



## **THEA 250A The Music of the Speaking Voice**

### **Spring 2016**

Course Meetings: M/W/F 3:00 p.m. – 4:20 p. m

Location: Ida Green, Arena\*

\*The meeting location may change more than once over the semester, due to production conflicts.

**“That kind of sense of always being ready for a new beginning of something, of something. And that for me is a kind of a life-line. Always ready for a new beginning. And that’s a way of staying young. I don’t get tired because there’s always new beginnings.” —Arthur Lessac**

**“You have to learn to work and search, not expect instantly to find.” — Patsy Rodenburg**

#### **Instructor Information:**

**Instructor:** Elizabeth Parks

**Phone:** 903-813-2567

**E-mail:** [eparks@austincollege.edu](mailto:eparks@austincollege.edu)

**Office Hours:** T/R 2:00 p.m.-3:30p.m.

**Office:** Ida Green, A114

**Contacting the Instructor:** You are welcome to come by during office hours or email me. Please allow up to 48 hours for a response. Also, please use only your Austin College email for spam filtration reasons

#### **REQUIRED READING:**

*The Use and Training of the Human Voice* by Arthur Lessac

Other selected readings will be assigned throughout the semester.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** In this class we will explore the music of the speaking voice and discover ways of using our voices both onstage and off. We will investigate the biodynamics of vocal production and development primarily through the work of opera singer, vocal coach, and speech therapist Arthur Lessac. Through Lessac's Kinesensic Training we will focus on speaking as a physical process and the interconnectedness of voice and movement. We will experience how different qualities of movement apply to the production of consonants, vowels, vocal tone, and projection. We will investigate our vocal potential through awareness and usage of breath, posture, bone-conducted resonance, vocal energies, body energies, and play. Ultimately, this class is designed to help you develop empowering, thoughtful, and genuine ways of using the music of your voice in performance, at home, and at work.

#### **Questions explored in this course include:**

- Why do we speak?
- What does it mean to have the right to speak?
- How can you use your voice to improve your daily and extra-daily (theatrical) life?
- What is “vocal life?”
- How is the voice connected to breath, energy, and the body?

**Expected Learning Outcomes:** Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Develop an increased awareness of the feeling process of speaking.
- Identify how the body, voice, and behavior are inter-connected in communication.

- Practice living, exploring, and communicating in “2<sup>nd</sup> Circle Energy.”
- Play/speak/sing the musical opportunities within a given text.
- Analyze text for tonal, structural vowel, and consonant playing opportunities.
- Describe how the study of verbal communication is valuable and useful in everyday and professional life.

## **POLICIES:**

**Withdrawal:** Austin College has instituted a new policy this year, which requires that students withdraw from a class before the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the semester.

**Professionalism and Courtesy:** Courtesy is crucial to a positive learning experience, but the greatest tool any theatre artist has is their professionalism! That is what keeps them employed, so let us begin practicing it today!

How do we practice professionalism?

**Be on time-** This means being early, setting down your things, readying yourself to work, and circling-up to begin class.

**Be prepared-** This means that you have read the material assigned, done the work assigned, and are dressed appropriately. (See below for attire requirements)

**Be present-** This means being an *active* participant in the room; being mindful and respectful of everyone in the room. This does not mean that you always have to be talking, sometimes it means allowing time for your colleagues to speak.

**Respect the space-** Water is acceptable but you may not eat or chew gum in any room we work in. Pick up after yourselves. Leave the room in better condition than you found it.

## **Academic Integrity:**

In keeping with its educational mission, Austin College places a high value on academic integrity and does not tolerate cheating and other forms of abuse of the academic process. The faculty and officers of the college assume that entering students, in accepting admission to Austin College, are aware that they will submit themselves to a high standard of academic honesty, and agree to follow the norms and procedures by which the college observes and enforces this standard.

Cheating and plagiarism, which is a form of cheating, are primary violations of academic integrity. Cheating is defined as, but not limited to, purposely using/receiving assistance from another student or source on an assignment where such help is not permitted. Examples include copying (though not necessarily verbatim) another’s work and turning it in as your own, use of “crib sheets” on an exam, or providing the material/mechanism for another student to cheat.

Plagiarism is defined as, but not limited to, using someone else’s work and attempting to pass it off as your own. This may be the work of another person, or information obtained from a book, journal, or internet source. Actions that create an unfair advantage by impeding the access of other course members to important information or sharing improperly received information also violate academic integrity. Recognizing that specifics of such violations may be differently defined in some course settings, the college gives instructors the authority to determine expectations and provide instructions according to particular circumstances. For more information on plagiarism, please see the website <http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/mla/plagiarism.shtml>

If you are caught violating the academic integrity policy, penalties may include anything from a zero on the assignment to expulsion from the course.

**Special note regarding academic honesty as it pertains to this class:** Students are expected to do their own work. Despite the fact that there will be group projects in this course, I consider copying your partner’s work to be an act of academic dishonesty. When collaborative projects are assigned, I expect *each* student to turn in their *own* portion of the work. It is not permissible for partners to turn in one single document for any given assignment.

- All assignments are due at the beginning of class.

- If you are absent for a class, I will only accept homework via Moodle until 5 minutes after the start time of this class.

**Attendance:** Timelines and participation are crucial to excellence in the performing arts and in life in general. Regular attendance is **mandatory**.

- 1) Each student is allowed **three** absences in total for the semester. Please use these absences judiciously and save them for emergencies.
- 2) For each absence beyond the allotted three absences, the student's overall course grade will be reduced by 1/3 letter grade with each subsequent absence. After five absences, I reserve the right to dismiss you from the class. If you accrue five absences after the drop date you will automatically receive an "F" for the semester.
- 3) Two tardies or early exits will equal one absence.
- 4) All sports and college sanctioned absences **MUST** be turned in by the Friday of the first full week of class.

**Coming and going during class:** Coming and going during class is **not permitted**. Once class begins, we are training together and we are responsible for each other's development and safety in the class. Constant coming and going disrupts the dynamic of the entire class and renders the work we are doing ineffective. The training room is a sacred and safe space and should be respected as such. Leaving class once we have begun counts as an absence. You must use the restroom, eat, text, etc. **before** class starts or **after** class ends. Leaving class once we have begun counts as an absence.

**Late work:** No late work will be accepted.

**Attire:** Much of the work we do in this class is physical work. Therefore, you are expected to dress appropriately in comfortable loose-fitting clothing that allows you to move easily. The following restrictions are for your safety: no jeans, no short-shorts, no skirts, no hats, and no jewelry. You may want to wear leggings, tights, or bicycle shorts under your shorts.

**Touching:** Because of the nature of the work we do there may be times I adjust your posture, form, stance etc. I want you to feel comfortable in this class. If this type of physical contact makes you uncomfortable please let me know.

**Institutional Disability Statement:** Austin College seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all individuals with disabilities and will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines. It is the responsibility of the student to register with and provide verification of academic accommodation needs to the Director of the Academic Skills Center as soon as possible. The student also must contact the faculty member in a timely manner (typically by the end of the first week of class) to arrange for academic accommodations. For further information regarding disability services or to register for assistance, please contact the office at 903-813-2454 or visit the Academic Skills Center.

**Electronic Devices:** Cell phones are not allowed, under any circumstance. While laptops and tablets are not forbidden they are, for the most part, not necessary in class. This class is about connecting, on a visceral level, to the human experience. This type of personal engagement and investiture is completely interrupted by the use of cell phones. If there is a need to take notes, laptops and/or iPads are permitted. If I suspect that you are using your computer for anything other than course-relevant material your device will be taken away and returned to you at the end of class. I reserve the right to prohibit the use of personal electronic devices if I feel that they deterring you achieving the goals and outcomes of the course.

**Grading:**

**A** = An “A” student does much more than is required; turns in flawless work, always on time; contributes actively and insightfully to class discussion; amazes and delights the instructor with a thoughtful and imaginative grasp of the subject as evidenced in both oral and written work.

**B** = A “B” student does more than is required; turns in nearly flawless work, always on time; contributes actively to class discussion; impresses the instructor with an above average engagement with the subject evidenced in both oral and written work.

**C** = A “C” student does all that is required; turns in work when due and free of significant error; contributes regularly to class discussion, and satisfies the instructor by turning in work of average quality.

**D** = A “D” student does all, or nearly all, that is required (though errors and sloppiness are sometimes evident), contributes sporadically to class discussion, but falls short of the average in oral and written work.

**F** = An “F” student fails to turn in all required work and/or turns in late work; seldom or never contributes to class discussion, or is often absent from class; and/or falls a good deal short of the average student in both oral and written work.

**GRADING SCALE:**

A + 100-97	A 96-93	A- 92-90	B+ 89-87	B 86-83	B- 82-80
C+ 79-77	C 76-73	C- 72-70	D+ 69-67	D 66-63	D- 62-60
F 59 and below					

**Grading Determination:****Late work will not be accepted****1. Attendance/Participation: 120 points**

Students will earn between 0-3 points per day for their participation. To earn the full three points, students must:

- a) Practice professionalism and courtesy as outlined above
- b) Actively engage with course content, with each other, and with the instructor.
- c) Complete all in-class assignments and explorations

**2. Statement of Expectations and Goals- 50 points****3. Reading Reflection papers– 120 points**

- a. Students will turn in a two page reflection paper over various readings throughout the semester.
- b. All papers must be submitted online through moodle.

**4. Speech of Passionate Concern- 50 points****5. Presentation- 50 points****6. Monologue – 50 points****7. Friday Coaching- 50 points**

- a. Students will sign up for a total of 3 coaching slots over the course of the semester.
- b. These slots will be in 20 minute intervals usually on a Friday afternoon during our allotted class time.
- c. Students are expected to be on time and participate fully during coaching sessions.

**8. Final Project - 50 points****9. Final Reflection Paper- 60 points**

- a. Students will turn in a final paper detailing what they learned over the course of the semester, what resonated with them, what didn't and, most importantly, why subjects, concepts or assignments did or did not resonate with students.

**Quizzes:** Quizzes may be given throughout the semester over content from the required reading if it becomes apparent that students are not prepared to discuss the assigned reading.

**Grading:**

Attendance/Participation	120 points
Reading Reflection Papers	120 points
Statement of Expectations and Goals	50 points
Speech of Passionate Concern	50 points
Presentation	50 points
Monologue	50 points
Friday Coaching	50 points
Final Project	50 points
Final Reflection Paper	<u>60 points</u>
	600 points

# The Music of the Speaking Voice

## GRADE SHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Attitude/Participation: 120 pts Total \_\_\_\_\_/120

Late arrivals: \_\_\_\_\_

Leaving and returning in class \_\_\_\_\_

Reading Reflection Paper: 120pts Total \_\_\_\_\_/120

Speech of Passionate Concern: 40pts Total \_\_\_\_\_/50

Presentation: 50 pts Total \_\_\_\_\_/50

Monologue: 50 pts Total \_\_\_\_\_/50

Friday Coaching: 50 pts Total \_\_\_\_\_/50

Final Project: 50 pts Total \_\_\_\_\_/50

Final Reflection Paper 60 pts Total \_\_\_\_\_/60

Total Points \_\_\_\_\_/600

FINAL GRADE \_\_\_\_\_



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I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understand the contents of the syllabus for this course. I therefore understand all that is expected of me and I accept the contents therein including all assignments, classroom procedures, grading policies and procedures.

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_