

# MUSA 5391 Individual Instruction – Voice

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Fall 2024: CRN: 12251

## Mr. Brian Downen, Associate Professor of Voice

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Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday, 10:30 a.m. -11:20 a.m., Friday, 11:00-11:20 a.m., or by appointment

## Prerequisite

Enrollment as a graduate music major and the performance of a successful placement audition for the voice faculty

## Course Description

The study of traditional classical vocal technique and the application of that technique in the performance of vocal repertoire from various periods and styles, and in multiple languages. There may be additional studies on historical and genre-specific performance practice and critical listening skills for self-and peer assessment.

## To Ensure Success in the Course

- Attend all lessons
- Rehearse weekly with your pianist
- Master technical skills through regular practice
- Accurately learn and memorize assigned repertoire
- Know the word-for-word translation of foreign language texts from memory
- Thoroughly research the composer, poet, or librettist, derivative work (opera/musical/oratorio), the character, and the historical context of your repertoire
- Combine the above elements into artistic performances commensurate with your academic level

**My job** is to guide, teach, and provide you with resources to develop your talent to its fullest potential.

**Your job** is to commit fully to the development of your instrument and the learning of your repertoire. 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 perform your assigned repertoire from memory in studio classes, area recitals, juries, and other performances with...

correct pitches and rhythms	<i>leading toward</i>	<i>basic</i> proficiency as a musician
fluent execution of diction	<i>leading toward</i>	clear communication of text
vocal mastery of the music	<i>leading toward</i>	a stylistically appropriate sound
good phrasing and dynamics	<i>leading toward</i>	<i>advanced</i> proficiency as a musician
compelling dramatic expression	<i>leading toward</i>	transformation from singer to artist

## 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 MUSA 5388	Graduate Recital 1 (16 selections or 50 minutes of music from the classical repertoire)	English, Italian, Spanish, French and German
Semester 4 MUSA 5388	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

- Attend all scheduled lessons.
- Audio or video record all lessons.
- Review the recording of each lesson, taking note of assigned vocalises, corrections made in music, etc.
- Practice and study for 1–2 hours daily to master vocal exercises assigned in lessons and to master the assigned repertoire.
- Total practice per week: 7–9 hours. Not all practice is singing!
- Perform at least twice on Voice Area Recital.
- Attend weekly studio classes and perform at least twice.
- Perform at least 3 pieces of the 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.

### For all assigned repertoire:

- Learn and memorize assigned repertoire (songs) with accurate pitches, rhythm, diction, appropriate style with level-appropriate technical skill, and musical and dramatic expression.
- Create a journal containing:
  - Written research on the composers, poets or lyricists, and historical period
  - A three-line word-for-word translation (not poetic) with accompanying IPA symbols (example attached).
  - Any other journaling you create concerning the piece, (i.e., character study, thoughts about your learning process, notes from your lesson recordings, etc.)
- In your music, write the word-for-word (not poetic) translation of the text and the IPA transcription above or below the original text.
- In Microsoft Word, create a side-by-side translation document, following this procedure: (example attached)
  - Create a two or three-column table with multiple rows.
  - Input each line of the original text with all diacritical markings in a separate cell of column one.
  - Input the corresponding literal (not poetic) line-by-line English translation for each line into the cells in column two.
  - If you are also translating into Spanish, input the corresponding Spanish word-for-word translation (not poetic) for each line in the cells in column three.

- Save a separate document for each song.
- This will be for use in memorizing poetry, its translation into your first language, and in degree recital programs.
- Study several recordings performed by recognized professionals in the genre of each piece using sources such as YouTube, Spotify, etc.

*For repertoire from a musical or an opera, also:*

- 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.

## 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 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 pianist for one half hour each week. Thus, you will have a one-hour commitment per week with your pianist.

## Grading

Grades are based on the following criteria:

### 30%: Weekly lesson grades

- Attendance (see attendance policy below)
- Arrival with your 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

### 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.

## 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 a 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 by email or text message, but no later than 9:00 a.m. on the day of your lesson.

### 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 Office of Registration and Records 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.

## Vocal Health

Effective practice is very important to progress toward your vocal and performance potential. However, excessive practice or singing more than 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. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, email them at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.”

For more information, please visit: <https://www.utep.edu/titleix/pregnancy-and-parenting.html>

## 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 Community Standards](#) 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 for free when using a UTEP-owned computer
- ***Aria-database.com*** (synopsis & translations of operatic arias)
- ***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*** by Philip Lieson Miller (English translations of art songs and arias): available at UTEP main library ML54.6.M5R5 1973
- ***Phonetic Readings of Songs and Arias*** by Berton Coffin: available at UTEP main library ML54.6.W65 v.1

## Technology Resources

[UTEP Technology Support](#): Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Help Desk for assistance. Contact the Help Desk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus. (915) 747-HELP or [helpdesk@utep.edu](mailto:helpdesk@utep.edu).

## Academic Resources

- [University 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 \(SSHHD\)](#): Students experiencing challenges or obstacles to academic success including registration, financial, food, housing, and transportation resources may request assistance at [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.