

Southern Methodist University – Meadows School of the Arts  
Division of Theatre – Fall 2017

Course Title: Voice for the Stage I

Course Number: THEA 2305 – 1

Class Meeting Times: T/Th 9:30am – 10:50 am

Class Location: B430

Instructor Name: Jack Greenman

RATIONALE:

“Voice is an action. It has no location in the body except when it is in action, sounding. It is for optimal functioning of the breath energy, as power source, that I have searched.”

-Catherine Fitzmaurice

A dynamic connection of breath and body to the given circumstances of a play is essential to the craft of acting. Vocal training allows actors to deepen their experience of breath, impulse, and vibration. The process of freeing the vocal mechanism allows actors to achieve ease and efficiency of vocal release and to make choices that are self-revealing. With practice, this process can also lead to a dropping-away of general patterns of self-editing and an expansion of the actor's range and flexibility in performance.

COURSE INTENTION:

***To free the voice for powerful, clear, and uniquely personal expression.***

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. To demonstrate a physical relationship with the process of vocal work.
2. To develop the skill of mindful awareness.
3. To allow muscular release to serve as the foundation of breathing.
4. To learn and maintain a healthy use of the voice.
5. To speak in a scene without excess effort.
6. To demonstrate intelligible articulation while speaking.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

**Attendance:** The attendance policy is simple – come to class. As the theatre is a performance art, the class is largely experiential. Therefore, attendance at all class meetings is essential to each student's growth and a minimal requirement for this course.

- Materials:**
1. A three ring binder to keep all notes and assignments organized.
  2. A pen and pencil.
  3. PDF Printouts brought to class.
  4. Memorized text.
  5. Water in a sealed container.
  6. A mat or towel and a zafu\*.  
[http://www.samadhicushions.com/Zafu\\_Meditation\\_Cushion\\_p/c-520.htm](http://www.samadhicushions.com/Zafu_Meditation_Cushion_p/c-520.htm),  
<http://www.dharmacrafts.com/100xza/2C101/meditation-cushion-zafu-kapok.html>,  
<http://www.yogaaccessories.com/round-cotton-zafu-meditation-cushion.html>
  7. "Everyday Voice Care" by Joanna Cazden (Amazon or Barnes and Noble)
  8. The articles "Breathing is Meaning" and "Structured Breathing" from  
<http://www.fitzmauricevoice.com/writings.htm> (Purchase for \$2 through PayPal)
  9. Subscription to the free ten-day trial at <http://www.getsomeheadspace.com/how-to-meditate.aspx>

**Notes** – Students will be required to take notes in class using writing implements and paper. No laptops or phones will be used for this purpose. Numerous recent studies point to the processing advantage of physical note-taking. A couple of related articles appear here: <http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away> and here: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>

**Clothing** – Students must wear clothing that allows for unrestricted movement. We will spend most of our class time doing exercises that require the student to move freely on the floor and perform vigorous physical activities. Skirts, jeans, dresses, high heels, platform soled shoes, low hanging pants, tight fitting clothing or any clothing that may restrict the student's movement is never appropriate for this class. Examples of appropriate clothing include, but are not limited to: sweatshirts, sweat pants, warm-up or workout clothes and dance attire. In all cases, appropriate clothing allows the student full range of motion and keeps the body warm and covered. Wearing appropriate clothing is considered a crucial aspect of class preparation. At the discretion of the instructor, a student who is dressed inappropriately for class may be asked to leave and will be graded as absent for the day. Students are advised to bring layers of clothing as the temperature in the room may vary.

**Participation** – In-class exercises, experiences and discussions are an essential part of learning good vocal use. Accordingly, positive interaction with classmates and with the instructor is of paramount importance. Students of acting need to cultivate an attitude of "leaning forward" into the work regardless of whether or not they working with the instructor in the moment. Deep listening, generosity and a willingness to share oneself are all signs of a student fully engaged in the work of the class.

**Instructional Touch and Consent** – Touch can be a useful teaching tool in this class. Adjusting alignment and positioning, bringing awareness to physical use, and partnering with others to demonstrate skills can all enhance the instructor's ability to communicate best practices.

In all cases:

\*I will be specific about the nature of the contact/touch, and its purpose.

\*I will ask your consent.

\*You are under no obligation to consent, even if you have consented before. If you do not consent, it's my job to alter the instruction.

\*You will not be penalized for withholding consent.

## ASSIGNMENTS:

- \* **Reflections.** Developing the skill of specifically articulating your experience is essential to your development as an actor. It deepens your understanding and ownership of the material and allows you to repeat successes with greater precision. The reflection process in this class is as follows:

**Once a week** you will enter a summary of your responses to the week's work into Canvas (explained below). This will include responses to class work AND (eventually) to your one required **Exercise Group** meeting a week. This summary will follow the reflection format included below. (An example of an excellent reflection is also included at the end of this syllabus.) Your summary must be submitted by **5pm every Monday** of the week following the reflection week. (For example, reflections for the week of 9/8 and 9/10 will be due by 5pm, Monday, September 15.) *Reflections not received on time will not be accepted or graded.* **A total of 9 Reflection emails will be required for an "A" on this assignment. Follow this link online for a video introduction to SMU's new learning management system, Canvas:** <http://guides.instructure.com/m/4210/l/141852-canvas-overview-video>

- \* **Exercise Group.** You will meet in groups of at least 2 people (but no more than 4) to repeat one of the week's exercises that intrigued you, interested you, or seemed essential to you. You will report on this session in each week's **Reflection** assignment. (Please follow the format for reporting **Exercise Group** activity below.)
- \* **Anatomy Quiz.** One quiz during the semester focusing on: *Breathing Mechanism, Upper Respiratory Tract/Articulators and Vocal Health.*
- \* **Mid-Term Exam.** A written take-home exam focusing on the integration of the vocal work that includes material from the first half of the semester.
- \* **Final Exam.** Students will demonstrate sections of the vocal work to the instructor individually.
- \* **Reading Assignments.** Readings will be assigned from **the required text**, "Everyday Voice Care" by Joanna Cazden **and several required articles/sections from any of the following:** "Freeing the Natural Voice" by Kristin Linklater, "Wherever You Go, There You Are" by Jon Kabat-Zinn and "Breathing is Meaning" and "Structured Breathing" by Catherine Fitzmaurice. **The instructor may also provide readings on Canvas.** In all cases, the reading will be used to facilitate an in-class discussion of concepts and experiences. **A short written quiz will precede each discussion.**
- \* **Vocal Self-Assessment.** A one-page written assessment of your vocal progress for the semester. This will include a one-sentence goal for the next semester of your training.
- \* **Your Acting Scene.** We will work on your scene from acting class from a vocal perspective.

## ASSESSMENT:

***Student Learning Outcomes*** will be assessed by the instructor using the following methods –

SLO 1: *To demonstrate a physical relationship with the process of vocal work.* Mid-Term, Final, and Vocal Self-Assessment.

SLO 2: *To develop the skill of mindful awareness.* Reflections, Class Discussion, Interactions with the instructor about the work, Mid-Term and Vocal Self-Assessment.

SLO 3: *To allow muscular release to serve as the foundation of breathing.* In-Class Work, Mid-Term

SLO 4: *To learn and maintain a healthy use of the voice.* Anatomy Quizzes, Exercise Group Report

SLO 5: *To develop a more fluid presence while speaking.* In-Class Discussion and Interaction, Acting Scene

SLO 6: *To speak in a scene without excess effort.* Acting Scene

SLO 7: *To demonstrate intelligible articulation while speaking.* Acting Scene

***Student Learning Outcome Rubric*** – IMPORTANT - Please see the Fall Rubric Worksheet document for a specific articulation of the levels of assessment and standards of accomplishment established for the Student Learning Outcomes of this course. (Translation: “How will I be evaluated?” and “On what will you base the evaluation?”)

## Voice for the Stage I: Week-by-Week

|        |   |                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 1 | - | Introductions<br>“What is Voice?”<br>“Three Drawings”<br>“High Stakes” Presentations<br>Syllabus Review                                                      |
| Week 2 | - | “High Stakes” Presentations<br>Individual Assessments                                                                                                        |
| Week 3 | - | “High Stakes” Presentations<br>Individual Assessments<br>Begin Vocal Training Progression ( <i>Breath and Awareness</i> )                                    |
| Week 4 | - | Vocal Training Progression ( <i>Letting Breath Happen</i> )<br>Continue <b>Destructuring</b><br>Begin <b>Exercise Groups</b> (One session per week required) |
| Week 5 | - | Anatomy I<br>Vocal Training Progression ( <i>Vibration</i> )<br>Destructuring<br>Continue <b>Exercise Groups</b>                                             |
| Week 6 | - | Anatomy I                                                                                                                                                    |

|         |   |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|         |   | Vocal Training Progression ( <i>Vibration</i> )<br>Destructuring<br>Continue <b>Exercise Groups</b>                                                                                        |
| Week 7  | - | Vocal Training Progression ( <i>Vibration</i> )<br>Destructuring<br>Continue <b>Exercise Groups</b>                                                                                        |
| Week 8  | - | Vocal Training Progression ( <i>Breath and Freedom</i> )<br>Destructuring, Introduction to <b>Restructuring</b><br>Continue <b>Exercise Groups</b><br><b>Anatomy Quiz due by 5pm 10/11</b> |
| Week 9  | - | Vocal Training Progression ( <i>Breath, Freedom and Focus</i> )<br>Destructuring / Restructuring<br>Begin working with <b>Acting Scenes</b><br>Continue <b>Exercise Groups</b>             |
| Week 10 | - | Vocal Training Progression ( <i>Breath, Freedom and Focus</i> )<br>Destructuring / Restructuring<br>Continue <b>Exercise Groups, Acting Scenes</b>                                         |
| Week 11 | - | Vocal Training Progression ( <i>Opening the Channel</i> )<br>Destructuring / Restructuring<br>Continue <b>Exercise Groups, Acting Scenes</b><br><b>Mid-Term Exam due by 5pm 11/3</b>       |
| Week 12 | - | Vocal Training Progression ( <i>Resonators and Articulators</i> )<br>Review Destructuring / Restructuring<br>Continue <b>Exercise Groups, Acting Scenes</b>                                |
| Week 13 | - | Vocal Training Progression ( <i>Resonators and Articulators</i> )<br>Review Destructuring / Restructuring<br>Continue <b>Exercise Groups, Acting Scenes</b>                                |
| Week 14 | - | Vocal Training Progression ( <i>Resonators and Articulators</i> )<br>Review Destructuring / Restructuring<br>Continue <b>Exercise Groups, Acting Scenes</b>                                |
| Week 15 |   | <b>Vocal Self-Assessment Due – 12/1</b><br>Review entire Destructuring / Restructuring progression                                                                                         |
| Week 16 | - | <b>Final Exam Meetings – 8:00am to 11:00am – B160</b>                                                                                                                                      |

*Course outline may flex based on class progress. The above schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.*

**Jack Greenman** is an associate professor of voice and speech and the Head of Acting at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX. As an actor, he has performed in over 75 professional productions including shows at the Undermain Theatre, New Swan Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Shakespeare Company, PCPA Theaterfest, GEVA Theater Center, South Coast Repertory Theatre, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Colorado Shakespeare Festival, Insight Out Theatre Collective, Strawberry Theatre Workshop, Centerpoint Theatre Group, Stage West in Fort Worth and at St. Mark's Cathedral, Seattle. He is the recipient of two Santa Barbara Independent Awards for Actor in a Lead Role (*Oleanna* and *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*). He maintains a long association with the Tony Award winning Utah Shakespeare Festival as a Voice/Text Director and has guided the voice and text work for *Henry IV, pt. 1*, *Measure for Measure*, *Into the Woods*, *Private Lives*, *The Secret Garden*, *Foxfire*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The School for Wives*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Great Expectations*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Music Man*, *Noises Off*, and *Macbeth*. Additionally, Jack has coached voice and dialects at the Denver Center Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, the Roundhouse Theater in Bethesda, MD, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, and for La Pell in Barcelona. Before moving to Dallas, Jack spent two years on the faculties of Cornish College of the Arts and Freehold Theatre/Studio in Seattle and 14 years as an Artist-in-Residence at PCPA Theaterfest in central California. Jack is married to artist and writer Sarah Greenman. They have two children – Katie (aged 10) and Charles (aged 7).

## Reflection Format

**Experience + Reflection = Learning + New Action**

1. What happened?
2. How do I feel about what happened?
3. What do I think about what happened?
4. What, if anything, did I learn?
5. What, if anything, would I change?

## Exercise Group Reporting Format

1. Please list the names of students with whom you met.
2. Please list the date and time of the meeting.
3. Please describe the exercise / exercises that you explored.
4. Please provide a photo of all members of the group that clearly shows your faces and the location in which you met.

## Communication with Jack

\*The best way to contact me is using my SMU email, [greenman@smu.edu](mailto:greenman@smu.edu).

\*I will respond to e-mail within 24 hours except between Saturday at 5pm and Monday at 8am.

\*I also will not accept chat/Skype/Facebook/LinkedIn friend requests until such time as I am no longer in a position to grade you. - See more at: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/jack-greenman/student-facebook-policy/141501899221417>

## Weekly Reflection Example

10/20

Today we began with deconstructing work and then moved into a lot of standing work as well as some exercises specific to releasing the jaw.

After doing the scrunch/stretch/shake, I noticed that it was more difficult for me than other days to relax laterally away from the spine. The pelvic swing helped me to realize how I was trying to control the exhale, something that I consistently do - I think because of singing, and having some subconscious need to be right in the way that I breathe. I tried to focus on releasing the exhale into whatever it wanted to be. It generally takes me a while to let fluffy sound settle into whatever it is that day. The pitch roams around, sometimes because I am consciously playing with it, and sometimes because that is just what comes out. There have been a few times when I was genuinely surprised by the pitch that came out! Both when it was higher and lower.

The Twist opens up my shoulders as well as my diaphragm. I truly do find it easier to breathe into the places that have some sort of pressure put on them, almost as if they are a target that my breath can bullseye and invade. Sometimes I feel like the pressure areas open up my breath more than the areas that are made available by a given position.

The Cobra was once again a fight or flight experience. I've noticed now that not only is the position "scary" for me, but also the anticipation of it. My breathing begins to change before I even get into the position because I know that it is coming and I begin to feel anxious.

When I am in the bow position, I feel a strong sense of my heartbeat in my stomach. It is a weird sensation that often distracts me from focusing on my breath. But I do feel that my breath goes primarily to my stomach and my lower back in this position.

As we moved into vibration with the ha-hu-mmmmm-ah sequences my nasal cavity opened up immensely. The neck stretches also helped with this. After doing all of the floor work, and stretching, I feel like I have so much potential breath and power available to me that the vibration sequences just become fun!

Our work on the jaw was incredibly helpful. I was surprised how much sound could come out of me without force simply by relaxing my jaw! It felt like a whole stream of air and sound of all pitches was ready and waiting to come out, all powered by the breath. Also, knowing where the muscles are helped to inform my focus in releasing tension.

I have been thinking a lot since this class about releasing my jaw in my work, and ensuring that during my scenes and even in every day conversations that I speak on my breath, and with all relaxation and power at my disposal.