

MFA Voice & Speech II
Speech for the 21st Century Actor
TPP6286 Class#25478

Time: Period 2/3 8:30-10:25am **Days:** T, TH
Location: CON G013 **Academic Term:** Spring 2026

Instructor: Susan Schuld

Office Hours: 213A *Mon 11am-1pm Tues 11-1pm Thurs 1-3pm or by appointment if these hours don't accommodate your schedule.*

Email: sschuld@ufl.edu

The recommended method of communication outside of scheduled class time is email

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Content emphasizes that "Good American Speech" is an outdated, elitist ideal. Actors are encouraged to find intelligibility in their own accents for today's multicultural artistic world. Work begins with a close study of speech anatomy and physiology and developing muscularity of the speech organs. Actors will identify their idiolects and learn how to approach accents of "General American" and "Standard American."

LEARNING GOALS

- To study the history and KTS's philosophy of a "General American" accent/dialect
- Identify that speech acts as a gesture and that speech choices are a layer of storytelling
- To obtain access of resources available for further study and research of how to implement speech training
- To explore the notion that proficiency in speech anatomy and oral posture will open doors in terms of character choice
- To obtain fundamental speech skills that will assist the actor in future accent acquisition
- Discern introductory elements of accent & dialect including placement, musicality, rhythm and physicality and incorporate these elements into the performance of text

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Demonstrate knowledge of speech anatomy
- Apply formal and informal speech actions
- Aurally distinguish & demonstrate accent phonemes of your own "idiolect," a "So Called General American," and a "Standard American" accent
- Demonstrate transcription competency when using the International Phonetic Alphabet

UF ACADEMIC POLICIES: Attendance, DRC, Grading, Evaluations, Honor Policy, Recordings, and Academic Resources including UF Computing Help Desk, Career Connections Center, Library Support, General study skills and tutoring, Writing Studio, Academic Complaints, Enrollment Complaints, Student Success Initiative, Public Speaking Lab, and Campus Health and Wellness Resources designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Our work begins with a close study of speech anatomy and physiology. It continues to a very full study of phonetics based on a much more linguistic model than is usually taught in speech courses. The emphasis is on the physical awareness and experience of sound distinction. Students develop the ability to discern subtle changes in vocal articulated sound using sounds that are found in many languages other than English. Through this process, we learn the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and develop phonetic transcription skills for future dialect study and script notation. The second aim is to begin the investigation of "A So-Called General American Accent, and A Standard/Classical American Accent as prescribed by

Patricia Fletcher. Our focus will be how to research and practice an accent or dialect - *not mastery*.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

My primary goal in voice training is to reacquaint you with the tools of physical and vocal expression that is your birthright. Therefore, I am committed to continually interrogating my course curriculum and practices to create a supportive setting. Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint, or belief.

COURSE STATEMENT TO DISRUPT LINGUISTIC PROFILING

Cultural languages and dialects other than 'so called' general American are welcome in this classroom. As we communicate with one another, keep in mind that the reader/listener should work as hard as the writer/speaker in the communication process. This means that we will listen patiently, work to understand one another, seek out clarification when necessary and avoid finishing each other's sentences or correcting grammatical errors unless invited to do so

Required Texts:

Classically Speaking by Patricia Fletcher, ISBN-13: 978-1300594239

<https://www.amazon.com/Classically-Speaking-Patricia-Fletcher/dp/1300594233>

Content Warning:

In this course, we will cover content and materials that some may find difficult. It is important that in a voice and speech course, we do not shy away from engaging with materials that may be controversial or challenging. I will do my best to give you advance notice when specific materials or content covered may contain images, language or perspectives that some may find difficult, and I encourage you to reach out to me if you are struggling with the course materials. In class, if you need to step away for a period of time as we are covering particular content, you may do so without penalty, but I ask that you remember that you are responsible for any information covered in your absence. We are looking to:

- Build our capacity for uncomfortable conversations
- Allow our classes to be an Accountable space
- Relax into the discomfort

Required Materials:

Yoga mat, water bottle, pen or pencil, small hand mirror, recording device

COURSE CALENDAR (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Week 1 Introduction to Knight-Thompson, Space that Shapes Sound, Anatomy, Isolations, and IPA Introduction

Week 2 Muscles that Shape, Phthongs & Obstruent's Front Vowels /i/ /I/ /ε/ /æ/

Week 3 Introduction to SCGA, Front Vowels /i/ /I/ /ε/ /æ/ & /t/d/n/l/ & /b/ /d/ /g/

Week 4 Outlandish, Back Vowels /ɔ/ & /ɑ/ & /s/ & /z/

Week 5 Points of Obstruent Focus, /s/ & /z/ & /sts/ /str/ /dr/ /tr/

Week 6 VO Techniques for Commercial Copy, Physical Actions, /m/ /n/ /ŋ/ /l/ & syllabics

Week 7 The Empty Chart, Back Vowels /u/ /ʊ/ /o/ & /oʊ

Week 8- Mid Vowels /ʌ/ /ɔ/ & /r/ /j/ /l/ **Tongue Twisters/IPA Midterm**

Week 10 VO Techniques for Commercial Copy, Vowel Quad, /eɪ/ /aɪ/ /ɔɪ/

Week 11 (Record Demo's?), Introduction to Standard American, Diacritics, /oʊ/ /aʊ/ & /ɜ/ /ɔ/

Week 12 Chekhov Acting Tools, /iə/ /eə/ /ɔə/ /aə/ & /ʃ/ /ʒ/

Week 13 /aɪə/ /aʊə/ & /θ/ /ð/ /f/ /v/ **Tongue Twisters and IPA FINAL**

Week 14 Chekhov Acting Tools, work final Speeches for presentation

Week 15 Final presentations TBA

Student Responsibilities:

- Students are expected to participate daily in warm-ups, exercises, and performances
- Students must be dressed in appropriate movement clothing for every class and performance
- Students must be supportive and respectful of their fellow classmates
- Students must complete all assignments and performances on their assigned due date
- Students must contribute focused and creative participation in all class exercises, assignments, and discussion

Attendance Policies:

For our class that meets two times a week: Students are expected to be in attendance (either remotely or in-person, as assigned) daily and to be on time. Students are allowed one “unexcused” absence that does not require documentation and does not conform to the UF “acceptable reasons for absence.” Any other “unexcused” absence will result in a penalty of a full letter grade (10%) from the final grade per “unexcused” absence. To be considered “excused” an absence must be accompanied by appropriate official documentation. Religious observances do not require documentation. Any absence from class for the following reasons must be supported by official acceptable documentation to avoid a grade penalty: To help organize accommodations, students should inform the instructor by the end of the second week of classes of religious observances of their faith that will conflict with class attendance this semester.

Tardiness: 2 tardies = 1 absence

Grading

Class Participation/Professionalism 20% (*punctuality, communication, attitude*)

Conceptual Information 45% (*homework, quizzes, blogs, papers*)

Midterm 15% (*level of progress in voice skills, application of acting skills, and text skills*)

Final Performance 20% (*level of progress in voice skills, application of acting skills, and text skills*)

General Grade Guidelines

A Exceptional Work (Outstanding Work)

Inspired Work

Imaginative and through solutions to problems

Shows continuous and exceptional (above average) growth

Shows understanding of basic ideas and methods taught through exceptional application in projects

Timely preparation and submission of class work

Regular and constructive classroom participation in critiques and/or discussion as appropriate to class and subject

Perfect attendance

A - Exceptional Work (Noteworthy Work)

B+ Above Average (Well Above Average Work)

B Above Average (Above Average Work)

Good workable solutions to problems

Shows some insight into problem solving

Shows continuous and above average growth

Shows understanding of basic ideas and methods taught through skillful application in projects

Regular attendance

B- Above Average (Narrowly Above Average Work)

C+ Average (Average in all respects)

C Average (Marginally Average in all respects)

Appropriate solutions to problems

Shows understanding of basic and methods taught through application in projects

Most class work is prepared and submitted in a timely manner

Participates in classroom critiques and/or discussions

Regular attendance

C - Average (Narrowly Average in all respects)

D+ Below Average Work (Marginally Acceptable)

D Below Average Work (Narrowly Acceptable)

Inconsistent solutions to problems

Shows little growth

Shows inconsistent understanding of basic idea and methods taught and applied to projects

Class work is often not prepared and submitted in a timely manner

Rarely participates in classroom critiques and/or discussions

Inconsistent and poor attendance

D- Below Average Work (Barely Acceptable)

F Unacceptable Work (Failed to meet requirements of the course)

Incomplete or no solutions to problems

Shows little or no growth

Shows little or no understanding of basic ideas and methods taught and the applications of these ideas are often missing or inconsistently presented in class work

Class work is not prepared and/or presented on time or at all

Participates rarely or not at all in classroom critiques and/or discussions

Poor Attendance

Class Participation and Professionalism

20% of your grade for this class is based on your Participation and Professionalism in discussion and the physical explorations. Please see rubric below.

Work Expectations:

You will have to plan on reading, watching videos, and/or practicing your voice/acting exercises outside of class. A good general rule is to spend two to three hours studying—practicing, reading, taking notes, for each credit hour. Examples of how to manage your time include:

1 credit is 2-3 hours of homework outside of class / 2 credits is 4-6 hours of homework outside of class / 3 credits is 6-9 hours of homework outside of class

4 hours or 240 minutes of homework = 48 min of practice for 5 days a week

5 hours or 300 minutes of homework = 60 min of practice for 5 days a week

6 hours or 360 minutes of homework = 72 min of practice for 5 days a week

Classroom Behavior:

Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will study engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

Participation Assessment Rubric*

	HIGH QUALITY	COMPETENT	IMPROVEMENT NEEDED	SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT NEEDED
CONTRIBUTION	Student volunteers one or more insightful comments, questions, or observations in every (or almost every) class meeting. Arguments, claims, or positions are relevant to the topic and supported with evidence from the readings	Student usually volunteers at least one thoughtful comment, question, or observation per class meeting. Arguments, claims, or positions are usually relevant to the topic and mostly supported with evidence from the readings	Student volunteers a reasonable or thoughtful comment, question, or observation in some class meetings. Student sometimes does not volunteer or participate in discussion, though they may contribute when the instructor calls upon them. Arguments, claims, or positions are not entirely relevant to the topic	Student rarely or never volunteers a comment, question, or observation and/or comments are usually off-topic or unsupported by readings. Heavy reliance on opinion & personal taste, e.g., “I love it”, “I hate it”, “It’s bad” etc.
LISTENING	Student always listens to and makes collegial eye contact with peers or instructor whenever they are speaking or presenting. Always or nearly always responds to or productively builds upon peers’ comments or questions. Often reminds group of comments made by someone earlier that are pertinent.	Student usually listens to and makes collegial eye contact with peers or instructor when they are speaking or presenting. Usually responds to or productively builds upon peers’ comments or questions. Student is rarely distracted and is consistently attentive in class.	Student sometimes does not listen to or make collegial eye contact with peers or instructor when they are speaking or presenting. Only sometimes responds to or productively builds upon peers’ comments or questions.	Student often does not listen to or does not make collegial eye contact with peers or instructor when they are speaking or presenting. Rarely or never responds upon peers’ comments or questions. Student is often distracted or inattentive.
CONDUCT	Student shows respect for all classmates and instructor, both in speech and manner, and for the method of shared inquiry and peer discussion. Does not dominate discussion. Student challenges, critiques, or analyzes ideas respectfully, and encourages and supports others to do the same. Student always works with all classmates and instructor in a cooperative, professional, and supportive manner.	Student generally shows respect for all classmates and instructor and for the method of shared inquiry and peer discussion. Participates regularly in the discussion but occasionally has difficulty accepting challenges to their own ideas or occasionally may lack diplomacy or consideration when challenging or critiquing others’ ideas.	Student sometimes shows little respect for a classmate(s), the instructor, or the process as evidenced by speech and manner. Student may sometimes be uncooperative, apathetic, or unsupportive of other members of the class; may sometimes demonstrate rudeness, insensitivity, or lack of support or lack of consideration for other members of the class.	Student shows a lack of respect for members of the class or the process. Often dominates the discussion or disengages from the process. When contributing, can be argumentative or dismissive of others’ ideas, or may resort to ad hominem attacks.

*Participation rubric adapted from Relearning by Design, Inc., 2000 and Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, Carnegie Mellon University, 2022.