

SPCO 203 Voice & Diction Spring 2024 (TR 9:55a-11:10) • Dr. Dawn Larsen

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Required texts: Mayer, Lyle V. *Fundamentals of Voice and Diction*. 15th edition.

Kenyon, Samuel. *A Pronouncing Dictionary of American English*.

Other required materials

- You will need a hand mirror that you bring to class EVERY TIME beginning 1/30/24. It should probably be bigger than a compact mirror. If you don't bring it and we use it, you will be counted absent.
- You will need to wear comfortable clothing that you can lie down and breathe in (see the clothing section below). No jeans or skirts. Nothing with a tight, constricting waistband. You will also want to have a blanket or yoga mat. If you attend inappropriately dressed (after the first week) and unable to participate, I will count you absent for that day.

Purpose

The primary objective of this course is to help you become a more competent communicator. To develop in the student a flexible vocal and articulatory mechanism that can be applied to conversation, sight and prepared reading, acting, radio/television public speaking, and other presentational skills. Students are expected to learn and use career speech. You cannot do this without practicing on your own. On the other hand, you are also encouraged to develop your own individuality within the framework of career speech. Hopefully, you will also have learned the IPA as a tool in improving articulation, and you will have learned various techniques to improve the speaking voice. Furthermore, the course will provide you with many opportunities to apply communication knowledge and theory in interpreting literary selections. The emphasis will be placed not as much on artistic performance, but on practical or utilitarian reading.

Objectives:

- proper breath control that should eventually become habitual
- a demonstration of the flexible use of vocal dynamics
- a pleasant vocal quality with adequate pharyngeal resonance, and one that is free from nasality, excessive tension, and breathiness
- an awareness and habituation of their optimum pitch accompanied by a development of a flexible and appropriate pitch range
- a facility to pronounce the consonants, vowels and diphthongs in dynamic speech with accuracy and smoothness
- appropriate projection
- variations of tempo and rate in response to the speaker's thought and/or intended meaning
- an ability to control all of the above aims during presentations in front of the class
- an ability to use career speech in conjunction with the International Phonetic Alphabet
- transcribing and reading the IPA

GRADES

This is a skills course. Your final grade will depend on your success in developing and using career speech. In this course, the major emphasis is on HOW you speak and not what you say. I cannot stress enough the importance of **PRACTICE**. You will get better or not, thus a higher grade, depending upon how much time you spend practicing. The content you learn in voice and diction will be applied to public speaking, oral reading and other presentational modes. **You will be expected to work on your voice and /or speech exercises for at least one hour each day at three 20-minute intervals.**

Daily Participation (attendance and participation)	15%
Written Tests and Quizzes.....	20%
Recorded Phonem Quizzes	25%
Final IPA Tests	15%
Final Exam Prepared Reading/Sight	20%
First & Final recording comparison	5%

Percentages to grades: 0-59=F; 60-64=D; 65-69=D+; 70-74=C; 75-79=C+; 80-84=B; 85-89=B+; 90-100=A • No W's will be given for any reason after the student withdrawal date.

Grading Criteria

The following criteria will be used in determining the term grade based upon the premise that all students should be developing career speech

- | | |
|---|---------|
| • Average speech and voice (preparation and implementation) | C |
| • Above average speech and voice (preparation and implementation) | Above C |
| • Below average speech and voice (preparation and implementation) | Below C |

Average speech and voice should meet the following criteria:

- The student presentation demonstrates preparation and is presented on the assigned day.
- The presentation is of the assigned length.
- During the presentation, the student exhibited control over earlier voice and speech errors and displayed career speech.

A Word About Grades

In a recent study by researchers at the University of California, a third of students surveyed expect a B just for attending class, and 40 percent said they deserved a B for only completing the course requirements. It is my goal to help you think differently about this class and your university experience, as well as help you connect your education to your profession.

- Working hard, or working harder than someone else, does not mean that you deserve a higher mark.
- Working hard, putting in many hours, does not create a good paper or performance. Natural creativity and a well-organized thought process is the key to successful problem solving.
- Be careful not to confuse the level of effort with the quality of work. A lot of effort does not merit a higher grade.
- The default grade for completing everything per the criteria on the course syllabus, including attendance, is a C, not an A.
- Students are expected to read and research for knowledge and perform either on paper or actively with the goal of exploring ideas.
- You will not *get* a grade, you will *earn* a grade, and therefore you deserve the grade posted.

- The academic burden falls to you, the student. Therefore take it upon yourself to read, research, and concept your proposed problem (be it test, paper, or performance) to a higher solution.
- When you develop a genuine interest in the field of theatre, a holistic and intrinsically motivated learning can take place, which better prepares you for the world, no matter your chosen field.

Assignments

Reading

YOU NEED THE BOOK FOR THIS CLASS IMMEDIATELY! You are adults. I do not believe in reading the text to you. You will be responsible for your own reading (see tentative schedule and check my website daily). You should have all assigned reading completed on the first day of the week.

Tests/Quizzes

You will be taking several kinds of tests in this class.

1. **One written chapter test**
2. **Phoneme Tests**

Weekly written Phoneme quizzes: you will be required to know the IPA symbols for the noted section. Unless otherwise notified, written quizzes will be given at the beginning of the class session. No makeup quizzes are allowed. Missed quizzes will be counted as a zero. All quizzes also have a time limit of 10 minutes. We will take these at the beginning of the period. If you show up late, you don't get to take the quiz.

Phoneme Oral quizzes: you will record a selection for me. You will also be asked to circle particular sounds on the assignment sheet. See Recordings below. There are many IPA websites. Find them and make sure you know how to produce the sound so that you will record it correctly. Make sure you are on an AMERICAN and not a British website. This is due at the beginning of class.

If you don't know how a word is pronounced, LOOK IT UP in your required *A Pronunciation Dictionary of American English!* This is your responsibility

3. **Final IPA tests** – these are at the end of the semester after we have covered all the IPA symbols. We will probably take these via Zoom and email as well.
4. **Final Exam** – The final exam consists of 2 parts – How we take these will be TBA.

FINAL Oral Prepared Reading Examination

You will choose, with my OK, a final reading of 1-1.5 minutes that you will prepare in advance and present in class. I will record this reading. The proposal for the Final Reading is due **3/9/21** in writing uploaded to dropbox. Failure to hand in this proposal will result in a 0 for the final reading.

FINAL Oral Sight Examination:

The final exam will be comprised of 2-3 minutes of a sight reading selected by me with your voice and speech challenges in mind. This will be recorded.

Recordings for Oral quizzes and assignments

We will all be patient about this, but if you are still having trouble after your second recording assignment, my patience will be extremely limited. You are responsible for making sure your mp3/mp4 files are on Dropbox by the due date reflected in this syllabus.

Recordings Directions – We will discuss this in class. You may use your phone to record exercises, BUT you must record in a quiet room. Having an external microphone is very helpful and they are cheap on Amazon. You can go to the media center or library to find a room. You will then upload the files to DropBox. I will send you a link via email that will give you instructions. MAKE SURE the files are mp3 or mp4.

Naming files (or you get a 0 for that assignment):

LastName.FirstName.AssignmentName.mp3.

Examples: Larsen.Dawn.ReadingAssignment.mp3 or Larsen.Dawn.OralQuiz1.mp3

Make sure you listen to what you have recorded. If you haven't, and I will know, you will receive a 0 for that assignment. It is the only way you will improve in this course.

Assignment sheets. Print off the assignment sheet. Circle the sound and take a picture of the completed sheet. Upload to Dropbox with the filename: LastName.FirstName.QuizName as a PDF. For example: Larsen.Dawn.FrontVowel.pdf

Vocal Profile and Overview

This will be uploaded to dropbox. It is found in your book pp.287-88. I would rather you word process the questions and answers, but if you choose to use the pages in the book and handwrite it, if I can't read it, I won't grade it.

Daily Participation

This grade reflects whether you actively participate in daily work. Are you ready to warm up each day? Have you warmed up on your own like you should? Have you improved/worked on specific problems between class days? Are you dressed appropriately and there with your yoga mat/towel? Do you have your text/homework, etc.? Are you present?

2/1/4 to 3/28/24 ALWAYS wear loose clothing and WARM UP before we start class. If you don't, you will be counted absent for the day.

Exam/Test Policy

All purses, backpacks, notebooks, books, etc. must be placed on the floor under your desk. ONLY your test, scan sheet and a pencil may be on your desk. You may not wear hoodies, hoods, hats, jackets, or scarves during the test. No electronic devices of any kind are allowed. If I see you talking to another student, looking at another student's paper, all penalties for cheating outlined in this syllabus will apply.

Class and University Policies

Correspondence

Email

The best way to correspond with me one-on-one is through email. If you choose to email me, in order for you to receive a response from me within 48 hours M-F, you must: email me from your FMU Gmail account **only** (required for all FMU students); in the subject line put **"SPCO 203, First**

Name Last Name" (SPCO 203 Dawn Larsen); within the email, address me as Dr. Larsen; sign your full name; the email should use grammatically correct English. If these rules are not followed, I will not respond to your email.

My Webpage - Check my website EVERY DAY. I will use the website to communicate with you as a class.

Phone Messages

You may leave a phone message, but if I can't understand you, your telephone number, your name, and/or your message, I will not return your call.

Appointments

You may make an appointment to see me face-to-face. Office hours are posted in a link on my website. To make an appointment, please send an e-mail message in the format outlined above. You must receive an email message from me confirming the appointment. If you don't, it means I didn't get your message. Keep your appointment time.

Attendance

In order for this course to be a successful learning experience for you, your attendance and active committed participation are necessary. Attendance is required. You get 2 absences w/out penalty. After those two, no matter the reason, 2% of your total grade will be deducted for EACH absence. Please do not show me doctor's notes, etc. Habitual lateness is cumulative (if you are 10 minutes late for 7 days, that counts as one absence). Should you choose to leave early without consulting me; that is also cumulative. The baseline attendance policy in the most current Francis Marion University catalog concerning Fs and Ws will be adhered to as well, which says if you miss more than twice the number of class days per week, in our case FOUR, I will stop recording grades for you, which will result in an F. If you choose to be absent, YOU are responsible for all material covered the day you missed class. Do not call or email me for information, call one of your classmates and check the website. If there are extenuating circumstances, such as hospitalization of you or an immediate family member or worse, email me as soon as possible and we will discuss your options. **2/1/4 to 3/28/24 ALWAYS wear loose clothing and WARM UP before we start class.** If you don't, you will be counted absent for the day.

ILLNESS POLICY: ONLY the following absences are excused with proof: Hospital admittance, Covid notification from a Doctor, Student Health Services notification. If you have an extended illness, or extenuating circumstances, contact me as soon as you can and we will try to work something out. However, late work, late exams and excused absences will only be allowed if you have been admitted to the hospital or have COVID. You must show me proof. If you contact me after you have missed more time than is allotted, penalties outlined in this syllabus will apply.

FMU COVID Policy

FMU covid policy says, if you are quarantined or have COVID, you **must** contact the FMU COVID office and then they will contact your professors. Only if the COVID office contacts me, do you get your absences excused, but because most of the work in my class is submitted on blackboard, you can still upload it on time. As well, you can email me weekly quizzes. Only if I get an official notice from the COVID office that you are quarantining or ill, can you take a late exam, but ONLY then.

Late Work and Extra Credit

I believe college should prepare you for the world and part of the world is learning to be responsible. For that reason, I take NO late work (except for hospitalization of you or an immediate family member & COVID). I take ANY early work. To balance this policy, I provide ample opportunity for extra credit

throughout the course. You may write up to 2 extra credit assignments for up to ½ letter grade addition to your final grade. Choose a live event and do the Vocal Profile in your book IN ESSAY FORM about your chosen speaker. You must use current edition MLA style. You must provide specific examples. Each extra credit assignment must be at least 1.5 pages in length. All extra credit is due by **3/28/24 midnight** - no exceptions

Final Grades

I will not email you with your grade close to the end of the semester. You can keep track by using the grading information given in this syllabus. You can check your grade as soon as I post it online.

Office of Disability Services

For those registered with the Office of Disability Services, please remind me at least 2 days prior to the exam date to send your exam to the office of Disability Services.

Midterm Deficiencies

At Midterm, grades will be averaged. Freshmen students with a D average or lower will receive a Midterm Deficiency via letter or email.

Graduating Seniors

Please alert me to your status by Midterm so that I can plan to schedule your final exam.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism and/or cheating will not be tolerated per the FMU student handbook and the FMU Honor Code. For the first offense, the assignment will receive a 0; second offense, you will fail the course. For all instances of plagiarism and cheating, the Fine Arts Dept Chair and the Associate Provost will be notified. This is serious business. Make sure you know what plagiarism and cheating are.

Electronic Devices

All electronic devices (most especially cell phones) must be turned OFF during this class. Vibrate mode is a distraction. You may NOT use a computer or tablet to take notes unless you are officially registered with the office of disability services. Then you must show me proof that is one of your accommodations before you open your computer in the classroom. There are too many recent studies that show that writing paper notes allow for better retention. Violation of this policy will result in you being issued a Behavior Form (see below).

Behavior

Though you are adults, it is necessary in some cases, to have strict behavior guidelines. Please see the Groundrules for Discussions link on my website for more information. Please read the following carefully: If you should choose to engage in behavior that is disruptive or offensive to others; talking, reading, doing other classwork, daydreaming; you will receive one warning from me. This class may be videotaped and/or photographed for disciplinary purposes. All attendance rules apply. See below:

Behavior Forms

For failure to comply with of any above criteria (electronic devices, behavior, etc.) set forth in this syllabus, I will issue a FMU Behavior Form, which cites University Violation #12:

Obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings, or other University activities, including public service functions, or any authorized activities on University premises.

If you are issued this form, you will be directed to leave class and will not be allowed to return until you have visited the Student Affairs office (referred to the instructions found on the form). You will be counted absent for that day.

My Teaching Style

Learning is a collaborative experience. I want to create a productive and safe environment where we can work and learn. Research has shown that an informal teaching style, if the students are mature enough, is the most effective style. Therefore, I expect you to be respectful of others through acknowledging that oppression exists because of ignorance and misinformation; and accepting responsibility for not repeating oppressive behaviors. Your behavior must be honest and assertive, thereby creating a safe atmosphere for open discussion.

As for me personally, I am concerned about you. I want you to benefit from this class. Please feel free to contact me when you have questions about the material or if you want me to look at your work before it is due. I expect honest and responsible behavior from you and will promise the same in return. I make every effort to be fair. This syllabus is a contract between you and me. I expect you to adhere to it.