Vocal Coaching
Fall 2026

MUAS 3524/5524/6524
Instructor: Dr. Willem van Schalkwyk
MU 342
Credit: 1
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00-2:00pm, by appointment
Email: willem.vanschalkwyk@unt.edu

Course Description
Instruction for advanced voice students to deepen their understanding of the many elements that combine to make a successful performance of vocal music from a vocal coach's perspective: musical style, performance practice, language, and interpretation appropriate to song literature, oratorio, and opera.

Prerequisites
Consent of the instructor.

Course Objectives
Through class performances of repertoire singers will demonstrate their current mastery of the following elements that comprise a vocal performance: diction, text, subtext, musical style, performance practice, and physical presentation. Instruction will be specific to the repertoire at hand and particular to the individual student. Depending on the individual student's areas of difficulty, the objective of this course is to address each of the abovementioned elements as follows:

- **Diction:** By speaking any problematic words or syllables, the instructor will direct the student towards a more accurate formation of the appropriate phonemes as encountered in Italian, German, French, and English. Students will also be made aware of the nuances and inflections unique to each of these languages in the texts that they are studying, since the understanding of this is crucial to the successful rendering of text in singing. Students will subsequently also speak the text in order to demonstrate their comprehension of the details under discussion.
- **Text and Subtext:** If, after the performance, the instructor finds it necessary to further evaluate the student's understanding of a text, in particular if it is in a foreign language, the student will be asked to speak the text as a poem, and also to paraphrase it in English. The instructor may then correct any incorrect or inadequate elocution or translation, and may employ a discussion to discover any additional meaning or intent of the text.
- **Musical Style and Performance Practice:** During the performance the instructor will assess the student's knowledge and application of components such as, but not limited to: overall tempo, rubato, ornamentation/cadenzas, possible cuts or tacets in arias, sustained line and/or articulation. Music from each style period employs these components in dissimilar fashion, and when necessary the instructor will correct the student's concept or execution by demonstration at the keyboard.
- **Physical Presentation:** In its essence a vocal performance is not just the recreation of beautiful and accurate sounds, but also a visual communication through facial expressions, gestures, and body language. These elements of performance will also be observed and analyzed. Where appropriate, the student will be presented with alternative and/or specific ideas of physical expression, which the student will then demonstrate while singing a section of the piece being worked on.

Expectations
In the course of the semester, there will be ten coaching sessions lasting 45 minutes each. In order for these sessions to be most beneficial to the student, it is expected that:

- student plans in advance what repertoire is to be covered in coming weeks, and provide this information to the instructor no later than a week in advance of each session;
- student is fully prepared on the material presented – thorough score preparation (IPA and translations as appropriate) in addition to having learned to sing the music.

Assessment
Letter grades will be assigned as follows: 93-100% = A, 90-92% = A-, 87-89% = B+, 83-86% = B, 80-82% = B-, 77-79% = C+, 73-76% = C, 70-72% = C-, 67-69% = D+, 63-67% = D, 60-62% = D-, below 60% = F. The final grade will be calculated as an accumulation of weekly preparation and attendance.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam [or specify alternative sanction, such as course failure]. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students (Office of Academic Integrity), who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term “cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.
See: Academic Integrity
LINK: https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003

STUDENT BEHAVIOR
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 Dean of Students 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 classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.
See: Student Code of Conduct
Link: https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – EAGLE CONNECT
Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at my.unt.edu. All official communication from the university will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect.
See: Eagle Connect
LINK: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

ODA STATEMENT
The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter. You can now request your Letters of Accommodation ONLINE and ODA will mail your Letters of Accommodation to your instructors. You may wish to begin a private discussion with your professors regarding your specific needs in a course. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access.
See: ODA
LINK: disability.unt.edu. (Phone: (940) 565-4323)

DIVERSITY AND BELONGING
UNT values diversity and individuality as part of advancing ideals of human worth, dignity and academic excellence. Diverse viewpoints enrich open discussion, foster the examination of values and exposure of biases, help educate people in rational conflict resolution and responsive leadership, and prepare us for the complexities of a pluralistic society. As such, UNT is committed to maintaining an open, welcoming atmosphere that attracts qualified students, staff, and faculty from all groups to support their success. UNT does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status in its application and admission process, educational programs and activities, employment policies and use of university facilities.

Health and Safety Information
Students can access information about health and safety at: https://music.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness

Registration Information for Students
See: Registration Information
Link: https://registrar.unt.edu/students

Academic Calendar, Fall 2024
See: Fall 2024 Academic Calendar
Link: https://registrar.unt.edu/sites/default/files/fall-2024-academic-calendar.pdf

Final Exam Schedule, Fall 2024
See above

Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per term. Music scholarships require a 3.5 cumulative GPA. Students cannot exceed maximum timeframes established based on the published length of the graduate program. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended you schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college, an advisor in UNT-International or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course.
See: Financial Aid
LINK: http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap

RETENTION OF STUDENT RECORDS
Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university's policy in accordance with those mandates.
See: FERPA
Link: http://ferpa.unt.edu/

COUNSELING AND TESTING
UNT's Center for Counseling and Testing has an available counselor for students in need. Please visit the Center's website for further information:
See: Counseling and Testing
Link: http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services.

For more information on mental health resources, please visit:
See: Mental Health Resources
Link: https://disparities.unt.edu/mental-health-resources

ADD/DROP POLICY
Please be reminded that dropping classes or failing to complete and pass registered hours may make you ineligible for financial aid. In addition, if you drop below half-time enrollment you may be required to begin paying back your student loans. See Academic Calendar (listed above) for additional add/drop Information.

Drop Information: https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html

STUDENT RESOURCES
The University of North Texas has many resources available to students. For a complete list, go to:
See: Student Resources
Link: https://success.unt.edu/aa-sa-resources

CARE TEAM
The Care Team is a collaborative interdisciplinary committee of university officials that meets regularly to provide a response to student, staff, and faculty whose behavior could be harmful to themselves or others.
See: Care Team
Link: https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care-team