

Course TH 408a Dialects Section 63014 Units: 2

Term: FALL 2024—M/W Time: 9:00 to 10:20 a.m. Location: MCC 109

Important: The general expectation for a standard format course offered is that one semester unit entails 2 hours of outside work. Total Class hours for this class is 2:40, so total practice/homework hours are a minimum of 4 ½ hours per week. Please refer to the Curriculum Office [Resources](#) page to find guidelines for courses that do not follow a standard format and/or a standard term

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Course Description

This course is designed for the actor, non-actor, and for those who have curiosity and passion for dialects and accents of English. Before dialect re-creation can take place, you will complete UNIT ONE: a training in breath, voice, phonetics and speech which provides open-book knowledge of the International Phonetic Alphabet, as well as tools for expressive use of vowels and consonants, and basic, practical steps toward vocal transformation. The purpose of the introductory work is to provide you experience and practice with vocal and auditory and tactile sensations helpful to re-creating dialects and other character-driven vocal transformations. The UNIT ONE process will take approximately seven weeks.

During and after completing UNIT ONE, I will lead you, as a group, in a step by step process for re-creating a dialect from an interview recording. Once you've learned the nuts and bolts, you will choose an interviewee, either from a prerecorded source, or from an interview you conduct and record of a person with the dialect you want to learn. The main requirement, in either case, is that the person's dialect is very different from your own. Other considerations are, a well amplified recording, free of distracting background sound, which is at least 5 minutes long. The class work on dialects will include sound lab workshop mode, for practice of the accent, and its application in a monologue. You will share your work on your accent of choice with the group. Then, you will choose a second interviewee and with my guidance, take on a more independent process. The skills you will be honing are those which are required and expected of professional actors. The purpose is to develop your understanding of the dialect process so you can acquire other accents dialects of interest on your own.

This training process will include warm up exercises that serve as a review of all the vocal sensations you are learning. Therefore, it is imperative that you come on time and prepared to review, listen to your body, and grow your vocal skills. Finally, the training schedule will fluctuate and adapt to the unique needs of the individuals in this class. Do not compare your progress or this class's process to other voice/dialects classes. Please contact me at any time if you have any questions or concerns.

Learning Objectives

1. Learn to use the various sounds of language as expressive tools for performance.
2. Achieve sound/symbol identification of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
3. Gain awareness and recognition of various accents and dialects.
4. Utilize simple socio-linguistic research to arrive at a deeper understanding of the diverse and complex history of the human voice.
5. Apply the knowledge of dialects in performance. Appreciate the playwright as the provider of the dialect (including vocabulary grammar/syntax, idiom), and the actor's responsibility to inhabit the sounds of the dialect (the accent).
6. To gain the beginnings of a repertoire of accents and dialects for performance.

Learning Aspirations:

1. Appreciation of vocal uniqueness and desired areas of improvement and growth.
2. Practice professional behavior: being on time, with the appropriate materials, engaged in the class session, supportive of one another's learning process.
3. Challenge oneself beyond personal vocal habits and patterns
4. Experience Self-reliance as a teaching tool in learning new modes of speaking and voicing

Week one

Names: a group discussion of the names associated with where you're from and who you're from. The things you celebrate about your names and the things you may find burdensome about your names. Your names as "hot button words" and keys of identity.

Hearing and feeling sound: an experiment in whether you feel sound as well as hear it. And what is the value in the ability of feeling sound, regarding accents, dialects, and other vocal transformations.

Week two

One Vowel monologue: Record a spontaneous personal statement (anything you feel strongly about). Speak for two minutes. Script out the recording. Speak the written statement sincerely, with conviction. Then, speak it again, this time transposing every vowel sound in each word to the same vowel sound. Follow the challenge of being as clear as possible, and taking your words as seriously as you did when speaking the words normally. What you are doing is called a "sound substitution." This is at the heart of any accent or dialect you will ever do. Most accents and dialects require 5 or 10 sound substitutions, or maybe more. Observe what happens as you attempt to say your statement in this way. What challenges does it present?

Week three

For this week you will need ear phones and a playback device. I will provide recordings and scripts on bright space. I will guide you through a process known as **Verbatim accent re-creation**. This will give you a taste of what the steps are in familiarizing yourself with and accent or dialect.

Week four

Introducing phonetic sounds and symbols. We will take a 3-D approach to printed symbols on a page by working with "**Phonetic Pillows**" This week we will concentrate on "Stationary vowels" Creating a vowel ladder, and exploring the resonance of each vowel.

Week five

Continuing to learn **stationary vowels** and adding more complexity to the vowel ladder.

Week six

Moving on to "**diphthongs**" which are vowels that require the articulators to make a sequence of two different shapes. Discovering diphthongs by moving from one sound to another on the ladder.

Week seven

Introducing **consonants**, many of which are familiar letters from the Roman Alphabet. And learning the unfamiliar six or eight consonants. Then grouping them in categories:

- Plosives
- Fricatives
- Affricates
- Nasals
- Glides

And constructing a huge consonant mouth. In which the consonants are placed at the various articulator structures in the mouth. Then searching out language one vowel and consonant at a time.

Week eight

Revisiting the accent we explored in week three, this time, phonetically, rather than by Verbatim accent re-creation.

Week nine

An accent of your choice either pre-recorded, found on a source such as YouTube, or else, a recording you make yourself, by interviewing someone live, whose accent is very different from yours. For the remainder of the course you will need earphones and a playback device. Workshopping and sharing your accent of choice.

Week ten

Applying your accent of choice to a "**monologue**." Not necessarily from a play. Sharing your monologue, spoken by you in the accent.

Week eleven

Transcribing your accent monologue into phonetics. The class will be in “workshop mode” with me checking in with each of you as you work.

Week twelve

Corresponding with me in phonetically -written letters, to which I will respond in phonetics. You and I will attempt to write these letters phonetically the way we actually speak rather than in some sort of standardized way.

Week thirteen

Comparing the way you speak to your accent of choice and charting out the differences.

Week fourteen

A second accent of choice (optional). The same process which you did with the first accent of choice, but implemented more independently, with my guidance.

Week fifteen

Final: sharing your accent of choice with the group. Second accent of choice optional.

Grading

Participation and homework = 100 points

Names discussion points = 5 5

Feeling embodied sound points = 5

One vowel monologue points = 5

Intro to Verbatim accent process points = 5

Phonetic pillows part one 5

Phonetics and the vowel ladder 5

Diphthongs = 5

Consonants intro 5

“Consonant mouth” exercise = 5

Same as week 3 accent phonetic transcription = 5

Accent of your choice = 5

Accent of your choice applied to monologue = 5

Transcribing monologue = 5

Phonetic correspondence = 5

Accent outline chart = 10

Sharing accent of your choice = 20

Second accent of your choice 5 extra credit (optional) = 10

A	100
A-	95
B+	90
B	85
B-	80
C+	75
C	70
D	65
F	60

CLASS CONDUCT-ATTENTIVENESS AND PRFOFESSIONALISM

1. Communicate! No credit for missed classes and no makeups for missed rehearsals or performances unless per-

sonal emergency of hospitalization or familial loss. Under these circumstances, please notify the instructor immediately and discuss how you are taking responsibility.

2. Respect the process: Quiet yourself upon entering the space (cell phone/electronic devices).
3. Respect each other: No eating during class as you will be regularly active in speaking and listening. Eating during someone's presentation or scene is distracting and shows lack of support. It can be distracting on set or during a rehearsal. Special energy needs, please alert me and we can accommodate.
4. Wear clothing for movement as we will be doing vocal and body explorations for the first five weeks. Please, no revealing clothing, flip flops and shorts should be at knee length. Yes, do bring in articles of clothing that are character appropriate on the day of rehearsals and performance. This is still an acting class and what you wear affects physical and vocal behavior.
5. We do make sounds during warm up that might trigger self-consciousness. Be gentle but encouraging of yourself as well as others. Remain focused on your inner environment unless it is a partner exercise.
6. Civility, conduct, and ethics are the microcosm of the world. You have already started changing the world, let us continue it in our discourse, in class discussions and giving supportive feedback of one another's creativity.
7. An important part of professionalism is refraining to talk negatively about the work and personalities in class, including instructors. This leads to negative energy and misinformation. It is my hope that we gain invaluable practice of being pro-active in things that matter: - health, wellbeing, and collaborating creatively. Communication is one of the virtues we can practice.
8. Posting grievances or class work, performance or information in/on Social Media Platforms is not allowed. As a class, you may want to create a group-chat for class assignments and to search for scene partners. Please include all classmates on this classroom chat/group.
9. Additional Space For The Class To Discuss:

NOTE FROM THE INSTRUCTOR: 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. As we go forward in classroom experiences, be brave in reaching out to me with matters that pertain to this class. Please notify me ahead of time of an absence before it occurs. This will help in final grading as it could be weighed as a plus or minus at the end of the semester. Your presence and communication represent your professionalism.

Note from School of Dramatic Arts: **Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theatre Consent Culture Statement**

Through our pluralistic approach of diverse pedagogies, methodologies, ideologies, and modalities of artistic expression, we invite(engage) and challenge students to expand their breadth and depth of knowledge, complexity, and range of the human experience. Even though we nurture, guide, and challenge our students to embrace the unknown or unfamiliar and step outside of their comfort zones through storytelling/art, we aim to practice effective strategies and offer tools to students mindful of their physical, psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing. In alignment with professional and industry standards, we will integrate core principles and techniques of Intimacy in Theater and Building Cultures of Affirmative Consent. This will provide agency, offer resources and support to the teachers, students, directors, and staff to establish healthy boundaries of consent when working on material that is physically, intimately, or emotionally charged content in both the classroom and production.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity and Conduct

USE OF AI AND RESEARCH PAPERS FOR ROLE PREPARATION IN 408A DIALECTS:

In gathering and constructing research in a performance based project, use the following methods to research your role and authentic your dialect: re-reading the script to gather information on the world of the play that relate to this story, documentaries on the main theme, historical articles, and talking to humanity that is represented in the story will help the artist develop creative artistry in role creation. Therefore, AI generated text, code or AI content is prohibited. Creative applications based on creative research bring authenticity to the reality or the satire of the character. Always supply three sources other than AI in constructing your research paper in Dialects 408a.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#)

MESSAGE FROM THE UNVISERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRETU:

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

If found responsible for an academic violation, students may be assigned university outcomes, such as suspension or expulsion from the university, and grade penalties, such as an "F" grade on the assignment, exam, or in the course

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. 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 relation to the class, whether obtained in class,

via email, on the internet, or via any other media. Distributing course material without the instructor's permission will be presumed to be an intentional act to facilitate or enable academic dishonesty and is strictly prohibited. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

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

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodation is not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate-](#) and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Support Systems:

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

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

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

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) 740-2500

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

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 740-0411

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

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101

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

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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.