

# **THEA 4500: The Art and Craft of Voice Over**

## **Spring 2023: Course Syllabus**

**Professor: Sally Vahle**  
**Office: RTFP 221**  
**Cell Phone: 214-597-2140**

**Class Meets: Monday's from 2-5:50pm**  
**Curry: Rm 211**

**Office Hours: Monday's between 11am-12pm or by appointment  
in person or via Zoom.**

**Email: [sally.vahle@unt.edu](mailto:sally.vahle@unt.edu)**

**Class Communication:** I will regularly send information and updates to the class via Canvas Announcements. I will communicate with individual students via Canvas Inbox. Students should send communication to me via Canvas Inbox or are welcome to send me a text message or leave me a voicemail message.

### **NOTE:**

**\*\*\*\*All Class Correspondence will happen via your Canvas class Inbox.**

**Required Course Text: NONE**

### **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.....

## **Course Description:**

### **THEA 4500: The Art and Craft of Voice Over**

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:**

Student's will ***develop*** through practice:

- Characterization techniques for Voice Over.
- A command of articulation/enunciation for Voice Over.
- Effective use of the microphone when recording VO copy.
- An understanding of their unique "vocal quality."
- Students will explore voice over technique using 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.
- Through practice and application acting techniques specific to Voice Over students will improve their vocal projection, diction and acting choices in order to bring deeper vocal and emotional strength to their VO recorded performances.
- Students will glean 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.
- Students will practice and cultivate, through performance projects, the work ethic required of the actor who works in the VO industry.

## **COVID and Virtual Learning:**

Should COVID become an issue during this semester, necessary adjustments may have to be made to the structure and delivery of this course.

*[Statements specifically addressing COVID and Virtual Learning are located at the end of this document.]*

### **ZOOM:**

Please note that most guest artist visits and some class sessions may meet via Zoom instead of in person.

When this occurs you will receive plenty of notice.

### **Attendance and Participation**

**Participation=Work Ethic= EVERYTHING.**

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

The great majority of work for this class will happen on YOUR time. Exercises, assignments and projects will be due on specific days, work meetings (smaller group and one on one) will be scheduled at various times during the semester, as will guest visits. 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.

### **Departmental Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

Punctual attendance accounts for a substantial portion of the course grade. Thus, students are expected to be present and punctual for all classes.

The following policy is consistent with all acting courses in the department that meet once a week:

- Students are allowed no more than a total of TWO (2) absences during the semester.
- Students are considered tardy if they arrive for class no more than 30 minutes late. Arriving more than 30 minutes late for class is considered an absence.
- Students are expected to attend class for the duration of the period. Leaving class before then is considered an absence.

- An occurrence of tardiness for the class FOUR (4) times is the equivalent of ONE (1) absence.
- A total of THREE (3) absences means that the highest grade the student can earn in the class is an F.

Any student with an issue in the area of attendance and/or punctuality will be referred to the Acting Faculty for guidance.

If a student's absences have resulted in a grade with which they are not pleased, they may choose to withdraw from the class.

The professor's roll is the official record of absences and tardiness. At any point, the students are welcome to check the grade roster on Canvas to be sure that their attendance/punctuality record is accurate.

## **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.

## **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 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.

### **GUEST ARTIST VISITS**

- The opportunity for students to learn from working professional guest artists and glean a variety of perspectives is invaluable. This course will incorporate as many guest artist visits as possible in order to introduce students to individuals working in range of aspects of the Voice Over industry. The majority of guest artist visits will happen via Zoom and happen in the second half of the semester during the “Professional Representation Simulation weeks.”
- When we are visiting with a guest artist on Zoom it is expected that students will be engaged, attentive, prepared to ask questions and will ALWAYS have their camera on during the Zoom conversation. ***If a student participates with their camera off they will be counted absent from class.***

***Please see the attached calendar for the weekly overview of topics.***

### **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.
- Illness accompanied by a doctor’s note. The doc note must articulate WHEN you are eligible to participate in class.
- If you test positive for COVID during the semester you must present me with confirmation that this is your status—I will work with you to complete the class work you miss as a result of your illness. Please remember, you must alert me

with documentation that your status is COVID Positive as soon as you receive your test result.

### **How do you earn points?**

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

“Assignments” is defined as:

- Zoom and/or in person meetings.
- Zoom and/or in person coaching sessions.
- 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:**

<b>A</b>	<b>90%-100%</b>	<b>of total points</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>80%-89%</b>	“ “
<b>C</b>	<b>80%-79%</b>	“ “
<b>D</b>	<b>60%-69%</b>	“ “

### **How will your work be assessed?**

**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.

## **Behavioral Expectations**

Activities such as reading books or articles for other classes, studying for other classes, or any other activity which is not pertinent to this course are considered inappropriate, and will be viewed as non-participation. Please refrain from texting /cell phone use. Lap top computers are only appropriate for note taking or relevant research pertinent to the current class. These diversions will result in a lowered grade or dismissal from the class. Student participation is expected to contribute to a positive learning environment, and respect for others is essential. Through positive and focused participation, each student demonstrates a commitment to the art form, the profession, their peers and themselves.

## **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](http://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](http://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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.spot.unt.edu) or email [spot@unt.edu](mailto:spot@unt.edu).

### **Virtual Classroom Guidelines: Department of Dance and Theatre University of North Texas**

Should online meetings of the class ever occur, it is expected that every student will practice virtual etiquette that is respectful to the class, the professor, and other students during these sessions. Adherence to appropriate virtual etiquette is factored into the student's grade. This includes the following:

- Log on at least a minute or two early; do not be surprised if you are counted late if you are not logged on to the virtual class when it starts.
- Do not attend class if you are unable to participate actively. Do not join the virtual classroom just to ignore it or walk away from it. If the instructor realizes this has occurred, your participation will be penalized, and you may be counted absent.
- Do not attend virtual class from your bed. While this is a virtual space, it is still a classroom. You will find it easier to pay attention, learn material, and complete your course work if you are seated at a table or desk.
- If you use a profile picture in virtual classroom, it should be a classroom-appropriate photo.
- Mute yourself unless you are making a presentation to the class or the instructor is seeking questions/comments from the class. For users in virtual classroom, the space bar acts as a quick unmute—press it down to speak on mic, then release the space bar to mute yourself again.
- You are expected to enable your video and remain on camera while class is in session, unless directed otherwise by the professor.
- Dress as if you are coming into a regular class.

- Make sure to illuminate your face with natural or artificial light so the instructor and others can see you clearly.
- Make sure there is nothing distracting or inappropriate in the background of your video feed.
- Try to avoid having other people enter and exit your frame to avoid distracting your classmates and instructor.
- If seeing yourself on camera distracts you, right-click on your own video feed in virtual classroom and choose HIDE SELF VIEW. This setting allows your instructor and classmates to see you, but you will not see yourself.
- Be careful when sharing your screen. You do not want your personal email, documents, or images to be displayed accidentally.
- Be aware everyone can see your messages in chat unless you have chosen to send the instructor a direct message. Private messages to other students are disabled to avoid distractions during class.
- Do not attend virtual class while operating a vehicle or doing anything else in which attending the virtual class at the same time may negatively impact your safety or the safety of others.
- Do not attend class in an unauthorized public space where others will see/hear the class. Your privacy and the privacy of your classmates is federally protected.
- If you know that you are unable to attend a class meeting, contact the instructor in advance to receive a recording of the class that you can watch later.
- Do not share the web URL for our virtual classroom class with anyone outside of class. If class is “virtual classroom bombed” because you shared the link, administration will be notified and will enact sanctions up to and including removal from the course and possible expulsion from the university.
- If the class is “bombed,” the instructor will first attempt to mute and boot the unwanted person from the meeting. If this is not possible or fails to stop the disruption, the instructor will end the meeting, create a new meeting link, and email it to you in short order.

