

THTR 342a — Basic Voice

Fall 2019 — Monday & Wednesday — 2-3:20p

2 units

Location: Zoom (link on Blackboard)

Instructor: Emily Alpren

Office Hours: By appointment

Contact Info: (e) alpren@usc.edu

(c) 414.721.8996

Will return emails and calls within 48 hours

Course Description

Breathing and speaking freely is central to our work as performers and successful communicators. This course will introduce students to the fundamentals of Fitzmaurice Voicework®, with an intention of putting these skills to use with text. Using deconstructing and restructuring techniques, this course will explore a series of exercises that identify and release held tension throughout the body and will then introduce a physiologically efficient approach to support breath and voice. We will investigate the relationship between impulse and expression, releasing and sounding, breath and meaning. In addition to written, reading and text assignments, you will keep a journal of your experience throughout the semester. The semester will culminate in a final performance.

Learning Objectives

- Experience heightened internal awareness and release
- Breathe with increased freedom
- Speak on support
- Discover a more honest connection with words/thoughts/images
- Create and execute your own warm-up
- Cultivate an experiential and theoretical understanding of breath, voice and resonance

Philosophy

There is no such thing as a perfect voice. We are not yearning for a particular sound, we are yearning to be heard, believed and understood in a way that is true in that precise moment. When we have greater access to ourselves and our impulses, we will – with technique – be able to extend our own humanity to our characters and audiences.

Furthermore, as voice teachers at USC's School of Dramatic Arts, we ardently stand for and strive to align ourselves with principles of anti-racism, anti-oppression, inclusivity, and equity in the classroom and on our stages. We stand in support of Black Lives Matter and the voices of BIPOC artists. We seek to educate not as privileged experts, but as facilitators whose hearts and minds are concerned with our students' health and well-being both as individuals and collectively. We encourage and celebrate students who speak out as advocates for themselves and others. We recognize systemic racism as part of our culture and so we seek to uplift our students to be the voices of change and the bearers of the torch for a new generation, a generation that does not seek to deny its past, nor to downplay the serious challenges of the present, but to face those challenges with resilience and bravery.

Course Notes

This course will take place on Zoom with required and non-required reading, text, video links and supplemental materials on Blackboard. Print all text assignments that will be spoken for class. Contact me with any printing or technical issues.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Participation: Includes your presence in class, your willingness to take risks and respect for others. It also includes you being prepared to work in the proper attire, with the proper materials. (See “Additional Policies” and “Required Materials” below)

Performance: Your preparation of text assignments and in-class exercises and demonstrated growth. This is not a grade about perceived “talent”.

Voice Journal: You will write at least one page of reflection per week. Your journal should focus on the work, the readings, your questions, challenges and successes throughout the semester.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	
Participation	30	
Performance	30	
Written	40	
Midterm	40	
Final	60	
TOTAL	200	

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Assignment Submission Policy

All written assignments shall be handed in before class on the date specified via Blackboard. No late assignments, 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 Timeline

Expect journals and written assignments to be graded within one week.

Additional Policies

Proper Attire: The work is physical. You are expected to dress in loose comfortable clothing. No tight fitting jeans. Be prepared to work barefoot or in socks.

Absences: You will learn from *doing* the work, observing others, discussing what we do, see and read. If the course falls between 7a-10p in your time zone, you are expected to attend each synchronous session. Any unexcused absence may result in your grade being lowered one full grade. Excused absences (including but not exclusive to illnesses and personal emergencies) must be discussed with me via email or during office hours. Please notify me immediately if you have time zone concerns that may affect synchronous class attendance.

Lateness: Habitual lateness (three tardies) may affect your participation grade.

Technology: This course requires a decent internet connection and a computer that supports Zoom. If you have any problems with this, please reach out to me. There are programs to support you.

Zoom Etiquette:

- Use of student-to-student chat shall be disabled.
- Please turn on your webcam so you can be visible in class unless otherwise instructed. If for whatever reason you need to disable your camera, send me a chat before (ideally) or after.
- No cell phone use, social media or internet surfing.
- Please attend to all bathroom needs before class. If you need to leave, send me a private chat.
- Maintain professional focus. Treat this like an in-person class.
- No eating during class. Drinking water is encouraged.
- No lying down or reclining unless instructed.

Required Materials

- Zafu (You may purchase a zafu at most yoga studios. It's also available online at YogaOutlet.com, YogaDirect.com, Amazon.com and multiple other retailers.)
- Yoga mat (if you are working on a hard surface. (You may purchase this at most yoga studios or the above online retailers)
- Notebook (for written notes and observations).
- Writing utensils
- Highlighters or multicolored pens
- Folder for text

Process and Progression

Process and Progression will change according to the needs and progress of the group. Assignments and deadlines will be clearly articulated in class. Please reach out with any questions regarding assignments or deadlines.

	Day	Date	Topic	Assignment Due
1	M	Aug 17	Introduction: Why voice?	
	W	19	Creating our Space / Creating our voices	- Space exercise - Knight Reading

2	M	24	Internal Awareness, Sensation, Release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Biography of My Voice" due - Week 1 journal
	W	26	Fitzmaurice Voice: Overview, Presence	Silence exercise
3	M	31	Anatomy of Breathing and Voice	Week 2 journal
	W	Sept 2	Destructuring: what is it?	CF Reading
4	M	7	NO CLASS – Labor Day	
	W	9		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poem #1 exercise - Week 3 journal
5	M	14	Destructuring cont.	Week 4 journal
	W	16		
6	M	21	Destructuring cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poem #2 exercise - Week 5 journal
	W	23		
7	M	28	Midterm I: Warm-up and Self Evaluation	Midterm I: Self-guided warm-up, self evaluation
	W	30	Midterm II: Performance Workshop	Midterm II: Performance Workshop
8	M	Oct 5	Destructuring to Restructuring	Week 7 journal
	W	7	Restructuring: anatomy	
9	M	12	Restructuring: support, focus line, breathing through the narrative, play	Week 8 journal
	W	14		Poem #2 workshop
10	M	19	Restructuring the political, the emotional, the personal text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poem #3 exercise - Week 9 journal
	W	21	Imaging in the body: allowing images to support intention, play	
11	M	26	Guided word Soaking	- Word Soak Text part I & II

				- Week 9 journal
	W	28	Performance Workshop	Poem #3 workshop
12	M	Nov 2	Election Day Eve – Performance Workshop continued	- Choose Final Performance Text - Week 9 journal
	W	4	Taking voice work out of voice class: embracing "problems" / Building bridges: from self to character, maintaining presence in performance	
13	M	9	Final Warm-up / Performance Prep	Final Warm-ups
	W	11	LAST CLASS – Performance prep	Performance workshop
15	F	20	Final Performance 2p-4p	Final Performance, self evaluation

SDA PRODUCTIONS

SDA productions are courses and therefore do not supersede any other courses in which you are enrolled. When in an SDA production, students must not register for evening classes that conflict with regularly scheduled rehearsals. In short, being involved in an SDA production is a curricular assignment and must be treated as any other curricular assignment.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR COMMITMENTS AND ISPS

Should you choose to participate in any extra-curricular project, such as an Independent Student Production, the SDA administration and faculty will not make allowances or exceptions for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, home work that is required as preparation for class, or lack of participation in class resulting from your extra-curricular involvement.

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 Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. 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>.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 814-4618 (Vidoe Phone), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

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. See the university's site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

Support Systems:

Campus Support & Intervention (CSI) – (213) 740-0411

Campus Support & Intervention is an office within Campus Wellbeing and Crisis Intervention. We are a team of professionals here to assist students, faculty, and staff in navigating complex issues. Whether you are here seeking support for yourself or someone else, we are available to help you problem solve, understand options, and connect with resources.

<https://uscsa.usc.edu>

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <https://titleix.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://titleix.usc.edu/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

Finally

I am excited to work with each one of you this year. Teaching the universal right of expressing yourself is a singular joy of mine. I welcome all questions, comments, complaints... whatever will help you in this process of discovering your voice.