



Course Syllabus: Voice and Diction for Theatre

College of Fine Arts

THEA 1233-101

Fall 2024; MWF 10:00am-10:50am

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Grace Edgar

Office: 105

Office hours: MWF 11am-12pm, T 1pm-3pm and by appointment

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Course Description

The student will learn about vocal anatomy and production through assigned readings, lectures, a midterm exam, and a final reflective paper. The student will develop vocal technique for speaking healthily and communicating effectively on stage through application of techniques and exercises, and the performance of a sonnet, two monologues, and a haiku or poem.

This is a performance-oriented course that focuses on developing the foundational skills in vocal production for the stage. Students will be introduced to exercises in relaxation, alignment, breath support, resonance, articulation, and phonation. Techniques for assessing emotional and psychological truths will be practiced as well as drawing emotional connections to sounds, words, and images. Students will study the International Phonetic Alphabet to understand regional and standard American dialects.

Course Objectives

- Develop correct posture, breath support and vocal placement for healthy vocal technique.
- Work on communicating effectively with clear diction.
- Extensive study of the International Phonetic Alphabet.
- Work with heightened and non-formal language.
- Apply acting technique and character development to create complete performances.
- Expand knowledge of the theatre canon.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

- *A Pronouncing Dictionary of American English* by John S. Kenyon and Thomas A. Knott
- *Freeing the Natural Voice; Imagery and art in the practice of voice and language* by Kristin Linklater
- Yoga mat or towel for floor work.
- Three-ring binder

Student Handbook

Refer to: MSU Student Handbook 2023-2024

https://msutexas.edu/student-life/_assets/files/handbook.pdf

Conduct Statement

Behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the instruction will result in the instructor's removing the disruptive student(s) from the class, either temporarily or permanently (instructor drop), and receive a final lower grade, up to an F. In addition, and depending on the nature of the behavior or conduct, the student(s) may be subject to further disciplinary actions as per MSU policies.

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

The university policy and procedures for academic dishonesty are outlined in the current Student Handbook in Appendix E. No cheating, collusion, or plagiarism will be tolerated in this class. Any student engaging in an academic dishonesty act will be sanctioned appropriately.

AI Policy

The MSU Student Handbook covers Academic Honesty under University Policies and Procedures. Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating, collusion, and plagiarism.

- Cheating is (1) the use of any unauthorized assistance, (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the Instructor, or (3) acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material.
- Plagiarism is the use of another person's published or unpublished work without full and clear acknowledgment.
- Collusion is collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit if the faculty member in charge does not authorize that collaboration.

Use of AI to assist in the completion of assignment will not be allowed or tolerated in this course.

Student Privacy Statement

Federal law prohibits the instructor from releasing information about students to parties outside the university without the signed consent of the student. Thus, in almost all cases the instructor will not discuss a student's academic progress or other matters with his/her parents without the proper release from students.

Title IX Statement

Obligation to Report Sex Discrimination under State and Federal Law

Midwestern State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. State and federal law require University employees to report sex discrimination and sexual misconduct to the University's Office of Title IX. As a faculty member, I am required to report to the Title IX Coordinator any allegations, personally observed behavior, or other direct or indirect knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking, involving a student or employee. After a report is made, the office of Title IX will reach out to the affected student or employee in an effort to connect such person(s) with resources and options in addressing the allegations made in the report. You are also encouraged to report any incidents to the office of Title IX. You may do so by contacting:

Laura Hetrick
Title IX Coordinator
Sunwatcher Village Clubhouse
940-397-4213
laura.hetrick@msutexas.edu

You may also file an online report 24/7 at
https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MSUTexas&layout_id=6

Should you wish to visit with someone about your experience in confidence, you may contact the MSU Counseling Center at 940-397-4618. For more information on the University's policy on Title IX or sexual misconduct, please visit <https://msutexas.edu/titleix/>

Pregnant and Parenting Students

To support the academic success of pregnant and parenting students and students with pregnancy related conditions, the University offers reasonable modifications based on the student's particular needs. Any student who is pregnant or parenting a child up to age 18 or has conditions related to pregnancy, may contact MSU's designated Pregnancy and Parenting Liaison to discuss support available through the University. The Liaison can be reached by emailing ruby.garrett@msutexas.edu or calling 940-397-4500. Should a student communicate with me that they are pregnant or have a pregnancy related condition or may need additional resources related to pregnancy or parenting, I will communicate that student's information to the Title IX Coordinator, who will work with the student and others, as needed, to ensure equal access to the University's education program or activity.

A pregnant student, a parenting student, or a student with pregnancy related conditions may be provided with supportive measures, based on the student's individualized needs, analogous to those provided to a student with a temporary medical condition, and provided such supportive measures do not fundamentally alter the nature of an education program or activity. Such supportive measures may include, but are not limited to:

For pregnant students:

- (1) Providing breaks during class to express breast milk, breastfeed, or attend to health needs associated with pregnancy or related conditions, including eating, drinking, or using the restroom;
- (2) Excusing intermittent absences to attend medical appointments;
- (3) Providing access to online or homebound education, including the providing of access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures (to the extent such materials, recordings are made available to any student with an excused absence);
- (4) Facilitating changes in schedule or course sequence, including extensions of time for coursework and rescheduling of tests and examinations and/or providing opportunity to make up missed assignments/assessments (such time extensions shall be applied in the same manner as the University grants and provides ADA/504 accommodations for additional time);
- (5) Allowing a student to sit or stand, or carry or keep water nearby;
- (6) Offering counseling;
- (7) Facilitating changes in physical space or supplies (for example, access to a larger desk or a footrest);
- (8) Allowing the student to maintain a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals or unborn children;
- (9) Providing elevator access;
- (10) Facilitating a voluntary leave of absence from the University if the student is in good academic standing at the time the student takes a leave of absence, and facilitating a return to the student's degree or certificate program without being required to reapply for admission if the student remains in good academic standing; or
- (11) Making other necessary changes to policies, practices, or procedures.

For Parenting Students:

- (1) Facilitating priority registration to the extent the University provides early registration for any other group of students; or
- (2) Facilitating a voluntary leave of absence from the University if the student is in good academic standing at the time the student takes a leave of absence, and facilitating a return to the student's degree or certificate program without being required to reapply for admission.

Grading

Grades will be comprised of IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) quizzes (25%), a midterm exam (10%), a final reflective paper (10%), three performances (15% each), and additional assignments and class participation (10%).

The student is allowed three absences per semester. Three late arrivals equal one absence. Any additional absences will result in a 10% reduction from the final grade.

90% or above=A, 80% or above =B, 70% or above=C, 60% or above=D and 59% or below=F.

Table 1: Percentages allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Percentage
IPA Quizzes (9 best of 11)	25%
Midterm Exam	10%
Final Reflective Paper	10%
Monologue #1 Performance	15%
Monologue #2 Performance	15%
Haiku/Poem Performance	15%
Additional Assignments and Class Participation	10%
Total Percentage	100%

Table 2: Total percentage for final grade.

Grade	Percentage
A	90% or above
B	80%-89%
C	70%-79%
D	60%-69%
F	Less than 60%

Additional Assignments

Throughout the semester homework regarding character development will be assigned. Assignments should be uploaded to [D2L](#). Assignments are due by 10:00am and late work will not be accepted. Additional assignments and class participation will count as 10% of your final grade.

Quizzes

Beginning on September 13, 2024, we will have a weekly IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) quiz on Friday. Some of the quizzes will be done outside of class time as IPA translations of your sonnet, monologues, and haikus/poems. Other quizzes will be done in class with text provided by Dr. Edgar. Your best nine out of eleven quizzes will count as 25% of your final grade. Your two quizzes with the lowest scores will not be counted toward your final grade.

Mid-Term Exam

There will be a midterm exam on October 18, 2024 during class time. You will receive a midterm review study guide on October 9, 2024 and we will have a midterm review session in class on October 16, 2024. The midterm will count as 10% of your final grade.

Final Reflective Paper

There will be a reflective final paper due on December 11, 2023 by 10:30am through [D2L](#). This paper will be reflective on your experiences in Voice & Diction class throughout the semester. You will give examples of techniques and tools you learned that were helpful to your development as an actor. The paper will be two to three pages in length, double-spaced in a 12-point font. Your reflective final paper will count as 10% of your final grade.

MSU Productions and Extra Credit

Attend the Midwestern plays this semester *Mr. Burns; a post-electric play* and *The Thanksgiving Play*. Your ticket is free to both of these shows with your validated Midwestern Student ID. Seating may be limited for these productions, please ensure you reserve your tickets early. An analysis bonus paper (additional 5% added to your final grade) addressing the vocal production of an actor of your choice will be due one week after the production closes.

Late Work

Late work will not be accepted with the exception of an emergency.

Make Up Work/Tests

No make-up work or tests will be accepted with the exception of an emergency.

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: August 29, 2024

Deadline to file for December graduation: September 23, 2024

Deadline to file for May graduation: October 4, 2024

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" November 25, 2024

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. A student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by Dr. Edgar. The student is allowed three absences per semester. Three late

arrivals will equal one absence. Any additional absences will result in a 10% reduction from the final grade.

Instructor Class Policies

Course Requirements

1. Participation: Daily participation in class activities and discussions. Always be warmed-up physically and vocally.
2. Daily Vocal Practice and IPA study: Schedule and commit to at least 25 minutes of uninterrupted practice and/or study five days a week. Turn your cell phone off or to airplane mode during this time.
3. Reading: Assigned reading is to be completed before the beginning of the week for the material covered during the week.
4. Productions: Attend the Midwestern plays this semester *Mr. Burns; a post-electric play* and *The Thanksgiving Play*. Your ticket is free to both of these shows with your validated Midwestern Student ID. Seating may be limited for these productions, please ensure you reserve your tickets early.

General Notes

Cell phones need to be turned off or to airplane mode during all classes. Dedicate class time to being present and learning your craft.

Wear comfortable clothes and shoes suitable for movement and floor work during class. Please wear audition dress when you perform your monologues and haiku/poems.

No gum or food. Please always bring water to drink.

Monologues and haiku/poem can be chosen by you, but will need to be email to Dr. Edgar for approval. Content warnings will be given for strong language and/or mature material.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants,

loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law.

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of Dr. Edgar.

Course Schedule:

Week	Subject	Assigned Reading from <i>Freeing the Natural Voice</i>
Week 1 8/26-8/30	An Introduction: The Approach to Vocal Freedom, How the Voice Works, Why the Voice Does Not Work Introduction of IPA	7-25
Week 2 9/4-9/6	Preparation for the Work, Workday One <i>Sonnet Assignments</i>	26-41
Week 3 9/9-9/13	Workday Two, Workday Three Sonnet work with IPA	43-86
Week 4 9/16-9/20	Workday Four, Workday Five <i>Sonnet Performances</i>	87-137
Week 5 9/23-9/27	Workday Six <i>Begin Classical Monologues</i>	139-160
Week 6 9/30-10/4	Workday Seven	161-172
Week 7 10/7-10/11	Workday Eight, Workday Nine <i>Perform Classical Monologues</i>	173-184
Week 8 10/14-10/18	<i>Begin Contemporary Monologues</i> Midterm Review <i>Midterm</i>	None
Week 9 10/21-10/25	Workday Ten, Workday Eleven	185-212
Week 10 10/28-11/1	Workdays Twelve and Thirteen	213-244
Week 11 11/4-11/8	Workday Fourteen, Workday Fifteen <i>Perform Contemporary Monologues</i>	245-274
Week 12 11/11-11/15	Workday Sixteen, Workday Seventeen	275-284
Week 13 11/18-11/22	Workday Eighteen <i>Begin Haiku/Poem</i>	285-293
Week 14 11/25	Workdays Nineteen, Twenty, Twenty-One	295-319
Week 15 12/2-12/6	Workout, Words...imagery, About Texts...art, Tuning into the Text...imagination	321-374
Week 16 12/11 10:30am- 12:30pm	<i>Perform Haiku/Poem</i> <i>Reflective Final Paper Due</i>	

Important Dates

Assignment Due	Date	Percentage of Final Grade
Classical Monologue Performance	October 11, 2024	15%
Midterm Exam	October 18, 2024	10%
Contemporary Monologue Performance	November 8, 2024	15%
Haiku/Poem Performance	December 11, 2024 10:30am-12:30pm	15%
Reflective Final Paper	December 11, 2023 by 10:30am	10%