

ALI 252

Advanced Pronunciation

Instructor: Tessy Tzoytzoyrakos

Classroom: THH 111

12:30-1:50pm

Email: tzoytzoy@usc.edu

Office hours: T/TH 4pm and by appointment

PREREQUISITES: Students are placed into ALI 252 based on the results of a previous ALI oral skills course, the International Student English (ISE) Exam¹, or the International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Exam². In addition, international students who want to fine-tune their pronunciation or modify their accent can enroll in this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Good pronunciation involves much more than the correct pronunciation of individual letters and sounds; it's also about mastering the stress, rhythm, and flow of your speech. ALI 252 offers tools to help grasp the “music” of English, raises awareness, and gives nonnative speakers a greater sense of confidence in their academic and professional interactions. This course is for international students who want to achieve more “native-like” pronunciation. **We will use acting techniques, theater, film and TV content to help achieve course objectives.**

We will be working on the following areas of pronunciation:

- Segmentals (vowels and consonants)
- Syllables (combinations of vowels and consonants)
- Word stress
- Intonational units or “thought groups”
- Prominence (sentence stress)
- Intonation
- Rhythm
- Connected speech

These language areas will be addressed and practiced through various drilling exercises, acting-related activities and discussions about the selected study scenes from popular plays, movies, and/or TV sitcoms. Students will perform scenes in class throughout the semester to showcase their progress.

Accurate, fluent pronunciation will be addressed in four stages:

1. Knowledge: understanding how sounds and patterns of sounds are made (both physical and non-physical features)
2. Comprehension: being able to decipher the difference between similar sounds and patterns
3. Production: producing accurate sounds and patterns while concentrating on the

¹ <http://ali.usc.edu/ise/>

² <http://ali.usc.edu/ita/>

physical and non-physical features necessary to produce them

4. Automaticity: comprehension and production of sounds and patterns without thought, as a fluent second language speaker (or native speaker with a modified accent).

GRADING: Upon completion of this course, students will receive a grade of Credit (CR) or No Credit (NC). The final grade will be based on the following criteria:

- **Participation and Teamwork:** Grades are based on the quality of participation such as attendance (10%), active engagement in scene study, class exercises, projects (15%), enthusiasm for learning and improvement (15%); this is a performance-based class and your attendance is mandatory not only for your own presentations, but also in support of your classmates.
- **Scene and Performance Work:**
 - Exercises (improv, warm-ups, drills, discussions, quizzes*) – 20%
 - Scene Presentations (Monologues, Group Scenes)– 20%
 - Final Assignment and Play Attendance**– 20%
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**Quizzes*, covering various pronunciation topics, will periodically be given and graded in class. These are designed to check your *knowledge, comprehension, and production*. *Class projects* include presentations and skits.

**At least once this semester you are required to attend one live theater performance of your choice; I will provide suggestions for you but you will be responsible to make your own arrangements; you will be giving an oral/written report on the show

COURSE MATERIALS: All handouts will be made available in class or on Blackboard.

ALI ATTENDANCE POLICY: More than **3** hours of absence will be reported to the ALI Student Advisor. More than **6** hours of absence will result in a course grade of **NC** (no credit). Absence is counted for *any* reason, including tardiness, illness, emergencies, and conference attendance. You will be marked **ONE** hour absent, if you are 10 or more minutes late, or if you leave class early without prior instructor approval. You will also be marked absent for the **ENTIRE** class time if you use your cell phone or any other electronic device during class time, unless otherwise instructed.

ITAs ONLY: Students must complete ALL course-related assignments, attend ALL meetings with their uSC, and not exceed the maximum number of allowable absences for the course. Students who do not meet these requirements will be at risk of receiving a No Credit and will have their department notified. Failure to attend the scheduled ITA exam may also result in a No Credit for the course.

Please note: This is a credit/no credit (CR/NC) class, which means that you will not receive a final letter grade (A/B/C/F) on your USC transcript. Since this is a proficiency-based course designed to help improve your oral skills, your proficiency in these oral skills at the end of the course or the ITA exam determines whether you will be advised to take an additional class or not.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: ALI and USC are very diligent in keeping students honest about their assignments and tests. Obviously, this is not so much of an issue in a pronunciation class since you cannot have someone else speak for you. However, occasionally a student may be tempted to cheat on a test, or copy another's words from the Internet for a presentation. While these "shortcuts" may make passing a test or preparing a presentation easier, they do not help you learn or improve; therefore, it really is in your best interest to do your own work.

CONFERENCING AND OFFICE HOURS: During the semester, I will be meeting with you individually and/or in groups to listen to your production of sounds, discuss your progress in your scene study and overall pronunciation, and strategize with you to help you reach your personal goals in English communication. In addition, please feel free to stop by during my office hours to practice your pronunciation.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Any student requiring accommodation based on a disability is required to register with the Disability Services and Programs office (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved recommendations can be obtained through DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the session as possible.

CLASSROOM COURTESY:

- Use of technology (e.g., smart phones, iPads) is NOT ALLOWED during class time, unless I specifically instruct you to do so; social media is distracting and takes your attention from learning and practice, so it is forbidden during class.
- If you need to take a quick break to use the restroom, etc., you do not need to ask permission; just quietly leave and return to class promptly.

USING ACTING TECHNIQUES TO TEACH PRONUNCIATION: You may be wondering how pronunciation and theater can be combined in helping improve communication skills. Effective communication is achieved by precise and strategic use of language structures, clear pronunciation, and the understanding of pragmatic knowledge in specific settings. Using acting techniques helps students with their cultural and oral interactions as well as with confidence building. Learning how to "imitate" characters portrayed in theater, film, or television gives students the opportunity to emulate successful communication behaviors in various contexts and situations. It allows students the chance to explore and experiment with language they may not normally be familiar with.