Post performances week will shift to Shakespeare work.

In lab: Wrapping up Dialect Donor Projects and reviewing phonetics learned up to this point.

Statements 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.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.