

9-2014

THTR 310.01: Voice and Speech III

John Kenneth DeBoer

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

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Recommended Citation

DeBoer, John Kenneth, "THTR 310.01: Voice and Speech III" (2014). *Syllabi*. 1894.
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Voice & Speech III – THTR 310 – 01
3 Credits—MW 11:10 am-12:30 pm—MCG 125

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

Email – john.deboer@umontana.edu
Office Hours – MWR 1-2 PM
Phone – 243-2018

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 dialects of English and non-English language accents
- To engage the student in independent collection, transcription, and development of primary source samples into a dialect or accent performance
- To introduce the process for phonetic acquisition and performance of non-English languages.

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, foreign accents and languages 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

General Education

Students accepted into the BFA Acting program may use the sequence of THTR 210, 211 and 310 to fulfill the Group III, Symbolic System Exception for General Education in place of the Group III, Modern and Classical Languages option. **BA Theatre students must complete the Group III, Modern and Classical Language option for graduation. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Required Materials

- Meier, Paul. [*Accents & Dialects for Stage and Screen*](#). Revised/Expanded ed. Lawrence, Kan.: Paul Meier Dialect Services, 2012. Print
- Computer and Internet access to upload assignments to [Moodle](#)
- Recording equipment with the ability to save files in MP3 or other compressed formats. Most phones, tablets, and laptops have such capabilities.
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Attendance and Promptness

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

Grading Scale and Breakdown

A	100 – 90%
B	89 – 80%
C	79 – 70 %
D	69 – 60%
F	59 and Below

Participation:	30%
Writing/Research:	30%
Performances	40%

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. Day four of a topic may coincide with day one of the following topic if time allows. We may move fast or slower depending on the needs of the group.

Weeks 1-6 – Standard Stage Dialects of English (Continued)

New York
American South
Irish
Scottish

Weeks 7-8 – Regional Dialects of American English

Midterm – Real Life Character Study, Dialect Research Presentations and Performances

Weeks 9-12 – Other Languages and Accents

French Accent
French Language

Week 13-Final Exam

Original Pronunciation - Shakespeare

Monologues and Performances

You will prepare several monologues throughout the semester. Each should be no longer than a thirty to forty-five seconds. 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 moment.
- B** **Good work.** The student has the acting skills and vocal ability necessary for advanced work, but is not yet truly comfortable
- C** **Fair work.** The student is somewhat prepared, but it is evident that more effort is needed to master the sounds and rhythms.
- 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 voice and speech skills necessary to begin playing "in the moment." However participation is often not enough. You are expected to show some growth in craft and artistry by the semester's conclusion and achieve the outcomes laid out at the beginning of the 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 as a PDF file. 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. All research must be accompanied by the appropriate MLA citation. **Students who have not submitted a transcription prior to performing will not be permitted to perform.**

Advanced Training

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.”

Electronic Resources

In this class we will embrace technology as the incredible resource that it is. Email is the required method of communication for the course. Please check your email and Moodle frequently throughout the day. **I will always initiate contact with you using your UM email.**

If you have course materials stored on your phone, tablet, laptop or equivalent device, set it to “Airplane Mode” so that the functionality is limited to stored data retrieval. 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 beeps or 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 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 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 restrictive items before work commences.

Personal Comfort

The study of acting often requires the instructor or peers to touch each other or be in close proximity. 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, any student with such needs 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, stretching, sweeping the floor, 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 it with respect. If you must speak, speak only of the work we will do in this class. When class has ended, restore the room. Return any furniture to its designated area and retrieve all belongs that you brought with you to class. There is no overnight storage allowed and the safety of your belongings is not guaranteed.

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.

[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 provide me, in writing, your official DSS accommodation letter. 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.