

THTR 342b— Basic Voice

Spring 2023 — Monday & Wednesday — 12-1:20p

2 units

Location: DRC 105

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 continue to explore Fitzmaurice Voicework®, with an intention of putting it to use with text and acting in character. After learning techniques that release held tension throughout the body, we will learn 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 in character.

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
- Approach character from a voice perspective
- Reveal and not conceal during performance

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.

If something is unclear, or you feel uncomfortable, or your needs are not being met, please reach out to me as I would love the opportunity to resolve this issue. You are your own advocate for your education, personal wellbeing, and creative process. Be brave in reaching out concerning matters that pertain to this class and your wellbeing in general. In doing so, it is my hope that we all gain invaluable practice of being proactive in things that matter – learning, health, wellbeing, and collaboration.

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.

If you need to miss class due to illness or quarantine, you must let me know by 9am the day of class so you can be “zoomed in” to the classroom from home. You MUST stay home if you have any symptoms of Covid-19; you can still participate from home and will be supported in any way you need.

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 due each Monday. 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

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. *Campus 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).

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 or needs you have.

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 learn from *doing* the work, observing others, discussing what we do, see and read. Your presence – however you are – is required. *Any single* unexcused absence may result in your grade being lowered one full grade. Excused absences (including but not exclusive to illnesses, quarantines and personal emergencies) must be discussed with me via email or during office hours prior to class.

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

Technology: You will be expected to print text, zoom into class and use Blackboard.

Social Media: Refrain from posts on social media about this class – regardless of intention – as it can cause hurt or self-censorship in the classroom.

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. Changes to online instruction will result in a re-ordering of assignments and exercises. 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	Jan 8	Introduction: The Journey	
	W	10	Reviewing internal awareness, sensation, release	Beginning Together
2	M	15	NO CLASS – MLK Day	
	W	17	Fitzmaurice Voice: Overview, Presence	- Knight reading review - Silence exercise
3	M	22	Presence cont. illuminating habits	Week 2 journal
	W	24	Destructuring: Embracing the involuntary	“The Journey” by Mary Oliver / “The Waterfall” by Mary Oliver
4	M	29	Destructuring cont.	- Read “Breathing is Meaning” CF - Week 3 journal
	W	31	The Sequence	Read Interview of CF by Saul pages 1-9
5	M	Feb 5	The Journey: De → Re	Week 4 journal
	W	7	Restructuring: support, focus line, breathing through the narrative	“a song in the front yard” by Gwendolyn Brooks / Sonnet 10 Wm Shakespeare
6	M	12	Midterm Performances	- Week 5 journal - Self-guided warm-up document due - In class warm-up - Midterm Evaluation due by 11:59pm
	W	14		
7	M	19	NO CLASS – President’s Day	
	W	21	De → Re Continued	Week 6 Journal Read “Structured Breathing” by CF
-	M	26	Performance Workshop	- Week 7 Journal

				- "a song in the front yard" by Gwendolyn Brooks
	W	28	Imaging in the body: allowing images to support intention	Print "Ode to the Present" by Pablo Neruda
9	M	Mar 4	Imagining continued	Week 8 journal
	W	6	Imagining continued	
10	M	11	NO CLASS – Spring Break	Explore pieces for final: poem and character monologue
	W	13	NO CLASS – Spring Break	
	M	18	Ode to the Present: Image-soaked performance workshop	- Week 9/10 journal (just one entry) - Image soak Ode for performance
11	W	20	Consonants	- Bring printed "This be the Verse" - Memorize "This be the Verse" by Philip Larkin in learning partners - Continue to explore text for final
12	M	25	Vowels	- Bring printed "To Anthea" - Memorize first lines of "To Anthea" by Robert Herrick in learning partners - Week 11 Journal
	W	27	Putting it together	
13	M	April 1	Performance Workshop	- Week 12 Journal - Prepare a poem that we have covered putting it together
	W	3	Performing you in a character	Print short character monologue

14	M	8	Performance Workshop: Character	- Send Final Performance Text for approval - Week 13 Journal
	W	10		Print final performance text
15	M	15	Taking voice work out of voice class: embracing "problems" / Building bridges: from self to character, maintaining presence in performance	
	W	17		Week 14 Journal
16	M	22	Final Warm-ups / Performance Prep	Final Warm-ups
	W	24	LAST CLASS – Performance Prep	Final Performance, self-evaluation
	F	May 3	11-1 Final	

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. 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.

Health and Participation in Class

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, USC recommends that face coverings (masks) be worn indoors including in classrooms.

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>

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
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

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

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, 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

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

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

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, 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

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.