

MUSA 1285 Individual Instruction – Voice

Spring 2023: CRN: 21402

Mr. Brian Downen, Associate Professor of Voice

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Office Hours: M/W/F 10:30-11:20 a.m. or by appointment

Prerequisite

Successful audition for the voice faculty

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 Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students will be able to:

- Demonstrate considerable improvement in the mastery of the primary vocal concepts of alignment, respiration, phonation and resonance.
- Utilize research in order to adequately prepare a piece of music for study and performance.
- Practice efficiently
- Demonstrate considerable improvement in combining 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.
- Perform 5-7 songs including one each in English, Spanish, Italian, German and French 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.
 - IMPORTANT: In the third semester of MUSA 3295 Music Education majors must perform a recital consisting of 8 songs and 25 minutes of music, that includes music in all major style periods and in at least the five languages of English, Spanish, Italian, German and French. In the fourth semester of MUSA 3295 Commercial Music Majors must perform a recital of 16 songs or 50 minutes of music largely devoted to commercial repertoire.

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 & 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. This includes repertoire in English and Spanish.
 - Write the original language with literal (non-poetic) line-by-line translation below (except for repertoire in English and Spanish, if you are fluent) 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 Requirements

- Attend all scheduled lessons.
- Audio or video record all lessons.
- 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 page 2 of your weekly assignment page provided by Mr. Downen.

- Perform 5-7 songs including one each in English, Spanish, Italian, German and French 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.
 - IMPORTANT: In the third semester of MUSA 3295 Music Education majors must perform a recital consisting of 8 songs and 25 minutes of music, that includes music in all major style periods and in at least the five languages of English, Spanish, Italian, German and French. In the fourth semester of MUSA 3295 Commercial Music Majors must perform a recital of 16 songs or 50 minutes of music largely devoted to commercial repertoire.
- 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 your 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.
- Attending and performing on studio classes is strongly recommended.
- Perform at least 3 pieces of semester's repertoire from memory on a mid-term exam lesson.
- 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 Voice Area Handbook.

Materials and Personal Equipment

- Copies of your music either in a three-ring binder or on a tablet large enough for you to read.
- 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
- Accompaniment recordings of all of your repertoire for use in lessons and recital.

Accompanists

You are expected to retain the services of a qualified pianist at your own expense to play for the second half of each voice lesson. You are also expected to rehearse with your accompanist for one half hour each week for a one-hour commitment per week.

Grading

Grades are based on the following criteria:

- 40%: 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)
- 40%: 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 2nd page of each week's assignment sheet provided by Mr. Downen
- 20%: Mid-Term Exam (sing 3 pieces of assigned repertoire from memory with accompaniment in the lesson the week of March 13) (If student competes in the Rio Grande NATS conference with new repertoire, the mid-term exam is waived.)

Course Communication

We will primarily communicate with each other by email, using our UTEP email addresses. It is your responsibility to check your UTEP email at least twice per day. I will try to reply within 24 hours and I ask you to reply to me likewise. If time is of the essence, you may send me a text message.

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.

Drop Policy

If you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the [Registrar's Office](#) to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an "F" for the course.

Incomplete Grade Policy

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

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.

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

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, 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](#).

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.