



Course Syllabus: Voice and Diction for Theatre

College of Fine Arts

THEA 1233-101

Fall 2025; MWF 10:00am-10:50am

Contact Information

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Course Description

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.

This lecture/performance hybrid course provides a supportive space for students to explore and develop the foundations of vocal production for the stage. Through engaging readings, interactive lectures, and guided exercises, students will gain a practical understanding of vocal anatomy and healthy voice use. Work will focus on alignment, breath support, resonance, articulation, and phonation, while also encouraging students to connect emotionally and imaginatively to sounds, words, and images. Students will study the International Phonetic Alphabet to strengthen clarity, explore regional and standard American and British dialects, and expand their understanding of heightened and non-formal language. Skills will be applied through the performance of heightened speech—including poetry, monologues, and scenes—with assessment based on participation, unit quizzes, in-class performances, a midterm and final with both written and performance components.

Course Objectives

- **Develop** a general understanding of the anatomy and function of the vocal mechanism.
- **Identify and practice** healthy alignment, breath support, phonation, resonance, projection, diction, and expression in voice.

- **Apply** a basic understanding of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), with specific emphasis on American English and its British counterpart. Work with heightened and non-formal language.
- **Explore** both heightened and everyday language through study and in-class performances.
- **Engage** with the theatre canon while discovering the unique potential of their own voices.
- **Examine** approaches to the vocal and body expression by pedagogues including Alexander, Estill, Fitzmaurice, and Laban.
- **Integrate** these skills into clear, expressive, and authentic stage performances.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

- Texts and instructional materials to be provided by the instructor through D2L and MSU email.
- Yoga mat or towel for floor work. (Students will be given advance notice when to bring these items)

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 unit quizzes (with the lowest grade dropped) (15%), a written midterm exam (15%), a midterm teaching demonstration (15%), a written final exam (15%), a final scene performance (10%), and a final monologue performance (10%). The student is allowed two 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
Unit Quizzes (lowest grade dropped)	15%
Midterm Exam (Written)	15%
Midterm Exam (Teaching Demo)	15%
Final Exam (Written)	15%
Final Scene Performance	10%
Final Monologue	10%
In-class participation, assignments and performances	20%
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%

Quizzes

At the end of each unit, you will complete a comprehension quiz covering the material from that unit. These quizzes are designed to reinforce your learning and ensure steady progress. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped and will not count toward your final grade. The remainder of your quizzes will count as 15% of your final grade.

Mid-Term Exam

The midterm will take place during Week 8 and will include two components: a Written Exam on Wednesday, October 15, 2025 (15% of your final grade), and a Teaching Demonstration Practicum on Friday, October 17, 2025 (15% of your final grade). A review session will be held in class on Monday, October 13, 2025, to help you prepare.

Final Exam and Performances

The final exam will take place during Week 15 and will consist of three components. The Monologue Performance will be held on Monday, December 1, 2025, and will count as 10% of your final grade. The Scene Performance will take place on Wednesday, December 3, 2025, and will also count as 10%. The Written Exam will be given on Friday, December 5, 2025, and will count as 10%. Together, these components make up 30% of your final grade.

MSU Productions and Extra Credit

Attend the MSU plays and musicals this semester *Blithe Spirit* and *Schoolhouse Rock Live!* 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 analyzing the use of voice and diction in the production will be due within one week of the productions final performance. (an additional 5% will be added to your final grade) Papers are due within one week of the closing of the show. Must write papers for both shows to receive credit.

Late Work

Late work will be accepted with a letter grade deduction for each day it is late.

Make Up Work/Tests

Students with approved absences (school travel, doctors note) will be given one week to make up missed assignments and tests.

Important Dates

Last day to drop a class with 100% refund: September 8, 2025

Deadline to file for December graduation: September 22, 2025

Deadline to file for May graduation: October 6, 2025

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" November 24, 2025

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

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

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

Sickness Policy

Your health and the wellbeing of the class are priorities. If you have a fever, please remain home until it has broken. If you test positive for COVID-19, follow the recommended quarantine period; upon returning, mask-wearing is strongly recommended for several days, though not required. For serious or ongoing medical conditions, seek medical care and provide documentation so that I can best support your learning experience.

Weather Policy

In the event of a university closure due to weather, class may be moved to a virtual format (via Zoom, Teams, etc.) if a lecture or discussion was scheduled. If the missed class was a practicum day, it may be canceled. Updates will be communicated through D2L and university email.

Instructor Class Policies

Course Requirements

1. Participation: Daily participation is expected for in-class discussions, activities and assignments.
2. Daily Vocal Practice and IPA study: Body and Vocal exercises will be given to you throughout the semester for you to incorporate in your daily routines. Please practice for short intervals (5-10 minutes) at least 2-3 times a day for retention.

3. Reading: Assigned readings must be read and prepared to discuss at the beginning of the assigned discussion day.

4. Productions: Attend the MSU plays and musicals this semester *Blithe Spirit* and *Schoolhouse Rock Live!* Your ticket is free to both shows with your validated Midwestern Student ID. Seating may be limited for these productions; please ensure you reserve your tickets early.

General Notes

This class is a chance to step away from the outside world and fully engage in the work of discovering your voice. Devices may be used for notetaking, but please refrain from texting, browsing, or social media during class. Disconnecting for 50 minutes at a time allows you to be fully present with yourself, your peers, and the work we're doing together.

Wear comfortable clothes and shoes suitable for movement and floor work during class.

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

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) exists 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 the instructor.

Course Schedule:

Week	Subject
Week 1 8/25-8/29	Syllabus, "Why Study the Voice?" Intro to Body Mapping + IPA
Week 2 9/3-9/5	Alignment + IPA Structure and Symbols (NO CLASS 9/1 – LABOR DAY)
Week 3 9/8-9/12	Breath & Support + Vowels (Vowel Chart)
Week 4 9/15-9/19	Phonation & Consonants (Stops, Fricatives)
Week 5 9/22-9/26	Resonance & Voiced vs. Unvoiced Consonants

Week	Subject
Week 6 9/29-10/3	Articulators & Practicum (NO CLASS 10/1 – HONORS THEATRE DAY)
Week 7 10/6-10/10	Applying IPA to Text
Week 8 10/13-10/17	Midterm Prep + Exam Week
Week 9 10/20-10/24	Normal vs. Heightened Speech
Week 10 10/27-10/31	Voice & Movement: Laban Efforts
Week 11 11/3-11/7	American Dialects: South/West (Southwest, Antebellum South, West Coast)
Week 12 11/10-11/14	American Dialects: North/East (Midwest, Northeastern, & Transatlantic Dialects)
Week 13 11/17-11/21	British Dialects (North/South England, Irish, Scottish)
Week 14 11/24	Scene & Monologue Coaching (NO CLASS 11/26-30 – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY)
Week 15 12/1-12/5	Performance Exams and Review for Final
Week 16 12/10 3:30pm-5:30pm	<i>Final Written Exam</i>

Important Dates

Assignment Due	Date	Percentage of Final Grade
Midterm Exam (Written)	October 15, 2025	10%
Midterm (Teaching Demo)	October 17, 2025	10%
Final Monologue Performance	December 1, 2025	15%
Final Scene Performance	December 3, 2025	15%
Final Exam (Written)	December 10, 2025 by 3:30PM – 5:30PM	15%