

# Syllabus:

## MUSA 1285 Individual Instruction – Voice

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University of Texas at El Paso, Department of Music  
Spring 2020

### Mr. Brian Downen, Assistant Professor of Voice

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Office Hours: by appointment

### Prerequisite

Passing 4 semesters of MUSA 1195 and successfully passing the barrier jury

### Course Description

The study of “classical” vocal technique and the application of that technique in specific vocal repertoire. Additional study in historical and genre-specific performance practice and in critical listening skills for self and peer assessment.

### Course Content

Student shall:

- Independently practice assigned vocal exercises specifically designed to promote vocal growth and a better understanding of the fundamental concepts of classical vocal technique.
- Independently prepare and memorize assigned vocal repertoire in line with the guidelines outlined in the UTEP Vocal Division Handbook for each major and level of study.
  - For all repertoire:
    - Learn and memorize assigned repertoire with accuracy of pitch, rhythm, diction, appropriate vocal style and musical expression.
    - Research the composer, poet or lyricist, historical period and context of the piece.
    - Study several recordings performed by recognized professionals in the genre of each piece using sources such as YouTube, Spotify, Rhapsody, etc.
    - Obtain and type (using Microsoft Word or similar) a literal (non poetic) line-by-line English translation in a side-by-side format with the original text for use in study, presentation in studio class and for use in recital and concert programs. (example attached)
      - Resources
        - IPASource.com (English translations and IPA)(available free when using a UTEP owned computer)
        - Aria-database.com (Synopsis and translations of operatic arias)(free)
        - Nico Castel Opera Libretti (English translations and IPA for complete operas)(available at UTEP main Library)
        - The Fischer Dieskau Book of Lieder (English translations of German lieder.) (available in Mr. Downen’s office)

- The Ring of Words (English translations of art songs and arias)(Philip Lieson Miller) (available at UTEP main library ML54.6.M5R5 1973)
- Phonetic Readings of Songs and Arias (Berton Coffin) (available at UTEP main library ML54.6.W65 v.1)
  - Write the literal (not poetic) line-by-line translation and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols for the text into your music. (IPA only for repertoire in English) (example attached).
  - Write the original language with literal (non-poetic) line-by-line translation below (except for repertoire in English) and International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols above in your studio journal. (example attached)
- For repertoire from a musical or an opera the student will also:
  - Obtain and study a synopsis of the complete work.
  - Research the character and understand who he/she is in the context of the work.
  - Research the scene to which the piece belongs.
- For pop, jazz or rock repertoire:
  - Study several recordings, arrangements and remakes of the song, using sources such as YouTube, Spotify, Rhapsody, etc.
- Perform all assigned repertoire to a level acceptable for professional presentation with accuracy of pitch, rhythm, text, diction and with appropriate vocal style and dramatic expression appropriate for the piece.
- Evaluate self- and peer-performances with appropriate terminology and constructive commentary, in person and in writing.

## Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are to enhance the student's ability to:

- Develop consistent mastery of the primary vocal concepts of respiration, phonation, resonance.
- Develop appropriate posture for singing.
- Develop and utilize research skills in order to adequately prepare a piece of music for study and performance.
- Develop and utilize efficient practice skills.
- Develop the skills necessary to combine technical and expressive qualities of singing to create an artistically fulfilling performance.
- Objectively assess their own performances and those of their peers through in-person discussion and written essay.

## Course Outcomes

At the completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Effectively vocalize to balance the voice and body in preparation for practice or performance.
- Identify and utilize specific vocal exercises in order to promote vocal growth.
- Perform 5-7 songs from memory, including one each in English, Spanish, Italian, French and German, from a variety of genres and styles with accuracy of pitch, rhythm, diction, appropriate tone quality and musical expression.
- Use objective criticism to evaluate personal performances and performances of peers in order to inform their own artistic progress.

## Course Requirements

- Attend all scheduled lessons.
- Audio or video record all lessons on a portable device (i.e., cell phone)
- Review your personal recording of each lesson, taking note of assigned vocalises, corrections made in music, etc.
- Practice 1–2 hours daily in order to master vocal exercises assigned in lessons and to study and learn assigned repertoire. Total practice per week: 7–9 hours.
- Record all practice on the reverse side of your weekly assignment page provided by Mr. Downen.
- Perform 5-7 songs from memory, including one each in English, Spanish, Italian, French and German, from a variety of genres and styles with accuracy of pitch, rhythm, diction, appropriate tone quality and musical expression.
- Maintain a research journal for each assigned piece that includes your three- line text translations into English and IPA, synopsis, character analysis, acting notes and student's own thoughts about the text, music, recordings listened to, arrangements, ideas for performance, and the emotional or theatrical landscape of the piece.
- Perform at least once on Voice Area Recital.
- Attendance at and performing on studio classes is strongly recommended.
- Perform a jury for the voice faculty at the end of the semester. This is the final exam for the course and will be graded based on criteria found in the Vocal Area Handbook.

## Materials and Personal Equipment

- Three ring binder
  - One for you in which you keep your assigned music and related materials
- 2 copies of each assigned piece.
  - One for your binder
  - One for your accompanist
- Research Journal (composition notebook)
- Audio or Video recording device (iPhone or similar okay)
- A copy of the International Phonetic Alphabet pronunciation guide for English, Spanish, Italian, French and German
- Access to the Internet

## Technology Requirement for Virtual Lessons

- Stable Internet Connection (preferably wired with Ethernet cable)
- Laptop computer or tablet (phones are not conducive to a good lesson)
- I-phone or similar to store and play your accompaniment tracks
- Bluetooth speaker or similar to amplify your accompaniment tracks
- USB microphone for best sound quality
- Skype account (free)

## Accompanists

Students are expected to retain the services of a qualified pianist to produce accompaniment recordings of their repertoire for use in practice, lessons and area recital. Students may also use accompaniment applications such as Appcompanionist or accompaniment files from YouTube.

## Grading

Grades are based on the following criteria:

- 30%: Weekly lesson grades
  - Attendance (see attendance policy below)
  - Arrival with voice in teachable condition
  - Active Participation in the lesson
  - Completion of assignments (i.e., text translations and IPA work)
- 30%: Evidence of weekly practice:
  - Mastery of assigned exercises and concepts
  - Preparation of assigned repertoire and ability to sing it with accompaniment
  - Completion of weekly practice log located on the reverse of each week's assignment sheet provided by Mr. Downen
- 10%: Written Work
  - Completion and quality of research journal
- 30%: Jury Grade
  - Average of grades assigned by the Voice Area faculty.

NOTE: No automatic withdrawals will be given by the instructor.

## Incomplete Grade Policy

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

## Attendance Policy

- Students are required to attend 14 one-hour (50-minute) lessons or 28 half hour (25-minute) lessons each semester. Lessons will be scheduled at the beginning of the semester and constitute a class that meets weekly at the same time. The instructor will determine whether the student takes one 50-minute lesson or two 25-minute lessons per week.

## Absences

- Students are permitted one absence per semester without grade penalty. More than one absence, no matter the reason, will reflect poorly on your grade.

## ⊗ Lateness

- The student forfeits the lesson if they arrive more than 10 minutes late for a 25-minute lesson or more than 15 minutes late for a 50-minute lesson.

## Lesson Cancellation Policy

- Notify Mr. Downen as soon as possible, but no later than 9:00 a.m. the day of your lesson. Email or text Mr. Downen.

## Make-up Lesson Policy

- Lessons missed by Mr. Downen will be made up.
- Lessons missed or cancelled by the student will be made up at the discretion of Mr. Downen. However, lessons cancelled by the student that are made up, will not negate the absence policy.

## Communication

- Student will communicate with Mr. Downen by email, or when time is of the essence or in case of emergency, by text message or phone call. Be sure that you receive confirmation from Mr. Downen that your message has been received.
- Mr. Downen will communicate with the student by email. It is the responsibility of the student to check their UTEP email twice daily. If time is of the essence or in case of emergency, communication will be by text message or by phone call.

## Concert Attendance

- Students are expected to attend all choral music concerts and one performance of each Opera UTEP production.
- Students are expected to attend all voice recitals.

## Area and Departmental Recitals Attendance Policy

1. All students enrolled in Applied Lessons must attend a minimum of twelve (12) Area and Departmental recitals which take place every Friday at 1:30 p.m. in the Department of Music. **Failing to attend twelve (12) required recitals will result in lowering Applied Lessons' final grade by one letter.**
2. Make up absences are accomplished by attending UTEP Music Department concerts and recitals. Non-University recitals such as El Paso Music Forum, El Paso Symphony, El Paso Wind Symphony, and Pro-Musica as well as any other performances given by our faculty and guests will be accepted.
3. To receive credit for the make-up, a student must attend a music event. The program must be signed by a music faculty member who attended the same event. The program must be brought to the Music Office to record the attendance. Student name and ID# must be on the program. Without this information students will not receive credit.
4. It is the student's responsibility to turn in the signed programs to the main office by 5 p.m. on Friday's Finals week. There will be no exceptions.
5. Students must sign the makeup sheet every time they turn in a program. At the end, the office must have both, the program with the student's information and their signature matching the date. There will be no exceptions.
6. Please note: When a single area recital is cancelled, students will need to replace the cancelled recital by either going to a different area recital held at the same time or turning in a makeup recital.
7. At the end of the semester, all students will have the same number of expected recitals.

## Extracurricular Performance Policy

According to the UTEP Vocal Area Handbook, all performance and/or coaching opportunities outside the UTEP Vocal Area should be discussed with Mr. Downen before accepting. This includes: UTEP Dinner Theater, Theatre Department productions, professional choirs, master classes with guest artists or local teachers.

## Vocal Health

Effective practice is very important in order to progress toward your vocal and performance potential. However, excessive practice or singing in excess of two hours per day can be counterproductive and dangerous to your vocal health. Listen to your body. Give yourself appropriate rest periods. Hydrate, do not smoke, avoid overuse of caffeine and alcohol, get adequate sleep, stay healthy and do not abuse your voice (i.e., talking over loud environments, yelling at sporting events or concerts, etc.).

## Accommodations Policy

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the [UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, or email them at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or apply for accommodations online via the [CASS portal](#).

## Scholastic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution \(OSCCR\)](#) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

## Class Recordings

The use of recordings will enable you to have access to your lessons. Our use of such technology is governed by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and UTEP's acceptable-use policy. A recording of class sessions will be kept and stored by UTEP, in accordance with FERPA and UTEP policies. Your instructor will not share the recordings of your lessons outside of course participants, **You may not share recordings outside of this course.**

## Covid-19 Precautions

You must STAY AT HOME and REPORT if you

- have been diagnosed with COVID-19,
- are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or
- have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test.

Reports should be made at [screening.utep.edu](http://screening.utep.edu). If you know of anyone who should report any of these three criteria, you should encourage them to report. If the individual cannot report, you can report on their behalf by sending an email to [COVIDaction@utep.edu](mailto:COVIDaction@utep.edu).

For each day that you attend campus—for any reason—you must complete the questions on the UTEP screening website ([screening.utep.edu](http://screening.utep.edu)) prior to arriving on campus. The website will verify if you are permitted to come to campus. Under no circumstances should anyone come to class when feeling ill or exhibiting any of the known COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, and alternative instruction will be provided. Students are advised to minimize the number of encounters with others to avoid infection.

Wear face coverings when in common areas of campus or when others are present. You must wear a face covering over your nose and mouth and a face shield that attaches to a baseball cap at all times in this class. If you choose not to wear a face covering, you may not enter the classroom. If you remove your face covering, you will be asked to put it on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear a face covering and follow preventive COVID-19 guidelines will be dismissed from the class and will be subject to disciplinary action according to Section 1.2.3 *Health and Safety* and Section 1.2.2.5 *Disruptions* in the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures.

*(classes with on-campus meetings)* Please note that if COVID-19 conditions deteriorate in the City of El Paso, all course and lab activities may be transitioned to remote delivery.

## Utep Services And Support

### Technology Resources

- [Help Desk](#): Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.

### Academic Resources

- [UTEP Library](#): Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- [University Writing Center \(UWC\)](#): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
- [Math Tutoring Center \(MaRCS\)](#): Ask a tutor for help and explore other available math resources.
- [History Tutoring Center \(HTC\)](#): Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.
- [RefWorks](#): A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.

### Individual Resources

- [Military Student Success Center](#): Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.
- [Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#): Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#): Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.