Fall 9-1-2001

DRAM 210.01: Voice and Speech I

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Course syllabi – Anne Basinski, Associate Professor, Dept. of Music and Dept. of Drama/Dance

DRAMA 210 VOICE and SPEECH I MW 9:40-11:00
Instructor: Anne Basinski Office: Music Rm. 10 243-5192

Course Objectives: To develop the voice as an instrument for the stage: to improve breath support, resonance, and diction. To learn how the voice works and how to care for it, and to develop an analytical ear for others’ vocal work. To explore vocal choices in character development.

Course Activities: Exercises to explore and develop breathing, resonance and diction. Poetry and monologue work to utilize this development. Notebook to record observations of others’ vocal work. IPA study to aid in future dialect work.

Attendance: You have three absences with no penalty. After that you will drop a letter grade for each absence. (B with six absences would become an F). If you are ill on a scheduled test day, you must call me before class time that day in order to be allowed to make up the test – otherwise it will be at the teachers discretion whether you will be allowed to make up the test, and how many points will be deducted.

Grading: Skills tests:
- Breathing 15%
- Resonance 15%
- Reading test 10%
- IPA 10%
- Diction 15%
- Notebook: 20%
- Final:* 15%

Notebook: You will observe five different ‘events’ during the semester, and in addition, two of your classmates. The events may be plays, rehearsals, (ask the director or stage mgr. if it’s okay to sit in), or director’s scenes. These may be a combination of university and non-university performances. Watch for at least half an hour at a time, and observe 2-5 people. In the written observations, make sure to address these questions:
- What was the show, and whom did you observe? Briefly describe the character (dumb thug, ditsy girlfriend, hard-nosed reporter).
- Describe fully the voice that the actor chose for his character: First, and most important, could he be heard and understood? Second, was it a good choice for the character? Why or why not? Can you think of a different vocal choice that might have been better?
- Classmate observation: Choose two of your classmates to observe throughout the semester. Make notes each time they perform in class, and start by getting a sense of their initial assets and problems. Why did you choose this person? Keep track of how they progress throughout the semester. This notebook should be typed, and it’s due on the last day of class, December 12th. Your grade will be seriously docked if you turn it in late, and it will not be accepted later than December 19.

Final Exam (Speech Project):
You will be given several pieces to choose from for your final project. This will be to demonstrate your utilization of the skills you’ve been working on during the semester. It must be memorized. Because of our long class period, some of you may have a conflict during exam time. If so, tell me beforehand and you may take the final at an alternate time.