

9-2014

MUSI 281.01: English and Italian Diction for Singers

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Recommended Citation

James, Kimberly G., "MUSI 281.01: English and Italian Diction for Singers" (2014). *Syllabi*. 2046.
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/2046>

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INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Kimberly James

Contact: Room 212, kimberly.james@umontana.edu, or via FB message

Office Hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

MUSI 281 introduces course participants to the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The bulk of this course is spent becoming familiar with this critical diction tool. Students learn to apply IPA to English/American and Italian classical repertoire. Students will learn general rules or guiding principles that apply to American English, British English, and Italian lyric diction. Students will also learn to transcribe, translate, recite, and perform Italian and English/American repertoire. This is a required course for BM vocal performance majors, but BA, BME, and BM Comp/Tech students with voice as the primary instrument are encouraged to register.

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS:

- To learn and correctly use applicable IPA
- To improve the use of the vocal articulators
- To improve listening and analytical skills
- To successfully create IPA transcriptions
- To recite and sing English & Italian words, phrases, and musical selections with authentic intelligible diction
- To accurately translate Italian songs & arias
- To collect resources for the authentic & intelligible delivery of foreign language repertoire

ASSESSMENT & GRADING:

Students receive a final grade at the end of the semester based on proficiency, progress, work effort, and completion of assignments in this course. Expect regular graded class work, homework, and quizzes. Quizzes & homework will be announced in class, and students will be given appropriate notice for preparation. Students earning less than a B- (80%) will be assigned extra assignments (required). The amount this extra work will positively impact the final grade will vary from student to student; overall grades for the class will factor in as well.

Be advised that late work is not accepted (unless due to approved absence).

20% assignments (transcriptions, translations, work sheets, score preparation, music practice, etc.)

20% class work & short quizzes (most quizzes will be announced one week in advance)

40% large exams (Exam 1 covers introductory material and English diction; Exam 2 primarily covers Italian diction but is somewhat cumulative)

20% repertoire performances (1 in English to be performed during student recital hour); 1 in Italian with grading weighted towards the Italian performance performed during the final exam time; you will need to check your pianist's availability for the English performance and bring your pianist to the final exam period for the Italian song performance.

The grading scale used for this course will be as follows:

		B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A	93-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62

Grade 'A' is reserved for exceptional work and a reflection of a keen understanding of the course material, sophisticated application of IPA to song literature and work assigned in class, superior listening and analysis skills, and other measures of outstanding work.

Grade 'B' is assigned for work that is consistently very good and shows above average interest, effort, understanding, and application of the course material.

Grade 'C' is assigned for average work. However, C work is considered marginal for voice performance majors and future music educators.

Grade 'D' is assigned for work that does not meet the expectations for the course as measured by below average work.

Grade 'F' is failing.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

- Bring materials to class – this includes your notebooks, handouts, and required course textbooks!
- Do your own work – although I encourage students to consult one another in problem solving, helping to clarify lecture material and assignments, etc., you will not incorporate the material by relying heavily on other students or outside sources. You may not refer to published IPA transcriptions or word-by-word translations. See the Student Conduct Code regarding academic integrity and my handouts regarding transcriptions and translations.
- Attend class and be an active participant – if you are not interested in attending or participating in a meaningful way, you should perhaps discuss your coursework and degree plan with your advisor. See attendance policy below.
- Keep up with assignments – in general, college students should spend 2-3 hours per credit hour per week studying and completing assignments. Check with a classmate if you miss class to see what might have been assigned in your absence. See attendance policy below.
- Utilize the Moodle course supplement and complete on-line assignments.
- Use your University of Montana e-mail address – the primary method of communication outside of class will be e-mail. If you don't plan to use your UM e-mail address, you must set up e-mail forwarding. (Please don't ask me how to do this.) You are responsible for all University-related e-mail that is sent to your UM e-mail address!
- Practice, practice, practice! Working on your diction should help you with your vocal studies. See practice handout. Although you may only take one year of diction as an undergraduate, you are expected to demonstrate growing linguistic proficiency during your time at UM. This will be observed at juries, master classes, competitions, auditions, recitals, and more!!
- Be respectful – to me, your collaborators, and your fellow classmates. Your attitude and behavior has an effect on course participants and the learning environment.

TEXTS:

REQUIRED: *Diction* by John Moriarty, *Singing and Communicating in English* by Kathryn LaBouff - both are available through the UM Bookstore or on-line through numerous vendors.

RECOMMENDED: [Singer's Italian](#) by Evelina Colorni; an [Italian verb book](#); an Italian/English dictionary with reliable IPA (such as [Webster's](#))

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:

Bring a hand mirror to every class session (you could use the camera feature on your phone)

Notebook for taking notes and keeping handouts and assignments together

ATTENDANCE POLICY (please read carefully):

Attendance is seriously considered in the final determination of grades. Should an emergency arise or you will be absent due to University-related activities, please notify me immediately. A limited number of excused absences can be permitted. **Should you choose/need to miss class, check with a classmate to see what you missed and to obtain assignments. Your instructor is not responsible for what you have missed** due to excused or unexcused absences. It is possible that students with too many excused (and certainly unexcused) absences will not be able to continue in the course. Attendance will be taken at every class period. Excessive absences negatively affect final grades.

DSS Statement

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation. For more information, please consult <http://www.umt.edu/disability>.

Academic Misconduct and the 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. The Code is available for review online at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR FALL 2014

(subject to change; most assignments are made in class)

August

8/26 – Introduction/discussion of course content and goals; get your books, *pronto!*

September

By 9/18 - Have your studio teacher assign you an easy English/American and easy Italian piece to use in this class

9/23, 25 – Dr. James out of town; class activities TBD, but class *will meet*

Learning IPA; transcription; recitation; performance

October

TBD – Perform your English/American song at Student Recital Hour, 2:10pm in MRH

10/14 – EXAM 1 (introductory materials, English diction)

10/16 – Possibly no class due to All State

10/30 – Dr. James out of town; class activities TBD, but class *will meet*

Applying IPA to Italian; continue with transcription, recitation, and performance; translating Italian

November

Italian diction, continued

11/4 – Election Day (no class)

11/11 – Veterans Day (no class)

11/27 – Thanksgiving (no class)

December

12/2 – EXAM 2 (cumulative to a certain extent but primarily dealing with Italian diction)

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 9 from 3:20 – 5:20 pm – you will perform your Italian diction song for the class; you must bring your pianist unless Dr. James is able to make other arrangements for a staff pianist

Please do not schedule your jury, work, or other activities during final exam times.