

Diction I – MUSC 1211

Midwestern State University

Fall 2025 Syllabus

General Information

Instructor: Dr. Bret Smithey

Course Number: MUSC 1211

Class Location: FA-C117A

Class Times: M W 300-350

Class Dates: 8/25-12/13

Email: bret.smithey@msutexas.edu

Phone: (940) 397-4789

Office: Fain Music Hall C117K

Course Description

A beginning course for the study of singers' diction. The International Phonetic Alphabet will be learned and applied to English, Italian, and Latin pronunciation.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Know the symbols and corresponding sounds of the International Phonetic Language (IPA).
- Be able to sight-read IPA transcriptions of song texts in Italian, Latin and English
- Practice effectively communicating text without compromising vocal freedom by understanding modifications and substitutions, diphthongs, semi-vowel glides, shadow vowels, merges, and implosions.
- Communicate text effectively through emphasizing words of primary and secondary stress, understanding the poetry, and learning the rhythm and melody of language.

Curriculum and Materials

The required materials for this course are *Diction for Singers* by Joan Wall and an appropriate Italian dictionary that uses IPA.

Communication

Please feel free to contact me by email (bret.smithey@msutexas.edu) at any time. Do not wait until after an assignment is due to tell me that you did not understand what to do or could not retrieve the required materials. If you let me know ahead of time, I will be more likely to be able to help resolve the situation.

I will utilize both D2L and your official MSU email for communication throughout the semester. You are required to regularly check both and are responsible for information given through either platform.

Student Assessment

Attendance and Participation 40%

2 Song Projects 25%

3 exams 30%

Grading

A 90-100

B 80-89

C 70-79

D 60-69

F Less than 60

Song Projects This course will include 2 song projects: one English and one Italian. Students may consult their applied voice instructors for repertoire selection. Each project will consist of a prepared phonetic transcription and English translation as well as an in class performance.

Exams This course will have 3 exams. Each exam will be consist of a written portion and an oral portion. An IPA transcription will be provided for the oral portion.

Make-up Work/Tests Any assignments missed due to absence may be turned in via email by the original due date. Late assignments may result in a grade deduction if not accompanied by proper documentation of illness or extenuating circumstances. Exams and performances may be made up if the student reports the absence via email before the time of class meeting.

Other Information:

Disability and Accommodations

If a student (1) needs class accommodation(s) because of a documented disability, (2) has an emergency medical condition that may interfere with class performance, or (3) requires special handling in case the building must be evacuated, he/she is encouraged to contact the office of Disability Support Services in room 168 Clark Student Center (940) 397-4140 and make an appointment with the professor as soon as possible.

Student Conduct

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 removing the disruptive student(s) from the class, either temporarily or permanently (instructor drop), and assigning a final lower grade, up to and including 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.

Privacy Statement

Federal privacy law prohibits the instructor from releasing information about students to certain parties outside of the university without the signed consent of the student. Thus, in almost all cases the professor will not discuss a students' academic progress or other matters with his/her parents. Please do not have them call. Regardless of these important legal considerations, the professors' general policy is to communicate with the students, not their parents, even when a student has signed a consent form. College students are adults and are expected to behave accordingly.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty including plagiarism and giving or receiving unauthorized assistance is prohibited. Plagiarism is (1) the use of source material of other persons (either published or unpublished, including the Internet) without following the accepted techniques of giving credit or (2) the submission for credit of work not the individuals to whom credit is given. If a student in the class plagiarizes material, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. The Student Honor Creed developed and adopted by the MSU Student Government reinforces the discouragement of plagiarism and other unethical behaviors. The first statement of the creed reads, "As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so." Plagiarism is lying, cheating, and stealing.

In this course, the use of generative AI tools (such as Chat GPT) is not permitted. If the professor of this course suspects that an assignment contains AI-generated or plagiarized content, the student will be informed by email and have 5 days to schedule an online office hour via Zoom to discuss the content. If the student fails to respond, no credit will be given for the assignment. Two or more zeros issued for suspected academic dishonesty will result in the automatic failure of this course.

Campus Carry

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. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at MSU Campus Carry Rules/Policies.

Campus Closure Policy

Since this course is fully online and asynchronous, all assignments will remain due at the time listed in the syllabus unless otherwise altered by the instructor despite any campus closure procedures.

Tentative Course Schedule:

IPA and English Diction 8/25-9/17

Latin 9/22-10/6

Italian 10/13-12/5

