

**THTR 342a — Basic Voice**

Fall 2021 — Monday & Wednesday — 2-3:20p

2 units

Location: MCC 106

**Instructor:** Emily Alpren

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Contact Info:** (e) [alpren@usc.edu](mailto: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 in person. Required and non-required reading, text, video links and supplemental materials will be 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	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>200</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

## 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.

## Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment

USC policy 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. (SeeSection C.1 Class Notes Policy).*

**Course evaluation**

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. You should expect to receive an email update once the system has launched to provide your feedback on this course. In addition, you are always welcome to connect with me as the instructor to offer any feedback on the course.

**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. 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.

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

**Technology:** You will be expected to print text and use Blackboard. .

**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 23	Introduction: Why voice?	
	W	25	Creating our voices	Wild Geese

2	M	30	Internal Awareness, Sensation, Release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Biography of My Voice" due</li> <li>- Knight reading</li> <li>- Week 1 journal</li> </ul>
	W	Sept 1	Fitzmaurice Voice: Overview, Presence	Silence exercise
3	M	6	NO CLASS – Labor Day	
	W	Sept 8	Anatomy of Breathing and Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CF Reading</li> <li>- Week 2 journal</li> </ul>
4	M	13	Destructuring: what is it?	- Week 3 journal
	W	15	NO CLASS – SDA Mandatory EDI Training	
5	M	20	Destructuring cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wild Geese exercise</li> <li>- Week 4 journal</li> </ul>
	W	22		Familiarize Brooks poem
6	M	27	Destructuring cont.	Week 5 journal
	W	29		Interview with CF
7	M	Oct 4	Destructuring cont.	Week 6 journal
	W	6	Midterm	Midterm: Self-guided warm-up, self evaluation, performance workshop
8	M	11	Destructuring to Restructuring	Week 7 Journal
	W	13	Restructuring: support, focus line, breathing through the narrative, play	Read "Structured Breathing " by CF
9	M	18	Restructuring the political, the emotional, the personal text	Week 8 journal
	W	20	Performance Workshop	Brooks 2.0
10	M	25	Imaging in the body: allowing images to support intention, play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Week 9 journal</li> <li>- Explore pieces for final</li> </ul>
	W	27		Word Soak Text part I

11	M	1	Guided word Soaking	- Word Soak Text part II - Week 10 journal
	W	3	Performance Workshop	Poem #3 workshop
12	M	8	Putting it all together	Week 11 journal
	W	10		Choose Final Performance Text
13	M	15	Experiential Explorations	Week 12 Journal
	W	17		
14	M	22	Taking voice work out of voice class: embracing "problems" / Building bridges: from self to character, maintaining presence in performance	Week 13 Journal
	W	24	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK	
15	M	29	Final Warm-ups / Performance Prep	Final Warm-ups
	W	1	LAST CLASS – Performance Prep	- Performance Workshop - Week 14 Journal
			Optional Rehearsal TBD	
	F	10	FINAL EXAM 2-4	Final Performance, self-evaluation

### 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 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](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/>).

### **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.

## **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.*