

Voice For the Theater: THEA 2051 - 002
Course Syllabus
Spring 2017
M/W 2pm-4:20pm
RTFP 127

Professor: Dori Leeman

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Office Hours: M/W 12:00 - 2:00 PM by appointment only

Office Location: DATH Adjunct office

Required Text:

Rodenburg, Patsy. *The Right To Speak: Working with the Voice*. Routledge, Inc., 1992. ISBN # 878300554.

LaBute, Neil. *The Shape of Things*. Broadway Play Publishers, 2003. ISBN-10: 088145222X

Other required material: A folder (for hand-outs) and a journal. You must bring your text, folder, and journal to every class. Failure to bring these to class will mean that you are unprepared for class and will result in a point deduction.

Course Description

This course is an introductory class in vocal work and is designed to provide the student actor with a basic foundation of technique for vocal preparation and performance.

This course will focus on the use of the voice as an instrument and the exploration of the vocal instrument and vocal quality, range, resonance, energy, and freedom.

Special attention will be paid to freeing the voice of tension and non-constructive habits. The many aspects of vocal expression will be explored and developed through relaxation exercises, a solid foundation of breath-work, and increased general physical awareness.

Course Objectives

- Students will identify the roles that relaxation, breath, articulation, resonance, and vocal production play in the development of character, focus, intensity, mood, and style for performance.
- Students will describe the physiology of vocal production.
- Students will identify individual restrictive breath, vocal habits and patterns, and speech habits and patterns.
- Students will correct breath, vocal, and speech habits and patterns that are impeding their own growth as a performer and acknowledge the steps taken to improve them through daily vocal and physical exercises and warm-ups.
- Students will investigate and execute the connection between breath, sound, and acting impulses with relation to dramatic text and poetry.
- Through the use of scene work, monologues and other forms of text, the students will demonstrate the importance that relaxation, breath, resonance, and articulation play in creating better vocal projection, diction, deeper vocal and emotional strength, and greater personal meaning to their performance.
- Students will demonstrate the discipline required in keeping the voice strong and pliable as required for performance.
- Students will critique a performance as it relates to vocal production.

GRADING

Grading will consist of work in five areas: in-class exercises/participation, prepared projects, quizzes, written assignments, and attendance/punctuality. Students are encouraged to make an appointment with the instructor if they wish to discuss their work in greater detail than class time allows.

IN-CLASS EXERCISES/ENSEMBLE COMMITMENT GRADE

Much of our work will involve exercises, some of which are done in class and some of which require preparation outside of class. All assignments related to these exercises must be completed in order to pass the course. At the end of the semester students will be given a Class Participation/Ensemble Commitment grade. This grade will reflect the commitment to all in class exercises, preparation for in-class work, discussion of the text, observations about the work, and attention and availability each class period. Lack of student support or inconsideration of classmates will be reflected in this portion of the grade. Students are graded regularly on the ability to evaluate the work using key terms and concepts explored in the assigned readings and in class discussions.

PREPARED PROJECTS

Students will complete several creative projects using the techniques of the course, and will execute these more than once. Each execution must be completed in order to pass the course. A project that is not ready to be performed because the actor has not prepared will be stopped, and forfeited. The forfeiture of a pass will result in a grade deduction of the overall presentation. Presenting a project that has not been rehearsed is a disrespectful waste of class time, and will not be tolerated. If a student is absent on the day he/she is scheduled to present, he/she will receive a "0" for that portion of the assignment.

QUIZZES

It is imperative that students read the assigned chapters. There will be 2 Quizzes on the text. Pop Quizzes will occur if it seems students are neglecting to read chapters and aren't adequately prepared for discussion.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Students will have written assignments documenting their work in the class. These written assignments include analysis on prepared projects as well as critiques of two Theatre Performances on Campus. If a student does not turn in a written assignment on the due date, he/she will receive a 5-point deduction for each day the assignment is late. No assignments accepted after 1 week.

PLEASE NOTE: Most assignments will be due on **Black Board** or in your journal; very few will be printed out papers. If the assignment is not posted to Black Board by the start of class, it will be considered late.

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

Everyone is allowed TWO FREE ABSENCES without penalty (excused or unexcused). Any additional absence from class will result in a drop in ONE FULL LETTER GRADE. Missing the class is, in effect, missing out on the course content. The work cannot be made up independently.

PUNCTUALITY

Everyone is allowed one (1) tardy, even though showing up late is unacceptable. Each additional tardy will result in a drop in half a letter grade. A student who leaves class before dismissal (regardless of the reason) will receive a drop in half a letter grade. Tardiness is a DREADFUL habit for actors to acquire. It makes you less marketable, will quickly attach itself to your reputation, and will result in not being cast. If you have a tendency to be late, let's work on losing that tendency this semester.

CELL PHONE USAGE

Use of a cell phone for texting, browsing, checking messages, or making a call (unless authorized by your professor) will result in points being deducted from your ensemble commitment grade. Get used to this; it is a horrific offense in a professional rehearsal. Seriously, a director will be very upset with you, and I don't want to see that happen.

GRADING (subject to change)

POINT SUMMARY:	POINTS
ENSEMBLE COMMITMENT GRADE	25
QUIZZES	
<i>Syllabus Quiz</i>	5
<i>Reading Quiz #1</i>	10
<i>Reading Quiz #2/IPA Quiz</i>	25
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS	
<i>Journal Entries (6@5)</i>	30
<i>Critiques (2@15)</i>	30
PREPARED PROJECTS	
<i>Alright</i>	5
<i>Poem</i>	10
<i>Scene</i>	20
FINAL EXAM & PERFORMANCE	
Final Exam (Written)	20
Final Exam (Photo Monologue)	20
Total Points and Percentages	200

Final grade breakdown for points earned:

A = 200 - 180 points

B = 179 - 160 points

C = 159 - 140 points

D = 139 - 120 points

F = 119 and below

If you have any specific needs that require academic accommodations please email your professor immediately and/or contact the Office of Disability Accommodation at 940-565-4323 or visit <https://disability.unt.edu/>

Special Exceptions Regarding Attendance

Each student is expected to be here for every class---just as you are expected to show up at a job when scheduled to work or attend every rehearsal and performance when cast in a play. The work you do in class creates the foundation for every class that follows. The one exception to this is if an absence is due to a documented medical issue. I hope you will come to see that acting is a social art, requiring you to participate on a collaborative level. In order to learn the skills of collaboration, you've got to be here.

- If you are involved in any special school function, which may require you to miss a class, please inform the professor ASAP and provide the required UNT official paperwork outlining the activity you are required to participate in.
- Absence for a religious holiday is permitted with at least one weeks notice.

Consider this

An actor's professional work ethic begins in the classroom. If you have trouble being accountable to yourself and showing up for *any* class, perhaps you should consider a different profession....the "independent contractor lifestyle" is probably not for you.

Other Information Regarding Grading Policy

IMPORTANT!

- If you are scheduled to work on a given day and are not prepared to work effectively and make good use of in class coaching time, you will be asked to step down and we will move on to the next performer. Class time is everyone's time—coming to class unprepared, unable or unwilling to work is disrespectful to everyone.
- If you miss a class when a performance assignment is due you will receive a "0" for that portion of the assignment. The project cannot be "made up." Only excused medical or emergency absences will be tolerated and evidence of such must be submitted in writing from the proper authorities.

PASS DESCRIPTIONS:

"FIRST PASS" REQUIREMENTS:

1. Script analysis ready for oral defense. Receive suggestions for future research.
2. Verbally demonstrate your play/scene analysis in class.
3. Give an informed and impassioned reading. You are expected to show:
 - a. beginning character analysis,
 - b. beginning physical and vocal characterization,
 - c. knowledge of all words and meaning of phrases,
 - d. use of the language,
 - e. ability to mean what you say,
 - f. awareness of builds, topping and cutbacks and
 - g. emotional commitment to the actions and objectives.

"SECOND PASS" REQUIREMENTS:

1. Demonstration of a fully memorized script.
2. Demonstration of 80% performance commitment to the character, "given circumstances" and style of the play.

"FINAL PASS" REQUIREMENTS:

1. Demonstration of a fully memorized script.
2. Demonstration of performance level physical and vocal characterization.
3. Demonstration of performance level emotional commitment to the situation.
4. Demonstration of performance level playing of actions and bold choices.

COMMUNICATION

Please direct all electronic correspondence with me to my UNT email address:
Dori.leeman@unt.edu

If you need to reach me concerning something **urgent** please text or call (404) 725-3662 to speak with me. Please leave a message if I don't answer.

PLEASE!

Get in the habit of checking your email everyday either the night before or morning of class for last minute communication from me.

Because I continue to work as a professional actress and am expected to do so by UNT and the UNT Department of Dance and Theatre, I will occasionally have to cancel class for projects I am cast in—sometimes on short notice. Always check your email the night before class. Teaching is my first priority; however, conflicts are sometimes unavoidable.

A few things to consider

- Be supportive of your classmates. Remember you are part of an ensemble. The energy and perspective you bring to each class will impact “the whole”. Each meeting, consider how you are contributing to the class.
- Reject jadedness and cynicism.
- Beginners are on a quest. There are no stupid questions. Ask anything.
- Do not expect perfection---embrace the concept of process.
- If you are feeling fear or an unusual physical/emotional sensation allow it to resonate and breathe. This work will challenge you and ask you to go places you maybe never have.
- Consider this class the perfect environment to take chances and risks....dive in! If you don't get to the place you shoot for, go for it again.
- Be inquisitive.
- Choose to listen, respond, and have a good time.

Important General Class Information

Wear comfortable clothing that allows you to:

- Fully stretch and move your whole body.
- Comfortably lay on the floor.
- Breathe without restriction.
- Walk naturally. (I.E. no flip-flops, high heels, cowboy boots, bulky heels, etc.)
- It's unavoidable---at times the floor in our workspace gets dusty and dirty.
Don't wear clothes that you're concerned about keeping especially clean. This may mean you have to change clothes for class. Please factor in the time that will take.

Please note: Failure to wear clothing you can move in will result in a deduction from your Ensemble Commitment Grade.

Studio Space:

We share our space with many other classes. It is therefore essential to “neutralize the space” at the end of each class and rehearsal, i.e. remove all debris that is not part of the space and put chairs in their proper place, strike set pieces/props. **NO FOOD OR DRINK ALLOWED IN THE STUDIO SPACE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A CLOSED BOTTLE OF WATER.**

Out of Class Rehearsals:

You are required to rehearse your scenes outside of class. Be respectful of your scene partners. If you are late for your rehearsals, you may be awarded an in-class tardy or absence. Out of class rehearsals are considered an extension of class. Therefore, promptness is likewise mandatory. Repeated lateness or missed rehearsals will result in the lowering of your final grade. It is your responsibility to know your scene partner's phone number and e-mail address.

Rehearsal Space:

Unfortunately, there is a limited amount of campus rehearsal space. You will have to be patient and creative when finding a place to rehearse. Plan ahead! You will be allowed to sign out RTFP 127 and RTFP 131. *Please note: You must strike the space at the end of each rehearsal.*

Other

- Please bring water with you to class.
- Please turn off cell phones when you before you enter the classroom.
- When ready to work, please sign in and enter the classroom. Get focused and prepared for the day.
- Please be prepared and focused---even on days you are not scheduled to perform/work!
- Please use common sense when it comes to hair, jewelry and piercings. Make sure your hair is out of your way. When it comes to jewelry, less is more in this class and if you have a piercing that could get ripped out or hurt a partner, take it out. If your tongue is pierced, please remove the tongue jewelry while in this class....it does affect your speech and will get in your way in this class.

Departmental Policy

Open flame of any sort (smoking, candles, lighting matches or lighters) in scenes, monologues, improvisations or productions is not allowed. Any action of this sort must be cut.

Withdrawal

Should you choose to drop this course, you must initiate the drop and acquire all of the proper signatures and paperwork. If that process is not completed, you will be subject to a WF or an F at the close of the semester.

SETE

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class. The spring administration of the SETE will remain open through the week of finals.

American with Disabilities Act Notice

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at [http:// www.unt.edu/oda](http://www.unt.edu/oda). You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Student Obligations to Academic/Production Work

D/T students are expected to budget and organize their time and efforts in order to meet both their academic and production commitments satisfactorily and on time. The faculty and staff recognize that the academic and production assignments within the Department, as well as outside employment and other obligations, sometimes impose conflicting pressures on DT students. One of the principal responsibilities of each student is to carefully identify and monitor the commitments that comprise his/her departmental assignments and outside obligations. It is also important to keep in mind that production work and outside obligations do not constitute an excused absence from DT classes or from the completion of any required class assignments.

Departmental Theatrical Productions

Each student is required to see all Theatre Division productions performed this semester. (These are denoted in the class calendar as well.) You will be doing written critiques on two of the shows. Each student enrolled in a theater class receives a free ticket to each departmental production show. It is your responsibility to reserve your ticket through the Theater Box Office. Please let me know via email if you will be unable to attend either of the performances. You will need to make it up by seeing a show in the community.

Theatre Voice I: Recommended Texts/Bibliography

Berry, Cicely.	<u>The Actor and the Text</u> , Applause, 1992
Berry, Cicely.	<u>Voice and the Actor</u> , MacMillan, 1973
Boal, Augusto.	<u>Games for Actors and Non-Actors</u> , Routledge, 1992 Chekhov,
Michael.	<u>On the Technique of Acting</u> , Harper Perennial, 1991. Grotowski,
Jerzy.	<u>Towards a Poor Theatre</u> , Simon and Shuster, 1968 Lessac, Arthur.
	<u>The Use and Training of the Human Voice</u> , Mayfield, 1997
Rodenburg, Patsy.	<u>The Actor Speaks</u> , St. Martin's, 2000
	<u>The Need for Words</u> , Routledge, 1993
Stanislavski, C.	<u>An Actor Prepares</u> , Routledge, 1989 Wangh,
Stephen.	<u>An Acrobat of the Heart</u> , Vintage, 2000 Wells,
Lynn K.	<u>The Articulate Voice</u> , Allyn and Bacon, 1999
Zinder, David	<u>Body Voice Imagination</u> , Routledge, 2002

Online Resources:

IDEA: International Dialects of English Archive: A repository of primary source recordings of regional and foreign accents/dialects. VERY VALUABLE SOURCE.

<http://web.ku.edu/~idea/>

The Voice and Speech Source: Excellent site for actors' questions and further investigation about how the voice functions, speech and phonetics. [http://](http://www.yorku.ca/earmstro/index.html)

www.yorku.ca/earmstro/index.html

The Dictionary of American Regional English: Audio samples of American Regional Accents. <http://dare.wisc.edu/>

Evan Easton's Authentic American Pronunciation: <http://eleaston.com/pr/home.html>

Great site for audio interactive sounds of American speech work-out.