

**Music 9504B/9841B: ACTING FOR SINGERS
Winter 2023**

Instructor: Robert McQueen

Location: Room 227, Music Building

Class Time: Thursdays, 9:30a to 12:30p

Course prerequisites: None

Course Description

This class offers a practical approach to the development of acting skills used by singers in theatrical genres. Students will gain an understanding of a variety of acting techniques and their use in sung storytelling.

There will not be any formal exams during this course, however there will be frequent assignments of exercises that will require preparation and/or rehearsal time between classes.

Learning Objectives:

- * To acquire and practice the skills necessary for the actor/singer to translate their ideas and energy into truthful and convincing dramatic interpretation and performance.

- * To develop an actor/singer's toolkit for practical use in preparing for and rehearsing a role.

- * To develop an understanding and practice of the skills needed to maintain and strengthen one's interpretation of a role over the course of performance.

- * To build a solid acting vocabulary particular to the actor/singer's rehearsal and performance process.

- * To strengthen the actor/singer's ability to reach an audience with their performance.

- * To gain confidence in one's ability to communicate a fully embodied performance.

- * To become aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses in the fields of dramatic preparation, rehearsal, interpretation and performance and to investigate how these can be built upon or reduced.

- * To enter into the preparation and performance of a role with a curious and inquiring mind.

- * To enhance one's spirit of investigation.

- * To strengthen the practice of collaboration with your fellow singers and creative team members during rehearsal.

- * To uncover and realise one's own creative power as an artist.

- * To heighten one's sense of dedication to artistic practice.

Course Content:

Acting For Singers is designed to introduce, practice and develop a practical understanding of dramatic preparation and performance. The ultimate goal of the practice of this class is for the actor/singer to gain the skills necessary to engage in the preparation, rehearsal, interpretation and performance of a role. The process of study in this course will aim to give the singing artist the tools they need toward becoming a fully embodied performer.

The classes for will be structured with equal parts instruction, dialogue, and participation.

The classes will be highly participatory and will involve physical warmups, acting exercises, monologue text work, scene text work, and will use material drawn from both within and outside the participants repertoire of roles.

There will be frequent assignments of exercises that will require preparation and/or rehearsal time between classes.

Course Timeline:

To Be Determined: the specifics of the course timeline is dependent on the prior acting training and experience of the students attending the class.

Course Format:

Each day will begin with a physical warm-up followed by various exercises, drawn from a variety of sources.

Each session will complete with discussion and dialogue to allow for questions, reflection, and summary of the day's work.

Reference material will be handed out, as necessary.

Journal:

Each student will create and maintain a journal throughout the semester involving their work in class.

These journals will be a reflection of the student's discoveries, challenges, perspectives and ideas.

The journal will be shared with the instructor after the Reading Week.

Should there be any part of the journal the student does not wish to share they should edit it prior to handing it in.

There may be journal entries you do not wish to share, and your privacy will be respected.

Attendance:

Attendance and punctuality are mandatory.

Students are required to attend all classes.

Acceptable exceptions will be illness or personal crisis.

Students will be expected to participate in all exercises unless prior permission has been given.

Accommodations will be made and respected as per prior discussion.

Dress:

Students should be prepared for physical movement in all classes and should dress accordingly.

Recommended Reading Material:

Hagen, Uta with Haskel Frankel. **Respect For Acting**, MacMillan Press, 1973

Constantine, Martin. **The Opera Singer's Acting Toolkit**, Methuen Drama 2020

Evaluation:

In-Class Work: 50% of final grade

Students will be evaluated on their participation in class, their enthusiasm and demonstrations, their inquiry and comprehension of the material, their artistic growth during the course, their attendance, punctuality and the improvement in their abilities.

Students will be expected to apply the tools acquired during the course: intention, action, immediacy, relationship, text analysis, research, collaboration.

Students will be expected to undertake rehearsal, and research outside of the classroom hours for presentations and discussions.

Artistry/Creativity: 35% of final grade:

Students will be evaluated on their artistic growth over the semester. The expectation of the students is that they will be able to demonstrate the use of the exercises and practices in class. The students will be expected to demonstrate the use of the acting toolkit they build in class.

Professional Behaviour: 15% of final grade:

Students will be evaluated on their ability to work within the protocols and courtesies of the profession.

Additionally, they will be evaluated on their ability to work collaboratively, and with professional regard for their colleagues.

Grading Scale:

A = 80 to 100%, B = 70 to 79%, C = 60 to 69%, F = 0 to 59%

A grade of INC (incomplete) may be used in exceptional circumstances if a student is unable on medical or compassionate grounds to complete the course requirements within the normal time.

Statement on Academic Offences:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic offence, as found at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Statement on Health and Wellness:

Students who are in emotional or mental distress should refer to [Health and Wellness](#) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Statement on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

The Graduate Program in Music recognizes that a student's ability to fulfill academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by illness or injury. To ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's course grade shall be granted only in cases where there is documentation indicating that the student could not reasonably be expected to meet the academic responsibilities.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the office of the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies), not to the course instructor. Students with special learning needs or other circumstances are asked to inform the instructor as soon as possible so that necessary accommodations can be considered.

Accessible Education Western:

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program. Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and

undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence: Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, either recently or in the past, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca or call 519-661-3568.