**VOCAL PERFORMANCE II: DIALECTS**

**SPRING 2015 – THEA 3311-001**

**Tuesday & Thursday, 8:00 – 9:20 a.m.**

Instructor: Julienne Greer, B.F.A., M.A., Ph.D.

Fine Arts Building, Room 143

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. or by appointment.

Office: 197A, Fine Arts Building, North

Email: **jgreer@uta.edu**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is intended to instruct acting students in the application and performance of a variety of U.S. and international dialects, accents, and regionalisms. Portions of the class will be dedicated to exercises that improve vocal tone, timbre, and flexibility as well as a fundamental understanding of the actor’s breathing apparatus. Emphasis will be placed on the integration of dialect work with performance techniques. Although the focus will be on the analysis and execution of dialects, a high level of acting performance technique is expected and encouraged.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course the student will:

* Demonstrate an accurate, objective analysis of his or her personal speech patterns.
* Demonstrate proficiency in a variety of accents utilizing them in a range of performances.
* Perform physical exercises in preparation of the actor’s body and voice.
* Interpret and analyze in written form use of dialect and regionalisms in a scholarly manner.
* Improve vocal quality, vocal variety, and expressive flexibility of meaning during class exercises and performances.
* Have a fundamental knowledge of phonetic symbols used to notate dialects in written form.
* Enable students to become more powerful communicators/storytellers through the art of voice and speech.
* Use Stanislavski’s system of acting for preparation and character development.

**REQUIRED TEXT**

*Accents: A Manual for Actors* by Robert Blumenfeld. Revised and Expanded Edition, with CDs. 2002.

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

* Voice Recorder.
* Writing materials to take notes.
* Recommended: ***Important:*** Laptop/Ipad – mobile device for access to Youtube or Vimeo during classtime.

**GRADING**

Grades represent these levels of achievement:

“A” Excellent Work - 90 - 100 % of points

“B” Good/Above Average Work - 80 - 89% of points

“C” Fair/Average Work - 70 - 79% of points

“D” Passing/Below Average Work - 60 - 69% of points

“F” Failure/Unsatisfactory Work - 59% of points or less

The grade of **C** is for students who fulfill all assignments, participate actively in discussion, and show regular and steady growth throughout the semester. To achieve a **B**, a student must do exceptional work, and the quality of the work must set a high standard for the rest of the class to follow. **A** is reserved for outstanding accomplishments –fulfilling the discipline of the assignment with skill, originality and personal vision.

Your grade will be based on the:

* Quality of work in the assignments listed below.
* Discipline and commitment shown in your promptness.
* Attendance.
* Preparation for class and exercises.
* Collaborative efforts.
* Alert participation in class critiques and discussions.

**Written:**

Critiques (3) 25 Points Each 75 Points

**Performance:**

Eight (8) in-class performances Pass/Fail

Three (3) Graded Scenes 50 Points Each 150 Points

Final Exam Performance 75 Points 75 Points

*Performance rubric is on Blackboard*

**TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS 300 POINTS**

[Scale: 300-270 pts. =A, 269-240 pts. = B, 239-210 pts. = C, 209-180 pts. = D, 179 or below= F]

Attendance: **Three excused or unexcused absences allowed. Sickness is an unexcused absence. Each subsequent absence your grade is lowered ONE FULL LETTER GRADE per absence. You must keep track of your absences.**

**POLICIES AND PRACTICES:**

1. Attendance: Regular attendance in class is required and is of primary importance. Your performances are not only those where you are in front of the class but also when you are performing the role of audience member and classmate. Grades shall be affected for repeated lateness to class and absences since a portion of this course is graded on attendance and participation. It is *the student’s responsibility* to make sure that the instructor has recorded the student’s attendance, especially if the student arrives after the class role is taken.
2. It is expected that you will be on time for class. In addition, it is expected that you remain for the entire session. The majority of work that you will be doing this semester is done in a master class-like format. You will learn by doing AND by watching. Late arrivals and early departures will affect not only your ability to receive the information but also that of your colleagues.
3. If you miss class because of illness *and* present a doctor’s statement attesting to your illness, then you may make up missed work. HOWEVER, it only means that you have used up one of your ALLOWED absences. It does NOT mean that you are allowed an “extra” absence besides the three (3) allowed before it begins to deduct final course grade points. ALL absences shall affect daily participation points.
4. Students who fail to meet class attendance requirements may be removed from acting, directing, design, and/or stage management positions for the current semester’s productions at the discretion of the department chair.
5. Assignments: Assignments turned in or performed late (after the class in which it is due), and which the instructor accepts, will be reduced by one full letter grade. Extra credit is NOT given in this course.
6. Classroom atmosphere: It is expected that you will be supportive to each of your colleagues in this class. The only way true progress can be made is if each of you feels “safe” trying new things and making mistakes. I will not tolerate behavior from anyone that upsets the “safety” of our work environment. Keep any negative personal feelings about your colleagues outside of the classroom. I will discuss in class how you can effectively discuss your colleague’s performances. It can be a very delicate situation and it is important for you to be conscientious in the way you handle your comments. The relationships you build with your colleagues will be vital to your success in the department and beyond. It will also be important to keep non-productive discussions and comments to a minimum.
7. Feedback: Keep in mind that each of you enters this class with different strengths and weaknesses. You will be evaluated on the progress you make and the skills you master. Your work will not be viewed in comparison to the abilities of your classmates. Should you have any concerns, I am available during my office hours or by appointment - please don’t hesitate to talk with me. Remember, I am commenting *on your work* NOT on you personally - you must learn to identify the difference between the two.
8. Health: Good physical and vocal health is necessary for successful performing. It is your responsibility to take good care of yourself so you will not miss your obligations.
9. Outside of Class: It is expected that you read any materials distributed or assigned as well as rehearse alone and with fellow classmates as necessary on classroom assignments. A three credit hour class requires 6 hours of work outside of class per week; this course is no exception.
10. Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student’s responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. Contact the Financial Aid Office for more information.
11. Final Review Week: A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabi. During Final Review week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week.
12. Americans With Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.
13. Academic Integrity: All students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code: *I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence. I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.* Instructors may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.
14. Student Support Services Available: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).
15. Electronic Communication Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University “MavMail” address as the SOLE means of communication with students. MavMail is used to remind students of important deadlines, advertise events and activities, and permit the University to conduct official transactions exclusively by electronic means. For example, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation are now sent to students through the MavMail system. All students are assigned a MavMail account. ***Students are responsible for checking their MavMail regularly.*** Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit.email/>.
16. **Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.
17. Finally, we will be approaching this class from a professional’s point of view. After all, that is what we are practicing to become. Out in the real world there is little room for “excuses.” This will be a very challenging class but should also be filled with discovery and fun.

**CALENDAR – VOCAL PERFORMANCE II: DIALECTS– Spring 2015**

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| **DATE** | **IN CLASS** | **Films/Projects Due** |
| January 20 | Introductions-Syllabus | *Downton Abbey/BBC America* |
| January 22 | Practice Exercises/Mouth Placement | *Gosford Park* |
| January 27 | Standard Upper-Class British/RP English | *Brideshead Revisited* |
| January 29 | Standard Upper-Class British/RP English | *Pride and Prejudice* |
| February 3 | **RP mono IN-CLASS PERFORMANCE** | *Secrets and Lies* |
| February 5 | General London and Cockney | *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels*  *Flushed Away* |
| February 10 | General London and Cockney | *Intermission* |
| February 12 | **Cockney mono IN-CLASS PERFORMANCE** | *Waking Ned Devine* |
| February 17 | Irish  **SIGN UP FOR SCENE #1** | *In the Name of the Father*(Belfast) |
| February 19 | Irish | *The Commitments* |
| February 24 | **Irish mono IN-CLASS PERFORMANCE** | **Critique #1 Due** |
| February 26 | **Scene with Accent Performance** | **SCENE #1 Graded Exercise** |
| March 3 | **Scene with Accent Performance** | **SCENE #1 Graded Exercise** |
| March 5 | Southern (rural/twang) | *Fried Green Tomatoes*  (Women) |
| March 17 | Southern (lilt) | *I Love You Philip Morris* (Men) |
| March 19 | **Southern mono IN-CLASS PERFORMANCE** | *Steel Magnolias* |
| March 24 | New York City | *Saturday Night Fever* |
| March 26 | New York City | *My Cousin Vinny/Donnie Brasco* |
| March 31 | **New York mono IN-CLASS PERFORMANCE** |  |
| April 2 | Black/African/Jamaican/Cajun/The Middle West  **SIGN UP FOR SCENE #2** | *Fargo****/****The Stick* (1987)  *Cool Runnings* |
| April 7 | Black/African/Jamaican/Cajun/The Middle West | *We are Cajun – documentary*  *Hotel Rwanda/The Last King of Scotland* |
| April 9 | Black/African/Jamaican/Cajun/The Middle West  **IN-CLASS PERFORMANCE** | **Critique #2 Due** |
| April 14 | **Scene with Accent Performance** | **SCENE #2 Graded Exercise** |
| April 16 | **Scene with Accent Performance** | **SCENE #2 Graded Exercise** |
| April 21 | Polish | *Sophie’s Choice* |
| April 23 | **Polish IN-CLASS PERFORMANCE**  **SIGN UP FOR SCENE #3** | *Green Card* |
| April 28 | French | *Ratatouille/The Da Vinci Code* |
| April 30 | **French IN-CLASS PERFORMANCE** | **Critique #3 Due** |
| May 5 | **Scene with Accent Performance** | **SCENE #3 Graded Exercise** |
| May 7 | **Scene with Accent Performance** | **SCENE #3 Graded Exercise** |
| **Tuesday, May 12** | **FINAL EXAM – 8:00 – 10:30 a.m.** | **Performance of Dialect Monologue** |

**\* This calendar is subject to change at the discretion of the professor.**

**CRITIQUES**

Over the course of the semester you will write three (3) two-plus (2+) page critiques of a film from the preceding column of examples focusing on the accents in the film. Students may pick another film or live stage production as approved by the instructor. A separate sheet will be passed out or placed on Blackboard with the paper’s requirements. The purpose of these written exercises is to assist you in formulating an analysis of dialect, vocal performance, and regionalisms as a structure to understand exemplary character work and performance on stage and in the cinema. You will be expected to apply terminology and analysis techniques learned in class and from the required text.

**Format: +2 pages, typed, double-spaced, separate cover sheet with name. Excellent writing, punctuation, and grammatical skills. Times New Roman 10-12 font.**

**IN-CLASS PERFORMANCES**

As each dialect is mastered there will be an eight (8) in-class performances of the selected dialect. The performance will consist of a short monologue that ***each member*** of the class will perform. The monologues will be on Blackboard. The monologue must be **MEMORIZED**. The monologue will be graded Pass/Fail. A rubric will be on blackboard to determine the grade. All students must pass at least five (5) monologues or their grade will fall by one full letter grade.

**GRADED SCENES**

There are three (3) graded scenes. Scenes are selected by the student. Scene partners are selected by the student. Students are highly encouraged to change scene partners each scene. Scenes may be from stage or screenplays. Scenes are between 3 – 5 minutes long. Scenes are completely **MEMORIZED**. A grade rubric for scenes is on Blackboard. Students are graded on both dialect and acting work.

**Final Exam – Tuesday, May 12th, 8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.**

The final exam is a performance-based exam of a 1-2 minute monologue of the student’s choice. The work must be new. An effort to provide costuming, staging, set, performance notes, and props should be made. All actors must STAY for the entire exam period.