

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 339b (Section 62936) –Spring 2025

The Actor's Instrument: Voice and Body

M/W/F MCC 111

12:00 to 1:50

Instructors: Kathleen Dunn (Voice/Speech)

Edgar Landa (Movement)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed for the continual honing voice and movement skills in the areas of training and performance. The course is a combination class and will have Voice meeting the first five weeks on M/W with Movement on F. The second week block will have the Movement Class meeting M/W with Voice on F. The final three weeks will be divided according to instructor discretion and student need.

For the *Movement Component*:

Students will examine physical storytelling through theatrical fight & violence for the stage and camera. This will include learning skills and techniques to create the illusion of violence and applying it to scenework.

For the *Voice Component*:

The student will continue to refine voice and speech skills that are unique to that student. Each student will have the opportunity to design a warmup to be shared with the class and in the rehearsal space of Junior Production. This task will provide an overview of the sensations of voice training: breath, physical awareness and support, intrinsic pitch, resonance, as well as articulation and pronunciation exercises.

The speech/dialect portion will investigate: One group dialect of a Region culminating in Scenes and a Final Project. The final project allows the student to investigate a dialect of their choice culminating in spoken word, original or published.

COURSE NOTES-----MOVEMENT

1. Clothing: Students should wear appropriate rehearsal/movement clothes that allow for movement. Open-toe shoes, sandals and clunky boots are not permitted. Working in bare feet or socks is not allowed. Shorts are not recommended. Jewelry should be removed prior to class.
2. Students will be editing on iMovie or any other editing platform of their choice (Movavi, DaVinci Resolve, Lightworks, Final Cut, Adobe Premiere, etc.).
3. All course materials and resources are located in the Content folder of Brightspace.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

For the *Movement Component*:

1. **Safety:** How to create the illusion of violence without causing harm to self, an acting partner, the audience, or scenery to create a safe working environment in the classroom and in a professional setting.
2. **Violence & Context:** Discussion of the artist's responsibility to reflect violence safely and accurately so that the actor can deeply explore violence in the service of a given character and text, within a variety of genres and styles.
3. **Basic unarmed stage combat:** Punches, blocks, kicks, falls, rolls, slaps, found objects as weapons. These are all tools that the professional actor will encounter throughout the course of their career.
4. **Action for the Camera:** An introduction to selling the action through the camera.

Principles covered:

1. Supportive Partnering
2. Eye Contact
3. Action-Reaction-Completion (ARC) Principle
4. Pace & Tempo: *Slow is Smooth and Smooth is Fast*
5. Receiver in Control
6. Reversal of Energy
7. Lines of Attack
8. Casting & Diffusing Energy
9. Physical Lines of Dialogue & Story Building
10. Stacking & Other Techniques for the Camera

REQUIRED READINGS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

For the ***Movement Component***:

Reference handouts containing overviews and additional information will be given to students throughout the semester.

DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS

For the ***Movement Component***: Assignments:

1. Mid-Term Quiz
2. Presentation of fight scene 1
3. Presentation of fight scene 2
4. Video Project
5. Final Project

Grading Scale

- A = 96-100
A - = 90-95
B + = 86-89
B = 84-85
B - = 80-83
C + = 76-79
C = 74-75
C - = 70-73
D = 60-69
F = 59 and below

GRADING TIMELINE

For the ***Movement Component***:

Quizzes cannot be made up without a penalty of half the point value. Late scene work will be assessed a penalty of half the point value.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

For the ***Movement Component***:

- | | |
|-----------|----------------------|
| 20 Points | Participation |
| 15 Points | Mid-Term Quiz |
| 15 Points | Scene 1 Presentation |
| 15 Points | Scene 2 Presentation |
| 10 Points | Video Project |
| 25 Points | Final Project |

100 TOTAL POINTS

- * Each scene will be scored as follows:
 - 50% - Execution of choreography
 - 30% - Execution of storytelling
 - 20% - Safety Management

Assessment of “Participation”

20% of the final grade is earned through class participation. This will be defined as:

- Show up on time – students who are more than 10 minutes late are considered tardy. Three unexcused tardy arrivals will result in a deduction of 5 points from the final grade unless special arrangements have been made with the professor. Consistent tardiness within the 10-minute grace period will result in a discussion with the student and a restructuring of the grace period.
- Openness to new methods of working and eagerness to attempt them.
- Energized support of all classmates’ work.
- Constructive feedback and observation of one’s work and classmates’ work.
- Meeting of all deadlines.
- Memorization of assigned material for scene presentations.
- Rehearsal outside of class hours with scene partners as necessary.
- Proper class-wear

COURSE NOTES-----VOICE

REQUIRED READINGS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

For the *Voice Component*:

Readings, Videos, and Tutorials will be found in Brightspace

Group Dialect: Totaling 50 points

Sound Lab Document	10 pts.
In Class Sound Lab Share of your Source	10 pts.
Written Research	10 pts.
First Rehearsal (blocked, memorized, with appropriate props and costumes)	10 pts.
Second Rehearsal (above elements and incorporating notes)	10 pts.
	Totaling 50 pts.

Final Voice Project: 40 points

Sound Lab Document	10 pts.
In Class Sound Lab Share of your Source	10 pts.
Interview of Dialect Source	10 pts.
Application of Dialect to Devised or Written Material	10 pts.
Application of professional skills in Second Stage Practicum	5 pts.
Timely attendance to all class meetings in both voice and movement	5 pts.
	Totaling 50 pts.

Totaling 100 pts. for Voice

ASSIGNMENT RUBRICS

For the *VOICE LAB component*:

Voice Rubrics will be uploaded to each assignment in Brightspace

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICY

For the *Voice Component*:

Please submit all written assignments in Brightspace. Work must be typed and transcriptions must be legible.

GRADING TIMELINE

For the **Voice Component**:

Assignments are due on the due date. Each day the written assignment is past due, it will receive a one-point deduction off the total grade. Three days past the due date, paperwork will not be accepted.

All rehearsals and performances will be scheduled on a specific day. If you miss your rehearsal or performance, 10 pts will be taken from the overall grade for that unit.

Assessment of "Participation" for both **VOICE** and **MOVEMENT**:

10% of the final grade is earned through class participation. This will be defined as:

- Show up on time – students who are more than 10 minutes late are considered tardy. Three unexcused tardy arrivals will result in a deduction of 5 points from the final grade unless special arrangements have been made with the professor. Consistent tardiness within the 10-minute grace period will result in a discussion with the student and a restructuring of the grace period.
- Openness to new methods of working and eagerness to attempt them.
- Energized support of all classmates' work.
- Constructive feedback and observation of one's work and classmates' work.
- Meeting all deadlines.
- Memorization of assigned material for scene presentations.
- Have the specific materials for the course and rehearsal
- Application of Professional Skills in Second Stage Practicum: Being on time, being supportive of cast and crew, off book when requested, communicating conflicts in a professional manner

Overall combined grade for **MOVEMENT** and **Voice Components**:

The overall grade for this course will be determined by an average of the two grades assigned in Voice and Movement.

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

95 to 100 A	90 - 94 A-	87-89 B+	83-86 B	80 - 82 B-	77 - 79 C+
73 - 76 C	70 - 72 C -	67 -69 D +	63 -66 D -		

Departmental Address to Attendance:

There are no excused absences except for religious holidays. It is your responsibility to communicate with your instructor if this is the case. After two unexcused absences, your grade will drop by **half a letter** grade, and it will continue to drop by **half a letter** grade for every two additional absences. You will be considered absent if you are more than 10 minutes late.

COURSE SCHEDULE: A WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

Week 1

For the *Movement Component*:

Mon Jan 13: Class Intro & Overview / The Warm-Up / Physical Lines of Dialogue
Hand Strike Techniques 1 (The Roundhouse Punch)
Arm & Hand Blocking Techniques 1 (Static Defenses)

Objectives: Distance/Measure, Eye Contact, Breath, Cueing, In Slow/Out Fast, Casting Energy, Clap Knaps, Physical Lines of Dialogue, Reality Speed vs Theatrical Speed

For the *Voice Component*:

Wed Jan 15: Syllabus and Review Vocal and Physical Sensations of Warm IPA Phonetics Review

Fri Jan 17: Introduction to Group Dialect: People Prosody and Pronunciation

Objectives: To revisit sensations of a warmup progression.
To remember the sound and symbols of IPA in preparation of Group Dialects

Week 2

For the *Movement Component*:

Mon Jan 20: **NO CLASS – School Holiday**

For the *Voice Component*:

Wed Jan 22: Group Dialect: Posture and Prosody and Pronunciation

Fri Jan 24: Individual Work–Bring your computers. Begin working on your Sound Lab

Objectives: Practicing the Four P's of Dialect Acquisition.

Week 3

For the *Movement Component*:

Mon Jan 27: Review of Hand Strike Techniques 1
Review of Arm & Hand Blocking Techniques 1
Hand Strike Techniques 1 (Variations) Strikes & Evasions
Fighting & Movement – The Compass Rose (ARC Movement)
Choreography & Story Building
Fight Values & Intent

Objectives: Specificity of Movement, Acting the Fight, Controlled Chaos, Pace & Rhythm, Spatial Awareness, Action-Reaction-Completion (ARC), Aggressor/Victim vs Sender/Receiver, Slow is Smooth & Smooth is Fast, Cueing & Timing

For the *Voice Component*:

Wed Jan 29: Sound Lab Shares

Fri Jan 31: Sound Lab Shares * Sound Lab Paperwork Due EOD

Objectives: Practice: Dialect Acquisition and Identification

Week 4

For the *Movement Component*:

Mon Feb 3: Hand Strikes 2 (Non-Contact Slap Techniques)
Full Body Contact 1 (Shoves/Pushes, Grappling, Headlocks & Disengages)
Review Choreography & Story Building

Objectives: Shared Knaps, Dispersing Energy, Placing Energy, Sharing Energy & Weight, Receiver in Control, Personal Safety & Boundaries

For the *Voice Component*:

Wed Feb 5: Sound Lab Share Day and Table Reads

Fri Feb 7: Finish Table Reads

Objectives: Application of the group dialect

Week 5

For the *Movement Component*:

Mon Feb 10: Hand Strikes 3 (Stomach Punches & Back Strikes)
Full Body Contact 2 (Bear Hugs, Hair Pulls, Hair Drags)

Objectives: Reversal of Energy, Presenting the Target, Receiver in Control, Vocal Cues, Touch Cues, Visual Cues

For the *Voice Component*:

Wed Feb 12: Off Book Rehearsals / sign up for tutorials Group 1 *4 scenes

Fri Feb 14: Off Book Rehearsals Group 2 *3 Scenes

Objectives: Apply voice, physicality, research, and movement to the given circumstances. Actively participate in Discussion and Receiving notes.

Week 6

For the *Voice Component*: Southern Research Papers Due Feb 24

Mon Feb 17: **NO CLASS – School Holiday**

For the *Movement Component*:

Wed Feb 19: Hitting the Floor 1 (Knee Drops, Sit Falls, Forward Falls, Aikido Rolls)
Leg Sweeps, Throws, Takedowns

Fri Feb 21: Hitting the Floor 1
Full Body Contact 3 (Shoulder Rams, Hip Throws)

Objectives: Body Control, Controlled Chaos, Receiver in Control

Week 7

For the *Voice Component*:

Mon Feb 24: Final Pass of Scenes

For the *Movement Component*:

Wed Feb 26: Presentation of Fight Scene 1

Fri Feb 28: Foot Strikes 1 (Knee strike to the stomach)
Arm & Hand Blocks 2 (Chop Blocks)

Objectives: Off-Line Targeting, In-Line Targeting, Body Knaps

Week 8

For the **Voice Component:**

Mon Mar 3: Finalize Final Projects and Discussion

For the **Movement Component:**

Wed Mar 5: Mid-Term Quiz
Bottle, Box, Rope – Found Weapons

Fri: Mar 7: Tables, Walls, Elevators and Kitchens - Architecture & Environment

Objectives: Prop Safety, Environmental Awareness, Creative Storytelling

Week 9

For the **Voice Component:**

Mon Mar 10: Introduction to Accented English for Dialect Projects

Objectives: Practicing and Understanding the Sensations of Accented English

For the **Movement Component:**

Wed Mar 12: Creating the Fight – Part 1 (Adding Dialogue)

Fri Mar 14: Creating the Fight – Part 2 (The Space)

Objectives: Building the Fight, Rhythm and Pace

Spring Break Week

March 16 – 22: **SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES**

Week 10

For the **Voice Component:**

Mon Mar 24: Final Project Sound Lab Document Presentations
Sound Lab Paperwork (Due EOD)

Objectives: Creating a devised piece. Applying what you know and trying what you don't know.

For the **Movement Component:**

Wed Mar 26: Putting the Fight Together (Choreography)

Fri Mar 28: Putting the Fight Together (Choreography)

Objectives: Learning Fight Choreography

Week 11

For the **Voice Component:**

Mon Mar 31: Sound Lab Shares and Iconic Image and Music Workshop on 5 lines of text

Wed April 2: Iconic Image Workshop and Music on 5 lines of text

For the *Movement Component*:

Fri Apr 4: Putting the Fight Together

Objectives: Learning Fight Choreography

Week 12*TBD**

For the *Voice Component*:

Mon April 7: Sightreads of Text

Wed April 9: Sightreads of Text

For the *Movement Component*:

Fri Apr 11: TBD (Action for the Camera)

Objectives: Camera Techniques for Action

Week 13*TBD**

For the *Movement Component*:

Mon Apr 14: TBD (Action for the Camera)

Wed Apr 16: TBD (Action for the Camera)

Objectives: Camera Techniques for Action

For the *Voice Component*:

Fri Apr 18: Off book rehearsals with added office hours

Week 14

For the *Movement Component*:

Mon Apr 21: Applying the Techniques (Scene work)

Wed Apr 23: Applying the Techniques (Scene work)

Objectives: Timing and Rhythm, Prop Safety, Story Building, Floating the Action

For the *Voice Component*:

Fri Apr 25: Run Dialect Bash

Week 15

For the *Movement Component*:

Mon Apr 28: Final Scene Choreography

Wed Apr 30: Final Scene Choreography

For the *Voice Component*:

Fri May 2: FINAL DIALECT BASH

Final Examination Date: Friday May 9 (11:00 – 1:00 PM)

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. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).

SDA PRODUCTIONS

SDA productions are courses and therefore do not supersede any other courses in which you are enrolled. When in an SDA production, students must not register for evening classes that conflict with regularly scheduled rehearsals. In short, being involved in an SDA production is a curricular assignment and must be treated as any other curricular assignment.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR COMMITMENTS AND ISPS

Should you choose to participate in any extra-curricular project, such as an Independent Student Production, the SDA administration and faculty will not make allowances or exceptions for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework that is required as preparation for class, or lack of participation in class resulting from your extra-curricular involvement.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

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](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

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 accommodations are 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.

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 is comprised 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) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

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.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theater 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.

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>
