

9-2013

# THTR 210.01: Voice and Speech I

John Kenneth DeBoer

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**Voice & Speech I - THTR 210 – 01**  
**2 Credits TR 11:10 – 12:30 PM McGill 125**

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Office Hours – R 1:30-3, F 1:30-3

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**Aim**

The purpose of this course is to broaden your empathetic use of voice and speech in performance. These goals are achieved through the study of vocal production and enunciation. At the end of the semester you will leave with an increased kinesthetic awareness of how movement, breath, voice, and speech combine to embolden your intellectual and emotional connection to text when acting on the stage.

**Objectives**

- To introduce the basic concepts of voice and speech for the stage and its value in performance and practice
- To introduce the fundamentals of anatomy and foster a kinesthetic awareness of the body necessary to support dynamic movement, breath, voice, and speech on stage
- To introduce the practice of controlled phonation and vocal resonance as emotional self-expression
- To introduce the vocabulary and conventions of poetic language, focusing specifically on the scansion of Shakespearean verse
- To introduce the symbols and vocabulary of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and the common vowel and consonant sounds of English

**By the end of the semester you must...**

- Demonstrate an expanded use of breath to support both voice and movement
- Exhibit marked improvement in clear phonation, projection, and volume
- Understand, recognize, and notate the poetry inherent in all dramatic texts
- Begin to attune to the nuances of speech and be able to hear, notate, and clearly phonate those sounds in the context of performance
- Incorporate all skills learned in the studio into daily life and the practice of acting

**Required Materials**

- [\*The Right to Speak\*](#), by Patsy Rodenburg
- [\*Speaking Shakespeare\*](#) by Patsy Rodenburg
- Computer and Internet access to record and upload assignments to [Moodle](#)
- [Audacity](#) (free download for Mac and PC available at the hyperlink) or other sound recording software with the ability to save files in MP3 or other compressed formats
- Clothes that support movement (no jeans or button shirts)
- [IPA Fonts](#) (free downloads for Mac and PC available at the hyperlink)

**Attendance and Promptness**

Acting is participatory: there is no way to learn without doing, no adequate substitute for a miss-

ing partner, and no way to “make up” missed experience. School policies will be enforced strictly. Only documented absences will be excused. **Missing more than one week of class will drop your grade one-third of a letter grade for each successive absence.**

Furthermore, besides adversely affecting your own learning, arriving late for class disrupts the learning process of your fellow students, therefore tardiness in excess of 10 minutes will be considered a complete absence, and every two instances of tardiness—of whatever duration—will equate to one absence for grading purposes. In addition, I reserve the right to declare a “no lateness” policy should the need arise. Briefly put, if the door to the class is shut and you are not inside by the time class begins, you are absent: no exceptions.

If an illness should cause you to miss class to the point of failing, it is up to you to pursue a medical withdrawal so that the course can be attempted again once you have recovered.

### Grading Scale and Breakdown

A	100 – 90%	Participation:	30%
B	89 – 80%	Writing/Research/Homework:	30%
C	79 – 70 %	Performances	30%
D	69 – 60%	Professional Growth:	10%
F	59 and Below		

### Participation

In addition to the attendance policy, for each class session you will receive a grade for the day on a scale from zero to five.

- 5** The student was actively participating in class, obviously well prepared, and positively engaged with the material and fellow classmates.
- 4-3** The student was present, somewhat prepared, but not participating fully
- 2-0** The student was unprepared, disruptive, disrespectful, or absent

A solid work ethic is expected in this class so high marks should be the norm. Poor work will stand out. If you consistently receive low marks for participation please meet with me outside of class to discuss the problem and how it can be resolved.

### Performances and Professional Growth

This portion of your grade is based on your performances and professional growth throughout the semester. While it goes hand in hand with the participation grade, it is also my evaluation of your technical skills and how they have developed. The rubric I will use to evaluate these subjective areas of growth is as follows:

- A Superb Acting.** The student has transcended craft past the point of intellectual preparation and is truly living in the moment.

- B Good Skills.** The student has mastered the intellectual preparation necessary to move on to more advanced skills, but is not yet living fully in the moment.
- C Fair Work.** The student is somewhat prepared intellectually for the work, but it is evident that stronger choices could be made and more practice is necessary.
- D Poor work.** The student has not or is not prepared fully for the work and it is painfully obvious to the audience.
- F Failure.** The student has not prepared at all, made no specific choices and is wasting the audience's time.

Hopefully you will develop the skills for effective use of voice and speech in performance and receive full marks. However participation is often not enough. You are expected to show some growth in technical skill and achieve the outcomes laid out in this syllabus by the semester's conclusion.

### **Text Presentations and Writing Assignments**

The main performance pieces and writing assignments for the class will be:

- Shakespearean Sonnet
- Shakespearean Verse Monologue
- *The Right to Speak* and Quizzes
- *Speaking Shakespeare* Reflection Forums on Moodle
- Scansion and IPA Transcription Quizzes and Assignments

### **Moodle**

All course assignments; readings, handouts and recordings, will be placed on Moodle this semester. You are expected to check the web daily in order to participate fully in the class. All written work (papers, journal entries, etc) must be properly formatted (I will provide examples), typed, and submitted as a PDF document via Moodle by the beginning of class on the date due. I will not accept paper copies. If Moodle is down, please use email as your alternate submission option.

Please use the following naming scheme for all files: lastname\_assignmentname

Assignments may be turned in late for partial credit. Performances must take place on the date noted in the schedule or assigned in class by the instructor. Due to a tight schedule and limited class time, they may not be made up without prior permission from the instructor.

### **Production Attendance**

All students are required to attend *Avenue Q*, *Distracted*, and *Angels in America* on the main-stage this semester and attend the "All-School Responses" which take place at 5:15 on the following dates (the Monday after the show closes.)

*Avenue Q*

October 14

*Distracted*  
*Angels in America*

November 4  
 December 9

Attendance will be taken at the talkbacks and we will have an in class discussion on the following class session if time permits.

### **Reading Assignments, Quizzes, and Reflection**

This semester you will read *The Right to Speak* and *Speaking Shakespeare* by Patsy Rodenburg. We will read *The Right to Speak* first and you will take a quiz for each reading assignment by the assigned date. There will then be an in class discussion of the reading where you can reflect on the material and your experiences. Some questions to consider for these discussions are:

- How do you see yourself represented in the reading?
- What works?
- What doesn't work? Why?
- How might these techniques have helped a performance you participated in or saw?
- How might an exercise be modified to better suit your needs?

In the second half of the semester you will read *Speaking Shakespeare* and will post your reflection to Moodle in a discussion forum. These two to three paragraph reflections must be posted by the dates noted online. Even though this is writing in an online forum, please use professional language, and university level writing. Points will be taken off if you do not adhere to the highest standards of thought and writing.

### **Tentative Schedule**

This semester we will work within the following generalized schedule in order to have enough room for flexibility.

<b>Weeks 1-2</b>	<b>The Fundamentals</b> Anatomy, Physiology, Warm-ups, and Vocal Health
<b>Weeks 3-4</b>	<b>Vocal Production</b> The Body, Alignment, Breath, and Phonation
<b>Weeks 5-7</b>	<b>Vowel Sounds and Resonators</b> Emotion, Extremes, Phonetics
<b>Weeks 8-10</b>	<b>Scanning Text and Operative Structure</b> Scansion, Poetry, Verse
<b>Weeks 11-End</b>	<b>Connected Speech</b> Consonants, Transcription, and Performing Shakespeare
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Monday, December 9 8-10 AM</b> Final Shakespearean Verse Monologue

### Extra Credit

This semester you can earn up to a maximum of **fifty extra-credit** points towards your **participation grade** for participating in the following activities:

- 10 Points – Serve on the crew—construction, stage management, board operation, and backstage run-crew—of a production that does not fulfill your required school crew assignment. Please be sure to provide a program or note from your supervisor to verify that you completed the assignment.
- 5 Points Each – A sleeve of fancy 8-ounce clear plastic party cups for opening night toasts or a two liter bottle of ginger-ale (or equivalent number of cans)

No student can earn more than 100% of his or her participation grade in the class. Be aware of this when pursuing extra credit. **There is no extra credit to make up missed assignments or performances.**

### Preparation for BFA Auditions

From the Handbook, Page 24: “all acting and skills courses during the third and fourth years of BFA training are considered “advanced.” This level of training is student-driven and collaborative. The successful completion of advanced courses requires that students synthesize and utilize the fundamental skills acquired during prior training outside of class time. Independent preparation and rehearsal is expected so that advanced concepts can be pursued in the studio. Students who fail to demonstrate proper preparation for advanced work or monopolize studio time addressing fundamental issues of skill will be graded accordingly and may be asked to withdraw from the course. Instructors will address the skills necessary for completing advanced work in the studio at the beginning of each advanced course.”

### Procedure/Policy

You are expected to abide by the following School regulations. There is no eating, drinking, or gum chewing during the class. Please let me know in writing if you have a medical exception to this policy. Water in a capped container is acceptable. Absolutely no weapons, real or fake, are allowed in the classroom.

There is inherent risk involved in many Theatre classes, as they are very physical in nature. Please proceed through class and rehearsals with caution. Always be mindful of your personal safety and the safety of others. Students participating in classes, rehearsals, and performances do so at their own risk.

Due to safety considerations, at **no** point during a student’s time spent in class or serving on a production (in any capacity) should non-enrolled persons be guests of that student **without my consent**. Presence of such unauthorized persons in a class, shop, or any backstage/off-stage area will negatively affect a student’s grade.

### Electronic Resources

In this class we will embrace twenty-first century technology as the incredible resource that it is. Therefore, email is the required method of communication for the course. Please check your email and Moodle frequently throughout the day. Due to its unreliability, refrain from messaging

me on Moodle using the IM feature. **I will always contact you using the primary email stored in Moodle and Cyberbear so be sure that your information is up to date.**

If you have course materials stored on your phone, tablet, laptop or equivalent device, please set it to “Airplane Mode” so that the functionality is limited to stored data retrieval for class participation. Please silence and stow other unneeded electronic devices. I will have my phone on vibrate in case an emergency message should be sent by the university. If accessing the web becomes necessary, inform me that you are doing so for the benefit of the entire class. Raise your hand and proclaim, “I’m Googling it!”

If one of your devices rings accidentally during class, please silence it as **quickly as humanly possible**. Don’t be embarrassed, just turn it off and all will be forgiven. Having said that anyone caught text messaging or frivolously surfing the web will be dismissed immediately from class, resulting in a complete absence for the day. **I’M NOT KIDDING.**

### **Movement Clothes**

Please wear clothes to class that facilitate movement. It will become immediately apparent to you that jewelry (small studs are acceptable except in the tongue), jeans, hooded sweatshirts, hats, tight-fitting and restrictive clothing, anything too revealing (showing skin), and hair that covers the face make full participation in class and proper evaluation by the instructor impossible. Please remove or change out of these items before work commences. Be prepared to work barefoot. If you must wear socks, please wear those that have slip resistant padding on the bottom.

### **Personal Comfort**

The study of voice and movement often requires the instructor or peers to touch each other or be in close proximity in order to adjust and align the body and voice. We all have bad days when we do not want such contact. Feel free to bow out of a particular exercise if you are having a “Wounded Warrior” day. However, frequent sitting out is a sign that you might not be ready to advance in your training. If deemed necessary by the instructor, any student with such issues will be asked to meet with the head of Acting/Directing and the instructor to discuss how we might better facilitate you through the course.

### **Sacred Space**

In order to foster an appropriate environment for our work, we will treat McGill 125 as a sacred space. Please remove your shoes and socks upon crossing the threshold into the classroom and store your belongings neatly in the shelves provided. If you arrive early, use this time for reflection, meditation, stretching, and organizing any furniture scattered about. Be mindful of any rehearsal furniture designated for a School production that may be using the space and treat them with respect. If you must speak, speak only of the work we will do in Voice and Speech. When class has ended, restore the room, returning any furniture to its designated area, and retrieve all belongs that you brought with you to class.

### **[School of Theatre & Dance Handbook](#)**

All students in theatre courses must have an in-depth knowledge of the practices and procedures outlined in the School of Theatre & Dance Handbook. The Handbook is available online at the link above.

**Disability Services for Students (DSS):**

If you have a disability for which accommodations are needed please contact me in the first week of the semester. Please visit the website linked above for more information.

**Student Conduct Code**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code located at the link above.



## Student Contract and Survey

I, \_\_\_\_\_ understand that the syllabus for the Fall 2013 section of **Voice and Speech I** stands as the course contract between the instructor, **John Kenneth DeBoer**, and myself and agree to abide by the expectations laid out.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Hometown: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

Life Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Where have you lived besides your hometown for a significant amount of time? \_\_\_\_\_

If you had to name the dialect of English that you speak, what would it be called? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever suffered any lasting damage to your voice? \_\_\_\_\_

Draw me a picture. Seriously. Anything you want! \_\_\_\_\_