

USC School of Dramatic Arts

342B Voice

62939R

Units: 2 units

M/W noon to 1:50pm

Location: zoom (invitation will be sent via blackboard and email)

Instructor: Laura Flanagan

Office: lgoldsch@usc.edu / 646-342-5314

Office Hours: by appointment

Contact Info: lgoldsch@usc.edu - see above

Course Description

The course is designed to re-introduce students to the fundamentals of voice training with a focus on putting those skills to use with heightened text. As such, we will explore the relationship between impulse and expression, deep release and communication, breath and meaning in an effort to provide you with the necessary confidence, skills, understanding, release and technique to begin your work with heightened language. In addition to weekly reading and text assignments, you will keep a journal of your growth and progression throughout the semester. The course will culminate in a final presentation.

Online, this course will focus on truth and intimacy in your connection to text, group work in the classroom (in breakout spaces and on the screen - don't worry it'll be fun), and finding your authentic released voice to express all the wonderful, strange and complicated texts we will be learning. By the end of our thirteen weeks together you will be much more comfortable and confident using heightened text to express greater meaning, as well as much more adept at using your vocal apparatus to maximize your authenticity and spontaneity in the moment.

Course Philosophy

There is no such thing as a perfect voice. Every actor has their own strengths and weaknesses and these make us interesting and compelling performers. Actors that have great voices are actors whose voices are indistinguishable from the specificity, depth, commitment, and truth of their performance. We don't want to hear your voice, we want to hear, believe, and understand what you are saying. Meaning is our commitment to understanding what we are saying, and our willingness to communicate that understanding. Technique is the bridge between our understanding and our expression. Thus, our meaning is the depth of our courage, truth, range, freedom, inspiration and exhalation as actors. It is the spirit that unites us as humans and elevates our work from the realm of ego into a greater realm of transformation.

Further, As voice teachers at USC's School of Dramatic Arts we ardently believe that Black Voices Matter. We strive to align ourselves with principles of inclusivity and equity in the classroom online and in person. 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 voice(s) of change and the bearers of the torch for a new generation; a generation that does not seek to deny it's past, nor to downplay the serious challenges of the present, but to face those challenges with resilience and bravery.

Learning Objectives

1. Create your own warmup using the fundamentals of de-structuring, restructuring, resonance, articulation, and thinking on the word.
2. Speak on support
3. Find meaning with a minimum of effort, maximum of expression.
4. Become comfortable and acquainted with learning a variety of texts - with an aim to allowing language to release your impulse and deep connection with word/image to spark your greater truth.
5. Familiarize yourself with specifics of speech actions.

Prerequisite(s): 140a, b

Concurrent Enrollment: 220a, 216

Course Notes

This course will take place on zoom, with occasional enhancements from blackboard. The majority of the class will be synchronous learning during a zoom session though we will occasionally use asynchronous techniques, recording ourselves outside the classroom.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

This course requires a good internet connection, and appropriate operating systems for zoom. In addition this course will require that you have a quiet space, large enough to facilitate you lying down and moving around a bit. A yoga mat is preferable but not required, as are flexible loose clothing that you can move comfortably at home or in your workspace - wherever that is.

Communication

I will be available for office hours by appointment. I am not available immediately after class to discuss anything because I have another class directly after. I will strive to return all communications no later than 24 hours after I receive them.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

All required readings and supplementary materials will be posted online during the semester.

Advised but not required is VOICE AND THE ACTOR by Cicely Berry - available online in paperback or in kindle format: I am putting links to bookstores that are NOT Amazon, in case you want to spend your money elsewhere. There is no need to have this book on hand when we begin class. Getting it by the third or fourth week will be acceptable, so feel free to order it from the attached small bookstores. Or you can find it yourself on Amazon. **Skylight Bookstore in Los Feliz:** <https://www.skylightbooks.com/search/site/>

[Voice%20and%20the%20aCtor; Vroman's Bookstore in Pasadena https://www.vromansbookstore.com/search/site/VOICE%20AND%20THE%20ACTOR; Book Soup in West Hollywood https://www.booksoup.com/search/site/Voice%20and%20the%20Actor](https://www.vromansbookstore.com/search/site/VOICE%20AND%20THE%20ACTOR)

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Each class will be broken down into two parts: Warm-up/Exercises for the first hour - Text/Play/

Performance for the second hour. Assignments will be as follows:

- after each class you will write in your blackboard journal, reflecting on lessons, experiences, challenges and connections you made in that day's class. Each synchronous class time will be represented by a journal entry.
- Each new piece of text assigned will be learned fully and completely
- Group text work will necessitate rehearsal together on zoom or FaceTime outside of class.
- All assignments will be assessed for heart felt conscientious effort.
- Midterm will be a zoom performance of a text we have worked on in class.
- Final will be a zoom performance of a text of your choosing.

Grading Breakdown

Including the above detailed assignments, how will students be graded overall? Participation should be no more than 15%, unless justified for a higher amount. All must total 100%.

Journal	25	25%
Learning the assigned texts	25	25%
Midterm	25	25%
Final	25	25%

Grading Scale (Example)

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

Assignments will be submitted through blackboard and USC email.

Grading Timeline

Journals will be graded at midterm and final
 Daily text assignments will be graded daily.
 Midterm and Final grades will be available four days after the test.

Additional Policies

Students are expected to attend all synchronous zoom meetings. Students are expected to arrive on time in the zoom classroom, ready to work. Journals will be checked weekly to make sure that students are keeping up with their work. I will be available for office hours for any individual concerns, challenges and needs that come during the course of the class.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

(Please refer to the [Contact Hours Reference](#) guide.)

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1	Introduction to Fitzmaurice Voicework. M. Student Introductions, games, and then into leg tremors. W starting with mind/body connection and leg tremors continued - into TEXT.	"Breathing is Meaning" by Catherine Fitzmaurice	Oliver, Mary. "Wild Geese" and/or "The Journey" / Due Wednesday: See blackboard for description of Assignment.
Week 2	M. mind/body connection and leg tremors adding side tremors. W. Adding final back tremor position	Fitzmaurice Interview between Saul and Catherine	Actors Choice: (choose between poems 1,2 or 3 to work on for three weeks). 1. Lorde, Audre. "A Litany for Survival" 2. Neruda, Pablo - "Ode to the Present" 3. Baldwin, James: "The Giver"
Week 3	M. Full review of back tremor positions, addition of first front tremor position. W. Addition of second front tremor position	Breathing article from the Guardian	Learn your poem for M. Work in groups and individually on camera
Week 4	M. Mind/Body and full review of ALL tremor positions, W. Mind/Body and full review plus discussion of the warm-up sequence.		Work in groups and individually on camera
Week 5	MIDTERM WEEK		Perform your poem on zoom

Week 6	M. Concrete/ abstract nouns, locating meaning in the body. W. The Long Thought - how to build an argument through a long thought	Howlround article of your choice with reflection in your journal	Sonnet 29 Shakespeare W: Everyone will perform Sonnet 29.
Week 7	Making the thought your own, breathing the thought	Mary Oliver: Breathing	For M. Write your own sonnet and learn it. We will work on it in groups and by yourself. / W. perform your own sonnet on zoom.
Week 8	Beginning articulation: Consonants M. Plosives W. fricatives/ continents	Cicely Berry Chapter 2	Lewis Carroll: "The Jabberwocky". Learn this text for W: we will play in groups.
Week 9	M and W. Practice tongue release with both plosives and continents		M. Play W. Perform the Jabberwocky in groups
Week 10	Vowels Introduced Monday: lip vowels/ Wednesday: Tongue Vowels		Herrick, Robert: "To Anthea..." Learn text by Monday. We will work on it in groups.
Week 11	More exercises for tongue release and vowels		Perform Robert Herrick.
Week 12	Introducing INTENTION: working on the spine and connecting to Given Circumstances		MACBETH: "Doubtful It Stood"
Week 13	More Intention		
Week 14	FINAL EXAM:	Warm-up and share Poem of your choice	Friday November 20th 11am - 1pm.
FINAL			

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 STU 301 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) 740-6948 (TDD only), (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. (Ummm... well... this seems to be where we are...)

Support Systems:

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: sarc.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. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

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

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

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