GOALS OF THE COURSE

This class is an exploration of the performer’s voice, with the precept that one’s voice is a manifestation of one’s state of being. Any presenter or any performer needs to use his or her voice as a tool to communicate ideas, intentions and objectives. The main focus of the class is the learning a series of exercises designed to liberate the speaking voice from habitual psychophysical tension and develop vocal range, stamina, clarity, power and sensitivity to impulse. Work will include discovery of sound in the body, awareness and opening of the channel (jaw, tongue, and soft palate), exploration of resonance, vocal freedom and range, isolating and strengthening resonating chambers and articulation exercises. Group and individual exercises designed to stimulate and develop the imagination, physical and sensory awareness, creativity and capacity for ensemble work will be practiced as a basis for vocal presence. Text work will include a Shakespearean sonnet and a monologue from a playwright chosen for the semester. Writing work includes extensive journaling and a self-evaluation. You will be required to read *Freeing the Natural Voice* by Kristin Linklater, 2-3 plays written by the assigned playwright, and periodic handouts. The goal of these applied techniques and exercises is the development of a voice capable of carrying within the vibrations and universal resonance and frequency of any human condition, and the ability to powerfully extend your voice into the bodies, minds and hearts of your fellow actors and the audience.

REQUIRED READING:

Linklater, Kristin. *Freeing the Natural Voice (Revised and Expanded)* Imagery and Art in the Practice of Voice and Language; Drama Publishers; ISBN 0896762505

Recommended Reading:


Berry, Cecily. Anything/Everything she’s written!

REQUIRED VIEWING/ATTENDANCE:

Students are required to see the following productions:

The Matchmaker – Kay Theatre
Moliere Impromptu – Kogod Theatre
PRACTICE:
To gain maximum benefit from the work, it is crucial to your success in the class that you create a daily discipline to practice the exercises learned in class. Training your voice requires time and commitment. Developing discipline is an essential part of becoming an actor. **Homework for every class is that you practice the tools you’ve learned in class for 30 minutes to 1 hour every day and that you journal 3 of your practices per week.**

WRITTEN WORK:

**JOURNAL:**
You are required to write 3 journal entries per week. Please keep a journal of your daily voice practice – not your class time practice, but the practice you perform outside of class on your own time. The journal must be typed. Attached to the end of this syllabus is an example of a journal entry – in the form and detail which I ask you to follow. The format to follow is:

1) Date and time of practice (not class time)
2) Exercises/tools from class you practiced
3) Physical/mental/feeling observations of your voice prior, during and after the practice. (speak text at end of practice for comparative value)
4) References to the reading done for class in Freeing the Natural Voice (page listed), in every journal entry.

If something was discovered in class and you did not have the opportunity to share it, I invite you to write about it as an addition to a journal entry about your practice.

The journals will be emailed to me ([lsmiley@umd.edu](mailto:lsmiley@umd.edu)) on the following dates. **5 points will be deducted from your grade for every day that your journal is late and absence from class is not an acceptable excuse for your journal being late:**

- Monday 10/01: 12 entries
- Monday 10/29: 12 entries
- Monday 11/26: 12 entries

CLOTHING:
The work we do in class requires physical movement. Wear rehearsal clothes, or clothes that you would wear to a movement class which will allow you freedom of movement and you don’t mind getting dirty. If you cannot participate fully in class because your
clothing restricts your movement, your grade will be lowered by 5 points for each incidence. **Absolutely no jeans EVER.**

**ATTENDANCE:**
You must come to class ready to work. I ask that you honor the practice by being dressed for class and practicing relaxation, stretching, or warming up by 10 AM. Unless there is a health reason, we work without shoes, so please have shoes removed. If you desire socks, have rubber treads on them so you do not slip on the floor.

in order to insure your individual success in THET 310 and the successful development of the ensemble of the class, it is recommended that you are present for every class. ANY absence outside of those excused as per the TDPS Performance Attendance Policy (below) will result in your participation grade being lowered by five points. You must be on time. Every unexcused late arrival will lower your participation grade by five points. Active vocal and physical presence in class counts as participation. You have the potential to earn 500 points for this class. Participation will be counted as 140 points toward your final grade. No performance will be excused due to lack of preparation or absence (without medical note). Below is the TDPS Performance official attendance policy:

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**Attendance Policy of the Department of Theatre**

Regular attendance and in-class participation are integral components of all theatre classes and seminars. Although instructors are responsible for informing each class of the nature of in-class participation and the effect of absences on the evaluation of a student’s work, the Department’s general attendance policy on excused absences is consistent with the University’s policy, which allows students to be excused for the following causes:

1. Illness of the student or illness of a dependent as defined by the Board of Regents on family medical leave.

2. Religious observance (where the nature of the observance prevents the student from being present during the class period)

3. Participation in University activities at the request of University authorities

4. Compelling circumstances beyond the student’s control

Students claiming an excused absence must apply in writing and furnish documentary evidence for their assertion that the absence resulted from one of these causes. (Undergraduate Catalog, pages 36 & 37)

For an absence to be excused a dated doctor's note, hospital bill, or insurance form must be provided on the FIRST day you return to class. I must clear any other causes of
absence prior to a missed quiz, project, exam, etc. Students are responsible for informing me of any intended absences for religious observances in advance. Pursuant to university policy, notice should be provided as soon as possible but no later than the end of the schedule adjustment period.

Whenever possible, instructors will make a reasonable effort to re-schedule in-class presentations for students with an authorized excused absence. Students should check the specific requirements of their courses carefully, however, as such re-scheduling is not always possible.