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THTR 514.01: Graduate Voice and Speech II

John Kenneth DeBoer

University of Montana - Missoula, john.deboer@umontana.edu

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Graduate Voice and Speech II – THTR 514 – 01
3 Credits—TR 11:10 am-12:30 pm —MCG 125 and F 12:10-1:00 pm—MCG 212B

Instructor – John Kenneth DeBoer
Office – McGill 212B
Mailbox – PARTV 197

Email – john.deboer@umontana.edu
Office Hours – R 1:30-3, F 1:30-3

Aim

As an advanced continuation of the work in Voice and Speech I and II, the purpose of this course is to extend your use of character voices, dialect acquisition, poetic scansion, operative structure, and the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Objectives

- To continue to explore the vocal subtleties—psychological and physical—of creating characters for the stage
- To continue to apply scansion and IPA transcription to the prescriptive preparation transcription of a specific dialect

By the end of the semester you must...

- Demonstrate full use of breath to support both voice and movement
- Exhibit consistent and clear phonation, projection, and volume
- Attune to the nuances of a variety of dialects and foreign accents and be able to both hear, notate, and clearly phonate those sounds in the context of performance
- Incorporate all skills learned in the studio into the practice of acting

Required Materials

- [*Accents and Dialects for Stage and Screen*](#), by Paul Meier (Any Edition)
- [*Vocal Direction for the Theatre*](#) by Nan Withers-Wilson
- Computer and Internet access to record and upload assignments to [Moodle](#)
- [IPA Fonts](#) (free downloads for Mac and PC available at the hyperlink)

Attendance and Promptness

As an graduate level acting course there are no un-excused absences. Missing a full week of class will drop the grade one third of a letter and so on. Two tardies equals one absence.

Grading Scale and Breakdown

A	100 – 90%	Participation:	30%
B	89 – 80%	Writing/Research:	30%
C	79 – 70 %	Performances	40%
D	69 – 60%		
F	59 and Below		

Tentative Schedule

Our work with each dialect will run on a three to four day schedule depending on the rate at which the class as a whole adapts to each dialect. A typical four-day schedule will look like this:

Day One	Signature Sounds and Additional Features
Day Two	Dialect Research and Coordination Exercises
Day Three	Monologue and Transcription Workshops
Day Four	Final Dialect Performances and Transcriptions

The schedule of dialects will look something on this depending on the skills of the class as a whole. We may move fast or slower depending on the needs of the group.

Weeks 1-2

New York

Weeks 9-10

Scottish

Weeks 3-5

Deep and American South

Weeks 11-12

Cockney

Weeks 6-8

Irish and Northern Irish

13-14

Foreign Accent

Midterm

Irish Scenes

Final Exam

Self-taught Foreign Accent or Dialect

Monologues and Performances

You will prepare several monologues throughout the semester. Each should be no longer than a minute in length. I expect a very specific character voice for each dialect performance. Part of this process will involve your ability to research native speakers that reflect the dialect as written. You will use this research as a model on which you will craft your performance. Be diligent that you have thoroughly researched the background of your chosen speaker and be prepared to provide evidence to defend their suitability.

I also expect to see a high degree of specific acting choices for each performance. This means I should not have to coach your acting more than your dialect. Each monologue is short, so come to class with bold choices already made. Most of all have fun. Costumes, props (even another actor in the space, just don't pick a scene), and whatever else you can think of are highly encouraged. Be CREATIVE.

Grades for your performances will be based on the following rubric:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| A | Superb work. The student has transcended craft past the point of intellectual preparation and is truly living in the dialect and the moment. |
| B | Good work. The student has the acting skills and vocal ability necessary for advanced dialect work, but is not yet truly comfortable in the dialect |

- C Fair work.** The student is somewhat prepared, but it is evident that more effort is needed to master the sounds and rhythms of the dialect.
- D Poor work.** The student is not or has prepared fully for the work and it is a painful experience for the actor, scene partners, and the audience.
- F Failure.** The student is not or has not prepared at all to work in the dialect.

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

Due to the extremely tight schedule this semester, performances must take place on the date assigned in class. Unless you have received specific permission from the instructor prior to the date of performance, all missed performances will be awarded zero points. Special consideration will be made for documented excused absences on a case-by-case basis.

Students who do not receive the grade they desire on their performance of any dialect may arrange to meet me outside of class to repeat their performance as many times as necessary in order to achieve an acceptable assessment.

Writing and Research

As with the work in Voice and Speech I and II, You must upload a typed transcription and scan of the piece to Moodle. You do not have to upload a recording. These transcriptions will be due on the third day of our work on a particular dialect, before your first performance. Please submit your work as a PDF file. **Students who have not submitted a transcription prior to performing will not be permitted to perform.**

Final Project

For the final project of the semester you will be paired with a cohort of undergraduate students and choose a foreign accent or dialect that we have not covered from the textbook and prepare a two-minute monologue or three-minute partner-scene as their coach. You will work independently on this project with no prior instruction, and provide a written reflection of the process during the final exam for the course.

Friday Sessions

The graduate component of the course will meet independently on Fridays in my office for extra coaching and seminar discussions of additional readings.

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 in your education. 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 that you can move in to class. It will be come 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 use 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, moving any furniture back to its designated area, and retrieve all belongs that you brought with you to class.

School of Theatre and 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.