

# MUSA 5391 Individual Instruction – Voice

Fall 2023: CRN: 12935

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

Enrollment as a graduate music major and successful audition for the 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.

Learning to sing well is a process that can seem mysterious and frustrating at its worst, and incredibly simple, and a source of great joy at its best. My job is to guide, teach and provide resources to you that will allow you to develop your talent to its fullest potential. Your job is to commit fully to the development of your instrument. Your active and committed participation in this collaboration will be critical to your success.

## Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

As a result of our collaboration, you will present your assigned repertoire by memory on studio classes, area recitals, juries, and other performances demonstrating...

- Correct pitches and rhythm *leading to* proficiency as a musician
- Fluent execution of diction *leading to* a knowledge of numerous music cultures
- Musical and artistic presentation *leading to* transformation from singer to artist
- Well-developed dramatic interpretation *leading to* affecting people with your art
- Vocal mastery of the music *leading to* artistic freedom and the ability to teach others

## Repertoire Guidelines

Semester of study	Number of Selections	Languages Explored
Semesters 1 & 3	7-9 selections in contrasting styles from the classical repertoire	English, Italian, Spanish, French and German
Semester 2	Graduate Recital 1 (16 selections or 50 minutes of music from the classical repertoire)	English, Italian, Spanish, French and German
Semester 4	Graduate Capstone Recital (16 selections or 50 minutes of music from the classical repertoire, including chamber music.	English, Italian, Spanish, French and German

## Student Responsibilities

- Independently practice assigned vocal exercises specifically designed to promote vocal growth and a better understanding of the fundamental concepts of classical vocal technique.
- For all assigned repertoire:
  - Learn and memorize assigned repertoire with accurate pitches, 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, etc.

- Obtain and type (using Microsoft Word or similar) a literal (not 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)
- Write the literal (not poetic) line-by-line translation and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols for the text into your music for any language in which you are not fluent.
- Write the original language with literal (not poetic) line-by-line translation below (for any language in which you are not fluent), and International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols above in your studio journal. (example attached)
- For repertoire from a musical or an opera:
  - Obtain and read 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, etc.

## 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. Not all practice is singing!
- Record all practice on page 2 of your weekly assignment page provided by Mr. Downen.
- 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 twice on Voice Area Recital.
- Attend weekly studio classes and perform at least twice.
- 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 and to Blackboard

## 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:

- 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 2<sup>nd</sup> page of each week's assignment sheet provided by Mr. Downen
- 20%: Mid-Term Exam (sing 4 pieces of assigned repertoire from memory with accompaniment in the lesson the week of October 16)
- 20%: Jury Grade
  - Average of the grades assigned by the Voice Area faculty. In recital semesters, the jury grade will be replaced by a grade for the recital hearing.

## 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 scheduled at the beginning of the semester and constitute a class that meets once per week at the same time.

### 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 canceled by the student will be made up at the discretion of Mr. Downen. However, lessons canceled 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

An incomplete 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.

## Area and Departmental Recital Attendance Policy

1. All students enrolled in Applied Lessons must attend a minimum of twelve (12) Area and Departmental recitals scheduled every Friday at 1:30 p.m., in the Department of Music. **Failing to attend twelve (12) required recitals will lower the student's final Applied Lesson grade by one letter.** Students are responsible for signing in at each recital electronically. Students arriving late, or leaving early may have their attendance voided.
2. When a single area recital is canceled, students must either attend a different area recital held at the same time or attend a makeup event (see makeup procedures, below).

## Recital Makeup Procedures

1. Students may make up Area and Departmental recital absences by attending UTEP Music Department concerts and recitals. Non-university concerts such as El Paso Opera, El Paso Symphony, El Paso Wind Symphony, and El Paso Pro-Musica, as well as any other performances given by our faculty and guests, will be accepted.
2. To receive credit for UTEP Music events with *electronic programs*, the student must complete the online **recital makeup form**, available by hyperlink within the electronic program.
  - To receive credit for events with physical *paper programs*, the student's program must be **signed at the conclusion of the event by a music faculty member in attendance.**
  - The student must submit the signed program with their name and ID number clearly written on the front page to the Music Office (M301). The student must also **sign the makeup log.** Without this information, the student will not receive credit. There will be no exceptions.
  - The deadline to turn in signed programs **to the Music Office is Friday of finals week at 5:00 p.m.** There will be no exceptions.
3. Students are responsible for knowing how many recitals they have or have not received credit for attending. Students may check their recital attendance by visiting the Music Office.

## 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](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 one's 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](#).

## Music Translation and IPA 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)

## 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.
- [The Miner Learning Center](#): Join peer-led study sessions in person or online to review content and discover study strategies in core curriculum courses.
- [UTEP Edge](#): UTEP's cross-campus framework for student success and empowerment – develops students' assets through high-impact experiences made possible by the expertise and dedication of faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners.

## Individual Resources

- [Student Success Help Desk \(SSHD\)](#): Students experiencing challenges or obstacles to academic success including registration, financial, food, housing, and transportation resources may submit a ticket request assistance to [studentsuccess@utep.edu](mailto:studentsuccess@utep.edu)
- [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.
- [UTEP Food Pantry](#): Non-perishable food items are available to students who are currently enrolled in classes. Bring a Miner Gold Card to Memorial Gym, Room 105, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.