

**THTR 140A – Voice I**

**Section: 62678D**

**Units: 2**

**Fall 2021 – T/Th 12:00-01:50pm**

**Location: PED 202**

**Instructor: Lauren Murphy Yeoman**

**Office hours: Friday 3-5pm**

**Other times by appointment**

**Email: [laurenmu@usc.edu](mailto:laurenmu@usc.edu)**

**Phone: 617-872-4194**

## **Course Description**

Welcome to first-year voice class, BFA Freshmen ensemble!

Your voice is unique to who you are - it's carried by your unique breath of impulse. Our aim is to access and allow that uniqueness, and find out what habits or ways of using ourselves we have that reveal or conceal us, to be able to make choices as an actor. You will learn the tools of the Linklater Voice progression, a series of exercises that lead to a complete vocal system as a daily actor practice - from breath work, vibration, jaw, tongue, soft palate, resonators and articulators to personal exploratory and imaginative work. This work gives building blocks to connect intellect, emotion, body, and voice so that you are thinking, feeling, breathing, and speaking at the same time. To free the voice is to allow yourself to be seen and heard in a true, personal, powerful way. The work will be applied to poetry and acting texts in the first semester, as a foundation for longer-form texts in the second semester. Some goals to keep in mind along the way:

- \* Individual: To build and sharpen your tools and abilities for authentic dynamism of voice, and parlay it into dramatic language.
- \* Ensemble: To become both the one and the all in your BFA cohort: the individual dedication of each ensemble member contributing to the progress of the whole group.
- \* Overall: To bridge the voice work directly into acting work, moving from personal into character and from expression into action. The raw materials of self will be used to create transformational art. It is important to cultivate commitment, work ethic, curiosity and inquiry.

***Voice and Speech Class Philosophy:***

*As voice teachers at USC's School of Dramatic Arts we strive to align ourselves with principles of inclusivity and equity in the classroom. 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 its past, nor to downplay the serious challenges of the present, but to face those challenges with resilience and bravery.*

## **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Develop a self-guided vocal practice using the Linklater Voice progression
2. Identify personal habits that reveal vs. conceal the voice
3. Perform dramatic text with vocal presence and support
4. Communicate layered meaning and feeling, use vocal dynamics and operative word stress to serve the acting objective

**Co-Requisite (s):** THTR 110 and THTR 115 and THTR 120a

## **Required Materials**

- *Freeing the Natural Voice*, 2006 edition, by Kristin Linklater, available in digital and hard copy versions through online sellers
- I will provide other required materials via Blackboard. These will include articles, videos, and websites germane to the voice work.
- Please bring a dedicated notebook to every class for hand-writing and drawing.
- Please bring a yoga mat, towel, or sweatshirt if you need padding for floor work.

## **Description and Assessment of Assignments**

Below is a general overview of the assignments. I provide a detailed assignment description and grading rubric for each assignment in the **Supporting Materials** section at the end of this syllabus.

### **Participation in in-class warmups and group exercises:**

Group warmups and explorations will be devised according to the individual and collective needs of this group, and depend on the generous, respectful, supportive contribution of each member of the ensemble for the continuous additive layering of learning through the semester.

Points will be deducted from your Participation grade for lateness and for absence: 2 points for lateness, 5 points for absence.

**Journal Reflections:**

You will write a journal entry for each of the first several chapters of *Freeing the Natural Voice*, correlating with in-class work, about your personal experience of the work on voice, body, and speech sounds. (10 journal reflections total.)

**Poem Exploration:**

A good ways in to the semester, you will apply the physical and vocal awarenesses developed in previous classes to a dedicated solo exploration of an assigned Poem. You will work with me in front of the group and try adjustments based on the principles of release and imagery we have been practicing and absorbing.

**Self-led Warmups:**

You will conduct two (2) self-guided warmups through the vocal exercises you have learned accumulatively over the semester. The first will be halfway through the semester, the second will be in the last week of classes.

**Final - River Story:**

For your final, you will give an autobiographical performance of your vocal journey in four parts: six words, metaphor, dialogue, and song. This exercise is for you to integrate your whole body, voice, intellect and emotions into communicating your intention and point of view in each moment.

**Grading Breakdown**

Grades will be recorded in the Blackboard gradebook and updated weekly.

Assignment	% of Grade
Participation in warmups and exercises	15
Journal Reflections (10 total)	20
Midterm – Poem Exploration + Materials	20
Self-led Warmup 1	10
Self-led Warmup 2	10
Final – River Story + Materials	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**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

## **Course-specific Policies (Assignment Submission, Grading Timeline, Late work, and Technology)**

### **Assignment Submission:**

Guidelines and expectations for all of the above components of your grade will be discussed thoroughly in class, establishing specific parameters to follow. Journal Reflections will be submitted via Blackboard. Poem Explorations, Self-Led Warmups, and River Stories will be delivered in class, and corresponding written work with those assignments will be submitted via Blackboard. Please ask me for clarification if you need it at any time in the semester.

### **Grading Timeline:**

Grading for performance and presentation work will be uploaded to Blackboard two days after the completed presentation and performance. Grades from written work will be uploaded two days after the deadline.

### **Late Work:**

No late assignments, exercises, or delivery of performances shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged with me or unless exceptional circumstances occur.

## **Attendance**

Lateness and absences will be evaluated on an individual basis. Unexcused absences are unacceptable. Communication with me is part of evaluation. No credit for missed classes and no makeups for missed rehearsals or performances unless extenuating circumstances occur. Under these circumstances, please notify me immediately.

## **Dress**

This class will be very physical. Movement clothing is mandatory. Please also remove any jewelry that could interfere.

## **Class Agreements**

- Share responsibility for including all voices in the conversation.
- Listen respectfully.
- Be open to changing your perspectives based on what you learn from others.
- Understand that your words have effects on others.
- Notice your own defensive reactions and attempt to use these reactions as entry points for gaining deeper self-knowledge, rather than as a rationale for closing off.
- Recognize how your own social positionality (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality, ability) informs your perspectives and reactions to your instructor and those whose work you study in the course.
- Differentiate between safety and comfort. Accept discomfort as necessary for social justice growth.
- Identify where your learning edge is and push it. For example, whenever you think, I already know this, ask yourself, How can I take this deeper? Or, How am I applying in practice what I already know?

## **Course evaluation**

Student feedback is essential to making this course the best it can be. Students will have an opportunity to submit comments on the mid-semester evaluation and the standard USC course evaluation survey at the end of the semester.

## **Synchronous session recording notice**

Synchronous class sessions will be recorded and provided to all students asynchronously in Blackboard.

## **Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment**

Please be aware that USC has a policy that prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment:

*SCampus Section 11.12(B)*

*Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been*

displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).

## **COVID-19 Resources**

Continuously updated requirements can be found on the [USC COVID-19 resource center website](#).

## **EDI @SDA: Professional Development/Mandatory EDI Training** **Wednesday, September 15, 2021**

As part of our EDI initiatives and call to action, some workshops will be offered to faculty and staff and to students. Competencies that will be included: Anti-Racism (Faculty/Staff) and Equity Mindedness (Faculty/Staff), and then Theater Intimacy & Building Cultures of Consent (Students, Faculty/Staff). More details will follow. NOTE: All SDA classes will be cancelled to support involvement in this effort.

### **Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown** **Subject to change based on the group's needs:**

	<b>Topics/Daily Activities</b>	<b>Readings and Homework</b>	<b>Assignment Dates</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	Introduction to each other and to the voice work. Who are you and how does your voice express your thoughts and feelings?	In <i>Freeing the Natural Voice</i> (FNV), read: *Tribute to Iris Warren pgs. 5-6 *An Introduction pgs. 7-11 *How the Voice Works pgs. 13-18 *Why the Voice Does Not Work pgs. 19-25 *Preparation for the Work pgs. 26-27	Journal Reflection 1 due Week 2
<b>Week 2</b>	Physical awareness, alignment and relaxation.	In FNV, read: *Physical Awareness pgs. 31-41	Journal Reflection 2 due Week 3
<b>Week 3</b>	Begin breath awareness, explore	In FNV, read:	Journal Reflection 3 due Week 4

	natural breath freedom.	*Breath Awareness pgs. 43-63	
<b>Week 4</b>	Discovering the touch of sound.	In FNV, read: *The Touch of Sound pgs. 65-86	Journal Reflection 4 due Week 5
<b>Week 5</b>	Freeing vibration and larger impulses for sound. Begin Poems (TBA).	In FNV, read: *Freeing Vibrations pgs. 87-116	Journal Reflection 5 due Week 6
<b>Week 6</b>	Humming and resonance. Review material covered so far, write Warm-Up Outline, prepare for Self-Led Warmup 1. Continue Poem Work.	In FNV, read: *Intermission Warmup pgs. 117-126	Practice the FNV Intermission Warmup pgs. 117-126  Write outline of self-led warmup and bring to class Week 7
<b>Week 7</b>	Self-Led Warmup 1, from Physical Awareness through Humming. Introduction to channel openers. Begin Jaw awareness and release. Continue Poem work.	In FNV, read: *The Second Four Weeks of Work pg. 127 *Freeing the Channel: Jaw Awareness pgs. 129-137	Journal Reflection 6 due Week 8
<b>Week 8</b>	Continue channel openers with Tongue stretching and loosening. Continue Poem work.	In FNV, read: *Freeing the Channel: Tongue Awareness pgs. 139-160	Journal Reflection 7 due Week 9
<b>Week 9</b>	Conclude channel openers with Soft Palate limbering. Continue Poem work.	In FNV, read: Freeing the Channel: The Soft Palate pgs. 161-172	Journal Reflection 8 due Week 10

<b>Week 10</b>	Introduction to the resonators. Begin lower resonators of Chest, Mouth, and Teeth.	In FNV, read: *Throat Awareness pgs. 181-184 *Chest Mouth Teeth Resonators pgs. 187-197	Journal Reflection 9 due Week 11
<b>Week 11</b>	Chest/Mouth/Teeth resonance with imagery, calling, triads, body swings.	In FNV, read: *Calling, Triads pgs. 199-205	Journal Reflection 10 due Week 12
<b>Week 12</b>	Review material covered so far, add to Warm-up Outline, prepare for Self-Led Warmup 2.	In FNV, read: *Intermission Workout pgs. 206-212	Practice the FNV Intermission Workout, pgs. 206-212  Write outline for Self-led Warmup 2 and bring to class Week 13
<b>Week 13</b>	Self-led Warmup 2, from Physical Awareness through Chest/Mouth/Teeth resonators. Begin personal voice autobiography work of River Stories.		Write your River Story: A <i>Little Play Called Me</i>
<b>FINAL EXAM</b> 12/14 11am-1pm	Share River Stories		

**Final Exam:**

Tuesday, December 14, 11am-1pm

**SDA PRODUCTIONS, ISPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**



SDA productions, ISPs and Extracurricular Activities\* will not excuse you from any class work. There will be no exceptions made for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework or lack of class participation resulting from your involvement in any of the above. Your grade will reflect your work in this class, independent from work in any other class or activity.

\*Activities that have been officially sanctioned by the larger university (such as marching band, song girls, or varsity sports) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.

## **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](http://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 Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from OSAS. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. OSAS is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for OSAS and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 814-4618 (Video Phone), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto: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.

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### **Health and Participation in Class**

You are expected to complete your Trojan Check screener daily and, as your instructor, I may ask you to show your daily screening in class. Your health and safety, and the health and safety of your peers, are my top priorities. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, or if you discover that you have been in close contact with others who have symptoms or who have tested positive, you must follow the instructions on Trojan Check. My hope is that if you are feeling ill or if you have been exposed to someone with the virus, you will stay home to protect others. I will ensure that you can continue to participate in class remotely so that your education is not disrupted.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, USC requires that face coverings (masks) be worn indoors including in classrooms. Face coverings must cover your nose and mouth and be worn throughout the class session. A mask with a valve is not considered an adequate face covering and should not be used, as it can expel exhaled air, increasing the risk to others. Eating or drinking during class is prohibited because of the risk posed by removing your mask for these activities. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in your being asked to leave the classroom immediately. Requests for accommodations related to the face covering and eating/drinking policies should be directed to the Office for Student Accessibility Services (<https://osas.usc.edu/>).

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## **SDA Student Support & Reporting Form:**

To facilitate a supportive environment of accountability, SDA has created an internal system of reporting for students to address issues/concerns and to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement. This mechanism provides a pathway for reporting and offering feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Any submission filed through this form will be reviewed and processed accordingly through SDA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

To file a report, please visit: <https://bit.ly/SDAstudentreporting>

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## **Support Systems:**

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

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

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

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

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*  
[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*  
[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](http://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776*  
<https://osas.usc.edu>

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710*  
[campussupport.usc.edu](http://campussupport.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*  
[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*  
[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*  
[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

## **Supporting Materials**

What follows are the detailed assignment descriptions and grading rubrics for each assignment, where applicable.

### **Class Participation in Daily Warmups and Exercises (15 points)**

#### **Learning Objective 1:**

Develop a self-guided vocal practice using the Linklater Voice progression

#### **Steps:**

Participation in class warmup and exercises means being fully prepared and ready to work, having all necessary materials, wholehearted engagement with explorations, being supportive and respectful of classmates, and regular and constructive participation in discussion and feedback on your own work and your classmates' work. These are professional skills for the actor to cultivate. Points will be deducted from your Participation grade for lateness and for absence. Lateness will result in a 2 point reduction, absence will result in a 5 point deduction.

### **Journal Reflections (20 points total)**

#### **(10 entries, 2 points each)**

**Learning Objective 2:** Identify personal habits that reveal vs. conceal the voice

#### **Steps:**

Self-reflection is key in absorbing the principles of voice work, and these journal reflections are intended to be your own record of your discoveries, questions, and ongoing consciousness-raising. Journal reflections are to be 1-2 pages double-spaced, and submitted via Blackboard.

**Midterm (20 points total):  
Poem Exploration (15 points) and Supporting Materials (5 points)**

**Learning Objective 3:** Perform dramatic text with vocal presence and support

**Poem Exploration  
(15 points)**

**Steps:**

You will apply the physical and vocal awarenesses developed in previous classes to a dedicated solo exploration of your assigned Poem. The sharings will be graded on the following: 1. Connecting thought, breath, and voice. 2. Embodiment of imagery and sound, 3. Communicating meaning and feeling, to reach the person you're speaking to through the screen.

<b>Components</b>	<b>Points Possible: 5</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Connecting thought, breath, and voice		
Embodiment of imagery and sound		
Communicating through the screen		
	<b>Total Points out of 15:</b>	

**Poet Materials  
(5 points)**

Imagination exercises in class will lead us to create Given Circumstances and Backstory materials for your Poet. The guidelines for these materials and submission will be on Blackboard after the experiential part of the exercises.

**Self-led warmup 1  
(10 points)**

**Learning Objective 1:**

Develop a self-guided vocal practice using the Linklater Voice progression

**Steps:**

You will conduct a self-guided warmup through the vocal exercises you have learned accumulatively over the first half of the semester. You will be graded on: 1. Sequential order, 2. Proper form in exercises, 3. Breath freedom, 4. Supported sound, 5. Released body.

**Grading Rubric for Self-Led Warmup:**

<b>Components</b>	<b>Points Possible: 2</b>

Sequential order	
Proper form	
Breath freedom	
Supported sound	
Released body	
	<b>Total Points out of 10:</b>

### **Self-led warmup 2 (10 points)**

**Learning Objective 1:**

Develop a self-guided vocal practice using the Linklater Voice progression

**Steps:**

You will conduct a self-guided warmup adding on the exercises you have accumulated in the second half of the semester. You will be graded on: 1. Sequential order, 2. Proper form in exercises, 3. Breath freedom, 4. Supported sound, 5. Released body.

**Grading Rubric for Self-Led Warmup:**

<b>Components</b>	<b>Points Possible: 2</b>
Sequential order	
Proper form	
Breath freedom	
Supported sound	
Released body	
	<b>Total Points out of 10:</b>

### **Final - River Story (25 points total)**

#### **River Story Exploration (20 points) and Supporting Materials (5 points)**

**Learning Objective 4:**

Communicate layered meaning and feeling, use vocal dynamics and operative word stress to serve the acting objective

### **River Story Exploration (20 points)**

**Steps:**

This exercise was created by Kristin Linklater. Here’s how she describes it: “Working through the exercises that we’ve covered thus far for your voice in class have given you the equipment for this “storytelling” phase of the work. It will be your conscious use of relaxation, physical

alignment, breathing, a loose jaw and tongue, an open throat, an awareness of the resonance of your voice in your body and your commitment to telling the story through freely flowing vibrations of sound coming from deep in your body that will allow the telling to create a palpable shift in the patterns and habits of your vocal usage.”

You will script and prepare your River Story and share it in class on your assigned day. I invite you to see this as an exploration of Self rather than a polished product.

**Grading Rubric for River Story:**

<b>Components</b>	<b>Points Possible: 5</b>
Six words	
Metaphor	
Dialogue	
Song	
	<b>Total Points out of 20:</b>

**Supporting materials  
(5 points)**

**Steps:**

You will turn in your River Story drawing and script. Guidelines for these will be on Blackboard after the experiential exercises in class.