



**THE 236: VOICE AND DICTION
 COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2015
 T/TR 12:30-1:45 p.m.
 PERFORMING ARTS #126**

Instructor: Rebecca Worley, MFA, Assistant Professor of Theatre
Office Location: Performing Arts Center #105
Office Hours: M/W 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., T/R 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. or by appointment
Office Phone: 903-886-5339
University Email Address: Rebecca.worley@tamuc.edu

COURSE INFORMATION

Suggested Texts:

Actor Training The Laban Way: An Integrated Approach to Voice, Speech, and Movement; by Barbara Adrian
Freeing the Natural Voice; by Kristen Linklater

Required Special Supplies:

In addition to standard classroom supplies (pens, pencils, paper for daily notes/assignments, a folder for those notes/assignments, computer paper, etc.), you will need a yoga or personal workout mat for this class.

Required Viewing:

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

Directed by Kelsey Cooper

Produced in the Main Stage Theatre by the University Playhouse at A&M Commerce

October 20-24 at 8 p.m. and October 25 at 3 p.m.

Calling All

Directed by Lauren Simpson

Produced in the Studio Theatre by the University Playhouse at A&M Commerce

November 17-21 at 8 p.m. and November 22 at 3 p.m.

Tickets are available for a nominal fee from the University Playhouse Box Office (PAC 101) from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. Or, you may make advance reservations by phone at any time by calling 903-886-5900 or by email at playhouseboxoffice@tamuc.edu.

Course Description:

Fundamentals of vocal production and movement for the stage. Including breathing, kinesthetic awareness, vocal placement and resonance, physical storytelling, and the interconnectedness of voice and body.

Course Introduction:

The course will consist of lecture demonstrations, vocal and physical warm-ups, explorations and exercises, written assignments, and performances. The objective for the semester is for the students to develop an increased awareness of individual physical and vocal strengths, weaknesses, controls and potential. Please consider yourself part of a workshop rather than a classroom as it is usually understood.

Although there is a lecture/discussion component to this course, by nature actor training requires substantial studio work – both inside and outside of the classroom. Please consider yourself to be part of a learning community where members support one another with suggestions and constructive criticism. Learning, observing, and sharing are central to this course. *Attitudes of awareness and openness are essential to your development and your contribution to the development of the other members of this class.* Please leave your worries, frustrations, competitiveness, and negativity outside the classroom door as much as possible.

Active participation in discussion and presentation of projects within the class is not only welcome; it is an essential requirement. Positive, helpful and constructive attitudes are also required! Presentations must be well prepared and shared with the understanding that questions and discussion will follow. The ongoing critique of performance is crucial to everyone's learning process. You should be aware that the vast majority of class time is composed of activities in which you are REQUIRED to actively participate. *If you have no plans or interest in sincerely exploring vocal and physical techniques and accomplishing significant growth as a performer, this is not the class for you.*

In this course, I will serve as your teacher, vocal/movement coach, director, guide, and outside eyes/ears as we work very specifically on your individual performance efforts. I ask that you trust me and approach the work with an open mind, an open heart, discipline and commitment, and a willingness to try new things. Then, we can work through our artistic challenges together!

Course Ethics and Attendance: Promptness, attendance, and “attentiveness” are valued in this class. Please behave accordingly and do not disrupt the class with excessive talk or the use of cell phones or other devices. It is assumed that students will work cooperatively with one another and all work that is not “original” will be properly credited. See the TAMUC *Student's Guide Handbook* for more information on plagiarism. This is a serious offense that can result in separation from the university. **EVEN if not specifically noted on instructions or prompts for each assignment, plagiarism policies will be strictly enforced.**

Physical Contact in Performance Classes

In all performance classes, it is sometimes necessary for the instructor or students to interact physically with one another. This is part of the learning process. Any required contact is to be considered professional and clinical in nature. If a student is at any time uncomfortable with the ideas or practices of physical contact, he/she should voice the concern(s) to the instructor or head of the Theatre Department. All needs for privacy will be respected.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students completing this course must be able to:

1. **Demonstrate**, through written and performed warm-ups, the ability to create and perform an effective physical and vocal warm-up for actors.
2. **Demonstrate**, through application and performance and written work, basic principles of Laban Movement Analysis (body, space, and effort).
3. **Demonstrate**, through performances, critiques, and oral analytical defense and prepared texts, a basic understanding of vocal production, voice placement and articulation.
4. **Demonstrate**, through performance and an oral analytical defense of choices made, the ability to create a detailed final performance incorporating and integrating the concepts of voice and movement presented in this course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:

Participation and Growth (20 pts.): *Note that attendance alone does not constitute participation.* Participation and Growth is a large portion of your grade in this course – for good reason! As mentioned above, participation is vital in this class. This is an interactive environment and students must not only attend, but must also actively contribute to each class. Furthermore, the completion of miscellaneous homework assignments will also be considered part of your participation grade. There will be quite a few of these short assignments and they are all important in the development of your skills as an actor.

Positive, respectful and helpful attitudes are mandatory. *I would like to make this very clear: I will make every effort to treat you with the respect that I believe you deserve. You are also expected to treat your peers and myself with that same respectful attitude.* If I believe that a student is disrespectful, I will ask that person to leave the classroom. In this event, the student will receive a zero for any activities conducted that day in class and receive a zero for his/her participation grade for the day (no matter how long you have been in class). Disrespect, rudeness, disruptive behavior, or negative attitudes will **NOT BE TOLERATED**. It should go without saying that refusal to participate in any activity or part of an activity during class will result in a substantial and appropriate loss of participation points for the student.

Previous vocal/movement training will not guarantee you a good grade in this course. Significant growth and a genuine attempt within the class will. This is a class that regards self-competition as a goal. You and your peers will arrive at various levels, and you will leave at different levels. However, growth from the beginning to the end of the semester can be evaluated. I challenge you to push yourself to grow and succeed. This class is concerned with developing *your* skills to the best of *your* ability. The community in the class is here to help all of us grow and expand our abilities.

Participation and Growth grades will be calculated daily and reflected upon/tabulated at the end of the semester. *Each student will begin with a mid-passing Participation and Growth grade of a 15.* Strong effort or lack of effort during each class and over the course of the semester as a whole will either raise or lower that grade.

Application Papers (2 @ 5 pts. = 10 pts. total): Students are required to attend performances of both Playhouse productions (clear your schedules NOW!). Students will submit papers that critique an actor's use of voice and movement in performance, citing the principles learned in the class. Papers should be approx. 2-3 pages, typed, 12 pt. font (or whatever your default font/size is), well-organized (complete sentences, full paragraphs). I *will* consider spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure in the grading. (See grading rubric in your syllabus). Papers are to be submitted **via email. I will not accept hard copies of your papers.**

Performance Projects (6 = 50 pts. total):

- **Actor Warm-up (10 points):** Students will develop and “perform” a personal vocal and physical warm-up using any or all of the steps we use in class. Students will also submit a written portion for this assignment that is specific, thorough, and includes
- **Body Attitude Project (5 points):** An observation and application of concepts explored in class. Students will present a short performance of their observations of another person's body attitude. More in-depth expectations will be discussed in class at a later date.
- **PGM Performance (5 points):** An observation and application of concepts explored in class. Students will present a short performance of their observation of another person in an extreme Postural Gestural Movement. In addition to the performance, students will also submit a **typed** Inner Monologue (6-10 sentences) of the person during their PGM using terms we have learned in class. More in-depth expectations will be discussed in class at a later date.
- **Poetry/Sonnet Performance – 1st Quatrain (10 points):** Memorized performance of the first four lines of the final exam sonnet. This “in-progress” performance should demonstrate that you are working towards a fully developed performance.
- **Final Performance and Oral Defense (20 points):** A fully memorized and prepared sonnet performance. This performance should show me that you, as an actor, have

comprehended and interpreted the meaning of this sonnet, allowing for a compelling and passionate performance. In other words, big choices need to be made. In addition to the performance, students will also submit a series of written assignments for the final exam. More in-depth expectations will be discussed in class at a later date.

Tests (2 @ 10 points = 20 pts. total)

Grading Breakdown:

The following grading scale will be used to determine all individual grades as well as the student's overall grade in the course:

Participation & Growth	20 pts.	90-100 =	A
Written Critiques	10 pts.	80-89=	B
Performances	50 pts.	70-79=	C
Tests	20 pts.	60-69=	D
		59 and below=	F
Total	100 pts.		

All assignments must be prepared and presented on scheduled dates. Please note: A grade of "A" will not be assigned to an individual who has not completed ALL outside of class assignments, regardless of average.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

WORKING EMAIL REQUIREMENT: It is a course expectation that you have a working email address that you check daily. If you have not already acquired an email address through the university or otherwise, please make arrangements to do so before the next class meeting. There WILL be times that I need to contact you with important information and email is often the speediest and easiest way of doing so. Additionally, I will provide electronic copies of any supplemental reading through email.

WRITTEN WORK: Unfortunately, papers/projects do occasionally get lost. Please, for your sanity, save your work on a thumb drive, etc. Do not depend on your paper staying on the hard drive of any university computer, as it will be deleted, altered, or worse – turned in by someone else as their work! Be aware that it is a course expectation that you keep copies of your assignments until you receive your final grade for the semester.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Contacting Me:

Please feel free to visit me during my office hours at any time during the semester. I am here to help! If you can't make my office hours due to a scheduling conflict, please set up an appointment with me. It is not an imposition. Communicate, communicate, communicate! If something is occurring that is presenting you with difficulties in this class, let me know. I cannot

help you if I don't know what is going on. The easiest and most reliable way to contact me is **via email**. I check it almost constantly. Please do not leave a message for me in the main department office.

Student Resources:

Department of Theatre

Performing Arts Center (PAC) #101

Phone: 903-886-5346 (Main Office)

<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/mmct/default.asp>

Communication Skills Center

Hall of Languages #103

<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/litlang/CSC/index.htm>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES
--

Course Specific Procedures:

Attendance Policy:

You may accumulate two (2) absences before any penalty occurs. **There are no additional absences allowed without penalty. Plan accordingly. There is no such thing as an “excused” absence.** Of course, if you have a prolonged illness or injury, or if a family emergency arises, speak with your instructor ASAP. **Grades will be dropped in ½ letter grade increments for every class absences beyond two.**

Late Arrivals:

To further foster a high level of commitment—and because the work we will be doing this semester will involve intensive focus—the class will adopt the following late entry policy. Students must be on time for every class. Entering a class late or leaving early is disruptive to the flow of the class and indicative of a less than disciplined/committed artist. Please be on time out of consideration to your learning process and the processes of others. If you are late for class, your participation grade will reflect this. The class will begin promptly at 12:30 p.m.! If you arrive after 12:40 p.m., please do not enter the classroom (you will be marked absent regardless). If you arrive within the ten-minute grace period, please do so discretely in order to avoid disrupting the class activities/discussions. *It is your responsibility to make sure that you find me after class and document your late attendance for the day—otherwise, your initial marked absence documented during roll will remain.* Also, you are expected to stay until you are dismissed from class. An early departure will significantly reduce your participation grade as well. **Two late arrivals (within the ten-minute grace period) or early departures (or any combination of the two) may be counted as one absence in the class.**

Cell Phones and Laptops:

Please turn off all cell phones upon entering the classroom. Please do not check messages or engage in text messaging during class. This is disruptive to the flow of the course. Further, you are welcome to take class notes on a laptop or other electronic device. However, these devices should only be used for taking notes over the current discussions/activities – and you must type very quietly and turn off all sound so as not to disturb other class members. If I suspect that laptops are being used for other purposes, I will ban them from the classroom.

Late Work:

Performance Presentations – Under normal circumstances, a missed Performance Presentation may not be made up.

Late Written Work – Late written work will be deducted a full letter grade each calendar after the assigned due date. This means that if you have to be absent for some reason on the day a written assignment is due, you must **email** your assignment to me prior to the beginning of class. All assignments are due within the first ten minutes of the class period unless I specify otherwise. No late assignments will be accepted after one week past the original due date.

Extra Credit:

As a general rule, there is no extra credit offered in this class – please, do not even ask.

Adaptation of Assignments:

Due to the fluid nature of this performance-based class, some assignments/scheduling may need to be adapted. All changes will be announced prior to implementation.

Food, Drink, Gum, and Smoking:

Please do not bring food or drinks into the classroom at any time (exception: you may bring bottled water with you to class). As this is a course focusing on practical performance, chewing gum is not allowed at any time during class. Smoking during class time (even when in individual rehearsals outside of the building) is never allowed.

Clothing:

Dress for maximum freedom and movement. Loose fitting clothing, sweats or dancewear are required. Jazz shoes, sneakers, bare feet or stocking feet are required. You will be rolling around the floor and need a full range of motion—clothing that inhibits this will result in a lowered participation grade.

Heels, boots, flip-flops, untied shoes, short skirts, tight jeans, and low-cut shirts will all restrict movement (and consequently restrict your ability to participate in class). Do not wear jewelry that will affect your freedom of movement or speech. No hats are allowed during warm-ups, activities, performances, etc. Also, please keep your hair securely away from your face during all exercises and performances in class. *No one will be excused from a class activity because of clothing concerns; you are required to wear clothing that will not inhibit participation in class activities.*

Fair warning: the floor may or may not be spotless.

Incompletes:

Under normal circumstances, an Incomplete (I or X) will NOT be given for a final grade in this course. Per University policy, students who **because of circumstances beyond their control** are unable to attend classes will, upon approval of their instructor, receive a mark of X (incomplete) in all courses in which they were **maintaining passing grades at the time of the request** for an incomplete.

University Specific Policies and Procedures:**Academic Dishonesty:**

This course adheres strictly to the college's guidelines for Academic Dishonesty printed in the *Student's Guide Handbook*. Plagiarism, cheating, or otherwise representing another's work or ideas as your own without proper attribution will not be tolerated. All work must be new and created for this class during this semester by you. It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand the definition of Academic Dishonesty at Texas A&M-Commerce. If such an instance occurs, the student will receive an automatic zero for the work in question, and I will immediately report the incident to the Head of the Department. (*You should be aware that this could result in dismissal from school without credit for the semester.*)

Students with a Disability:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu

[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

Student Conduct:

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week 1:

9/1: Introductions and Syllabus
Relaxation

9/3: Relaxation
Breath Work

Thursday, Sept. 3rd- Last day to ADD a class without instructor permission

Week 2:

Monday, September 7- LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH 80% REFUND

9/8: Relaxation
Breath
Touch of Sound
Trapezius exercise

9/10: Floor Work
Move to Standing
Alignment

Week 3:

Monday, September 14- LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH 70% REFUND

9/15: Alignment
Buzzing
Walk Into Sound

**Wednesday, September 16- CENSUS DAY
LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITH REFUND**

9/17: Add Stretching/Mobility
Huh Circle

Week 4:

Monday, September 21- LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH 50% REFUND

9/22: Intensify Movement/Strength

9/24: Rhythm/Movement/Sound
Zoom & other focus/rhythm/movement/sound games

Week 5:**Monday, September 28- LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH 25% REFUND**

9/29: Cont. Voice Work w/ Movement

10/1: Calling
Middle Voice**Week 6:**10/6: Middle Voice Cont.
Calling in Middle Voice10/8: Assign Warm-Up Assignment
Peals**Week 7:**10/13: **Warm-Up Assignment Due**
Spinal Orientation
Body Attitude10/15: Assign Body Attitude Assignment
Initiation
Sequencing
Breath Support
Articulation**DoT Production ...*Spelling Bee* October 20-25****Week 8:**10/20: **Body Attitude Assignment Due**10/22: Review
Test 1**Week 9:**10/27: Kinesphere
Dynamisphere
PGM10/29: Assign PGM Assignment
PGM, cont.
Reach Space

Week 10:

11/3: ...*Spelling Bee* papers due **via email**
 Spatial Tension
 Trace Forms

Thursday, Nov. 5 - LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITH Q GRADE

11/5: **PGM Assignment Due**

Week 11:

11/10: Hand out sonnets and Assign Translation Assignment
 Start Efforts

11/12: Continue Efforts

DoT Production *Calling All* November 17-22

Week 12:

11/17: **Translation Assignment Due**
 Continue Efforts

11/19: **Test 2**
 Assign Outline Assignment
 Laban in group/Circle

Week 13:

11/24: **Perform 1st Quatrain**

11/25-27: THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASSES

Week 15:

12/1: *Calling All* papers due **via email**
Outline Assignment Due
 Workshop Sonnets

12/3: Cont. Workshopping Sonnets

Sunday, Dec. 6- LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW

Week 16:

12/8: Cont. Workshopping Sonnets/Mock Performances

12/10: Mock Performances

Final: Thursday, 12/17, 10:30-12:30 a.m.: Final Performance of Sonnets

OFFICIAL RUBRIC -
Grading of Performance Response Essays

Format and Details 3 pts.

- Does the author have a clear introductory paragraph that expresses the goal(s) of the overall paper (See prompt.)?
- Does the opening sentence draw the reader in?
- Does the author clearly state a thesis and go on to support it?
- Does the author identify specific examples from the script or production?
- Does the author stay clearly in the past tense?
- Did the author proofread carefully for proper grammar and misspelled words?
- Is paragraphing appropriate (parallel to changing ideas)?
- Is there a concluding paragraph?

Content 3 pts.

- Does the author clearly discuss topic(s) outlined in the prompt?
- Are there specific examples from the text/performance to support the argument?
- Is there unnecessary information (such as recounting the plot versus using plot points to support argument)?
- Is the information in the performance response essay accurate?
- Does the author balance their opinion/interpretation with concrete examples from the text/performance?
- Is the author concentrating on what was written or presented as opposed to what was missing or what they preferred to see?

Style and Flow 3 pts.

- Does the paper flow smoothly?
- Is there a clear and logical organization to the paper?
- Does the author make clean, logical transitions from idea to idea?
- Does the author use theatrical terms appropriately?
- Does the author clearly write for an appropriate audience (instructor and peers)?

1 “free floating point” to be used as + or – at the instructor’s discretion.

10= A 9=A- 8= B+ 7= B 6= B- 5= C+ 4= C 3= C- 2= D+ 1= D

Student Contract for THE 236, Fall 2015

I have read the Course Syllabus for THE 236 and understand its content including the attendance policy, productions required, academic honesty section, and classroom behavior requirements (including use of cell phones).

NAME (Signature)

Date