

THEA 4051: The Art and Craft of Voice Over

Asynchronous Remote Course Syllabus

Instructor:

Professor: Sally Vahle
Cell Phone: 214-597-2140
Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom.

Email: sally.vahle@unt.edu

Class Communication: Please direct all communication to me either via my cell phone or our class canvas site. (Canvas Inbox)

NOTE: All Class Correspondence will happen via your Canvas class Inbox only—NOT email.

THEA 4051: The Art and Craft of Voice Over

Course Description

This advanced course in Voice for actors introduces students to a vital aspect of the media industry: Voice Over. In this course, students will further explore vocal techniques such as characterization, articulation, enunciation and vocal quality, as applicable to voice acting, as well as critical analysis of all types of voice over copy. Students will learn about all aspects and elements of the voice over industry, including background, trends, genres and sectors. Home studio set up, navigating the microphone, voice over demo creation and marketing will be topics of investigation.

Essential Performance Functions/Requirements of the Course

This course teaches the foundational skills used in professional voice acting. Because this is a performance-based class, you will be graded on the vocal work you create and submit during the semester. To participate successfully, all students need to be able to do the following essential performance tasks:

1. Create recorded vocal performances

You will submit recordings of your work throughout the course. These recordings should be understandable, clear enough to evaluate, and expressive enough to show how you are interpreting the material.

2. Demonstrate core voice-acting techniques

Over the semester, you will work on:

- clear speech and articulation
- breath support
- pacing and timing
- vocal intention, meaning, and expressiveness

These are the foundational skills used in professional voice-over work and are central to the learning goals of the course.

3. Submit recordings that reflect your own vocal performance

Your recordings must be created using your own voice and should have enough volume and technical clarity for feedback and evaluation.

4. Use feedback to improve your performance

You will receive detailed notes on your vocal work. Students are expected to apply feedback and show growth and development in their voice-over technique.

5. Participate in course materials and preparation

This includes reading and analyzing scripts, listening to or watching examples, completing warm-ups and exercises, and preparing assignments.

These expectations represent the essential skills taught and assessed in the course. They reflect the basic competencies used across the professional voice-over industry.

Access and Accommodations

I am committed to supporting all students in their learning. If you believe you may experience barriers in any part of the course, please contact the Office of Disability Access (ODA) as early as possible. ODA will work with you to determine reasonable accommodations that support your access to the course. Accommodations can support your learning experience, but they cannot remove or change the essential performance requirements listed above, since these are the core skills this course teaches and evaluates. All students must be able to consistently demonstrate these essential skills in order to successfully complete the course.

Course Structure

This course takes place 100% online. The course is structured in such a way that your work and learning will be self-guided. The exercises and practice that you engage in on your own each week will shape the outcome of the assignments that you record and submit to me over the course of the semester. You will receive written critique and responses to your work from me. There will be two opportunities to connect with me for verbal feedback during the semester. These "check-in's" will happen via video

conferences using Zoom. There are 15 weeks of content that you will move through. I will open up a new module each week.

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Required Course Text:

Rodenburg, Patsy *The Right to Speak*. Methuen Drama, 2nd edition, 2015.

Required Course Materials:

In order to participate in this course student's must have the following materials:

- Consistent access to a computer
- A quiet place to record copy
- A USB microphone
- Ear Phones

CANVAS: All course work and communication will happen via Canvas---it is your responsibility to make sure that you ENABLE CANVAS NOTIFICATIONS so that you don't miss out on communication, assignments, etc.....

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This advanced course in Voice for actors introduces students to a vital aspect of the media industry: Voice Over. In this course, students will further explore vocal techniques such as characterization, articulation, enunciation and vocal quality, as applicable to voice acting, as well as critical analysis of all types of voice over copy. Students will learn about all aspects and elements of the voice over industry, including background, trends, genres and sectors. Home studio set up, navigating the microphone, voice over demo creation and marketing will be topics of investigation. Pre-requisite: *THEA 2051: Voice for Theater*

Course Overview and Requirements:

This course will introduce students to the mechanics of the voice and the effective

use of the vocal instrument for the actor when performing voice over content. Students will explore their vocal instrument and vocal quality, range, resonance, energy and vocal freedom specifically in relationship to voice over.

As THEA 2051, Voice for Theatre is a pre-requisite for this course, students are expected to apply all of the foundational work they learned in their Voice for Theatre class to their work in this course.

It is assumed (and necessary) that students enrolled in this course have a foundational command of:

- A knowledge of their Personal speech habits and the ability to self-correct any speech or aspects of regional dialects as deemed necessary by voice over copy.
- The ability to analyze content/copy with detail and specificity.
- Practical knowledge of the role that relaxation, breath, articulation, resonance, and vocal production play in the development of character, focus, intensity, mood, and style for performance.
- The ability to make acting choices when cold-reading.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, learners will be able to:

1. Recall, understand and apply key vocabulary relevant to actors and voice over.
2. Identify the physiology and components of the human voice.
3. Create and make use of a comprehensive vocal and physical warm up.
4. Effectively make use of the technology required of actor who does Voice Over (microphone, recording platform, etc....)
5. Apply Voice Over techniques to and critically analyze a broad range of text, including industry standard genres of VO copy and will improve, through practice, their command of relaxation, breath, resonance and articulation.
6. Demonstrate, through recorded exercises, their ability to successfully deploy their use of vocal techniques to a variety of Voice Over materials.
7. Develop an understanding of the current industry standard business aspects of the VO industry, including, VO demos, demo copy selection, home studio and on-site studio etiquette, client/talent dynamic and relationship, the process of seeking agency representation and more.
8. Demonstrate, through practice and application of acting techniques specific to Voice Over, improvement their vocal projection, diction and acting choices in order to bring deeper vocal and emotional strength to their VO recorded performances.
9. Show through performance projects, the work ethic required of the actor who works in the VO industry.
10. Develop objectivity of their vocal and acting choices in order to self-assess and self-direct their recorded Voice Over audition submissions.

Course Participation

Participation=Work Ethic= EVERYTHING.

Your WORK ETHIC will be THE determining factor in your success or your failure in this course.

Each student is responsible for managing all deadlines for course content, and is expected to participate fully---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 effort you commit to the work you do in this course will ultimately define your success in this course. Your work ethic will determine your final grade in this course and your overall effort (or lack thereof) will contribute to how prepared and poised you are to enter the highly competitive VO profession. You will quickly discover that a Voice Over Actor's process--- *being* a VO actor is truly a solo artistic endeavor.....until you book a gig—THEN “collaboration” occurs.

CANVAS:

If you do not have “notifications enabled” it will be impossible for you to pass this class. Please double check that notifications are ENABLED.

This class will fully utilize CANVAS. All class communication will happen via the class Canvas inbox and via announcements. For classes that happen via Zoom notifications will be sent through the class Canvas portal. It is imperative that students “enable notifications” in their CANVAS class portal. Enabling notifications allows you to receive announcements, assignment notifications and other important information.

More: Course Structure and Content

In the first half of the semester will be a deep dive into all things Voice Over.

Students will:

- “Learn their voice.”
- Learn the basics of studio technology and machinery as it pertains to VO.
- Learn about the business of VO.
- Learn about and practice copy from all forms and genres of VO.
- Explore and practice character voices.
- Engage in “listening” exercises.
- Practice cold reading.
- Practice “timing” reads.

In the second half of the semester the professor will act as your “agent” and students will be “talent.” Students will be expected to apply what they have investigated and practiced in the first half of the semester “as if” they are VO talent represented by an agent. In this phase of learning, students will receive, via email, a broad range of copy and will be expected to follow all direction contained therein, record the copy, submit their .Mp3 and will receive detailed feedback/critique. What students learn, how they apply themselves will exactly mirror what they can expect to experience as professional VO actors.

Grading Policy:

Each of you begins this course with a grade of “A”. In order to maintain your “A” you must fully participate in this course by meeting all deadlines and turning your work in ON TIME. Why does this matter? In the real life of a VO actor if you miss the deadline, you’ve missed the gig.

- If you are scheduled to participate in a small group meet up or individual coaching via Zoom or in person and do not show up—you will receive zero points.
- If you miss the deadline for any written or recorded work in this course you will receive zero points. Late work will not be accepted.

Special circumstances when late work will be accepted:

- If you are involved in any special school functions which may require you to miss a class please inform the professor ASAP.
- Please notify me at the beginning of the semester if you will be absent due to a religious holiday.
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How do you earn points?

ALL assignments in this course carry a value of 10 points.

“Assignments” is defined as:

- Aural (listening) observations and responses.
- Written work.
- Recorded voice over submissions.

At the end of the semester I will total all of your points and the total points possible. Final grades will be calculated on a 10% grading scale.

For example:

How will your work be assessed?

Letter	Percentage
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A	90%-100%
B	80%-89%
C	80%-79%
D	60%-69%

Your work in this course will be based on the following, as applicable:

- Commitment to professional standards. (preparation, organizational skills and work ethic).
- **Ability to follow VO audition copy directions EXACTLY as stated. If you do not follow the written instructions exactly you will automatically receive ZERO POINTS (F).**
- Participation in class and in all exercises.
- Willingness to explore and take risks.
- Evidence of cumulative improvement.
- Overall quality of speech adjustments and exercises.
- Overall cumulative improvement in cold reading, vocal expression, and vocal support and placement.
- Overall ability and willingness to integrate each unit of study as the semester progresses.
- Quality of recorded submissions.
- Overall ability to apply the work done over the course of the semester to a variety of dramatic text.

The grading in this class is, unavoidably, somewhat subjective. Your grades for each individual unit of study as well as specific assignments within each unit will be based on both how much concentrated effort you have devoted to the process of your learning and your work and what you have ultimately achieved.

NOTE:

- ! In order to remain a theatre major and graduate with a degree in theatre, each student must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5.**
- ! In order for a class in your major to count toward credit in your major you must receive a minimum grade of “C”.**
- ! Students should strive for excellence in all of their academic and artistic work.**

GENERAL PARAMETERS FOR LETTER GRADES:

Please note that the “descriptions” listed below are extremely general and designed only to be a basic guide to help students understand the expectations of the instructor when assessing work in class. Hopefully this little bit of context will help you set personal goals to work toward over the course of the semester.

‘A’ grade:

Participation is excellent. Work is committed, focused and sustained, with obvious, excellent growth. All assignments and deadlines satisfactorily completed on time. Student shows clear excellence in mastering the objectives of the assignments. Instructor’s critiques generally focus on strong aspects of the work. Student is self- motivated, self-directed and strives and is able to improve upon strengths. All work shows careful preparation and commitment.

‘B’ grade:

Participation is above average. The student exceeds the basic fulfillment of all requirements is met with growth. Student shows strong competence in fulfilling objectives of the assignment. Instructor’s critiques generally focus primarily on strong areas of work, with several specific areas of improvement suggested for subsequent work. There is evidence that the student works independently to evolve both strengths and areas of improvement. Work is strong, has been well prepared and consistently shows good potential for improvement.

‘C’ grade:

Participation is mediocre. A fair number of assignments have not been submitted for grading. Student is content with/satisfies the general requirements of the assignments. Feedback and critique generally focus on weaker areas of work, with stronger aspects identified and reinforced. Lack of evidence of independent work on areas the instructor has identified as “needing improvement”. Overall work ethic needs improvement.

‘D’ grade:

Student has missed a significant number of exercises. When work is turned in student has produced work that often does not satisfy the minimum requirements for project. Critiques focus on lack of preparation, lack of understanding of assignment and unwillingness to give maximum effort. Work ethic reflects a poor attitude, lack of organization, motivation and discipline—all of which results in below average outcomes, overall.

Critique and Feedback

I am available, by appointment, to meet with any student at any point in the semester. All students will receive written or verbal assessment of their recorded work.

COMMUNICATION:

- Please direct all class related correspondence via the “Inbox” on our class Canvas site.
- Students are welcome to reach me by calling my cell phone: 214-597-2140—text and voice mail messages either is fine.

PLEASE!

Turn on the “Notifications” option in Canvas so you receive updates from me. I will use the “Announcements” option as a primary communication tool for class. The only way to ensure that you receive them is to “enable notifications” on your device(s).

IMPORTANT:

I cannot stress how important communication is. If you are experiencing challenges, an emergency anything that is keeping you from fulfilling your commitment to this class or any of your classes at UNT, please consider having a conversation with me. I do understand that things come up that are unavoidable and unexpected—that’s life. There are many avenues of support at UNT. I am aware of them and can point you in a direction for support and guidance. I am always willing to work with students to help them achieve success whenever possible.

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.

Responsibilities for Time Management

Dance and Theatre 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 Dance and Theatre 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 important to keep in mind that production work and outside obligations do not constitute an excused absence from Dance or Theatre classes or from the completion of any required class assignments.

Student Behavior in the Classroom:

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr

Access to Information – Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940- 565- 2648.

Americans with Disabilities Act Notice

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking 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 an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of 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 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 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 <https://disability.unt.edu/>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

SPOT

The Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and 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 SPOT to be an important part of your participation in this class. The SPOT evaluation will happen at the end of the semester.

From the UNT Website: SPOT

Student Evaluation Administration Dates. Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via *IA System* Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at www.spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu.