

## Cherry Duke, Instructor

Fox Fine Arts Center, M442  
(915) 747-6220 office  
(917) 312-5598 mobile  
[ccduke@utep.edu](mailto:ccduke@utep.edu)  
[www.cherryduke.com](http://www.cherryduke.com)

## University of Texas at El Paso

**Office Hours:**  
By appointment.

## Prerequisites

Placement audition for voice faculty.

## Course Description

This course is designed to enhance students' ability to use their singing voices in the healthiest and most efficient manner possible, to advance their communication and performance skills, develop their knowledge of vocal pedagogy, and to expand their knowledge of vocal literature.

Vocal performance as a means of artistic communication is emphasized and will be tailored to the individual student's goals, whether those goals are vocational or recreational.

## Course Materials

- Pencil with eraser, highlighter marker, and water, as you should take to any rehearsal.
- 3 copies of each assigned piece (one for self, one for accompanist and one for instructor).
  - Provide a 3-ring binder with copies your assigned music for instructor, who will keep it in the studio.
  - Keep your own copies of music organized in a 3-ring binder (your "lesson binder"), where you will also keep your lesson forms, copies of exercises, song research, translations, etc. Bring this to every lesson.
  - Ask your pianist how they prefer to receive your music (in a binder, single-sided vs. double sided, etc.).
  - Be sure your photocopies are clear and legible, and include ALL the notes and words.
- Any purchased music anthologies you were asked to buy for each semester. You will only be asked to purchase one per semester, however you may choose to supplement your own musical library with more.
- Metronome (there's an app for that).
- Bring all your assigned music, lesson forms, program notes, translations, and character analysis to every lesson. Just keep all that in your lesson binder.
- It is your responsibility to contract a pianist to play for the second half of your lessons as well as your recital and jury performances. See section called "Pianist" on page 3.

## Course Content

*Student shall:*

- **Independently practice** assigned vocal exercises/vocalizes specifically designed to promote vocal growth and a better understanding of the fundamental concepts of vocal technique.
- **Independently prepare** and memorize assigned vocal repertoire.
  - For all repertoire:
    - Learn and memorize assigned music and text with accuracy of pitch, rhythm, diction, appropriate vocal style and dramatic expression.
    - Research the composer, poet or lyricist, historical period and context of the piece as it was originally performed.
  - For repertoire in a language other than those spoken fluently by the student:
    - Obtain and write a literal (not poetic) line-by-line/word-for-word translation into *all* copies of the music. It is also helpful to write the paraphrased meaning of each line into the music. Keep this in your lesson binder.

- Write pronunciation (ideally using International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols) for the text in your copy of the music.
  - For repertoire from a dramatic work (musical, opera, film or oratorio):
    - Obtain and study a synopsis of the work.
    - If possible, watch a video of a staging or movie of the entire work.
    - Research the character and understand who he/she is in the context of the story.
    - Research the scene to which the piece belongs.
  - For pop, jazz or rock repertoire:
    - Study as many recordings, arrangements and remakes of the song as one can find, using sources such as YouTube, Spotify, recordings available in UTEP libraries, etc.
- **Perform** the assigned vocal repertoire to a level acceptable for public presentation with accuracy of pitch, rhythm, diction and with dramatic expression appropriate for the piece.
- **Listen** to, discuss, and write about recordings by professional singers.
- **Attend** all lessons, as well as weekly studio and recital classes.

## Course Goals

---

*The goals of this course are to help the student to:*

- Sing with confidence, efficiency and a healthy, beautiful tone.
- Identify, discuss and demonstrate consistent practice of the primary vocal concepts of posture, respiration, phonation and resonance.
- 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 listening skills.
- Develop the skills necessary to combine technical and expressive qualities of singing to create an artistically fulfilling performance.
- Identify, discuss, and demonstrate consistent practice of essential performance skills including character/mood development and presentation, and recital/jury etiquette.
- Objectively assess their own performances and those of their peers through in-person discussion and written essay.
- Develop organizational skills necessary for the performing artist.

## 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 assigned songs from memory with accuracy of pitch, rhythm, diction, appropriate tone quality and musical expression.
- Critique self and others verbally and writing.

## Course Requirements

---

*In order to achieve these objectives, the student will:*

### Practice & Study

- Listen and/or watch recordings of your lessons at least three times, preferably *daily*, before the next lesson.
  - Audio and/or video record every lesson with your smartphone or other device.
- Practice a **minimum** of 30 minutes *daily* outside of the weekly lesson to keep consistency in your voice. A minimum of 1 hour daily is recommended for improvement beyond simple consistency.
  - Log your practice using the form provided in each lesson. Return the completed practice form to your professor at your next lesson.
  - Divide your practices into a portion for working on vocalization exercises assigned in lessons and a portion for studying and learning assigned repertoire. Assign some practice time for just experimentation.
  - Total suggested practice per week: 7–10 hours.
- Prepare and memorize 3–5 songs for performance on area/departmental recital as well as studio class and juries. Refer to Voice Area handbook for specific repertoire requirements.

- Read assigned materials on singing and related concepts.
- Listen to/watch recommended singers and performances on YouTube, Spotify, etc.

## Written Work

For each assigned piece, turn in a copy (and keep a copy printed in your music binder) of the following *before* you work on a song in your lesson:

- 1) **Pronunciation & Translation** (write into your music):
  - a) Phonetic transcription (International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) preferred), above lyrics.
  - b) Word-by-word translations into English (and/or Spanish if needed).
- 2) **Program Notes\*** *to be kept in lesson binder with songs*, including:
  - a) Synopsis of song (“What is this song about?”).
  - b) Poem/lyrics written out (with poetic translation) separate from the music, in two columns, like you would see in a recital program. (See attached example.)
  - c) Biography of composer.
  - d) Biography of poet/lyricist.

\* See example included in this syllabus.
- 3) Personal research (to be kept in your lesson binder or in a journal) including character analysis; your own thoughts about each poem, the music and/or the arrangement; ideas for performance; and the emotional landscape of the piece.

## Performance

Students will perform material from their solo (lesson) repertoire at least 2 times each semester (see below). This can be accomplished by singing on a studio/master class, performing at NATS, as a soloist on a choir concert, in departmental/area recital, church services and Opera Workshop performances. *You must work on the piece you will perform at least twice in lessons for it to count towards a required performance.*

## Attendance

1. Attend all scheduled lessons (see attendance policy below).
2. Attend all scheduled studio classes and perform as assigned.

## Pianist

- Students are required to hire a pianist at their own expense to attend the *last* half of each voice lesson, beginning at the latest during the second full lesson of each semester. This is to ensure student can work on required repertoire with appropriate accompaniment, enabling the instructor to focus on your vocal technique and style.
- Students are further expected to work with their pianist a minimum of one additional half hour each week on their assigned repertoire.
- You alone are responsible for paying your pianist on time, according to the schedule you agreed to with them. Pianists who are owed money will opt not to play juries. It is unacceptable to hire a different pianist to avoid paying one you owe.

## Concert Attendance

Observation of your peers and professionals in your field is one of the surest ways to improve your perspective and musicianship. To that end, you should attend:

1. All choral music concerts and at least one performance of each of the Opera Workshop productions.
2. At least 3 outside professional-level concerts of varying genres and at least one concert should be classical.
3. All recitals of fellow Duke Studio members, and have a faculty member in attendance sign your program.

## Final Exam

Perform a jury for the voice faculty.

## Evaluation

---

*Grades will be based on the following criteria: (Scale: 90-100% = A; 80-89% = B; 70-79% = C; 60-69% = D; 0-59% = F)*

### 50%: Weekly lesson grades

- *Attendance* and punctuality (see attendance policy below).

- *Execution* (includes evidence of having worked with your pianist, and ensuring your pianist is present at lessons as required).
- *Practice* (evidence of regular and consistent practice, and logged on Lesson Form/Practice Plan which must be turned in at every lesson).
- *Assignments*: completion/mastery of assigned exercises, concepts and other assignments.

### 25%: Written and other assignments

- Program notes turned in before working on song in lesson.
- Completion and quality of research, including journal, translations, composer biography, IPA in music, etc.
- Listening assignments.
- Concert attendance

### 25%: Jury Grade

- Average of grades assigned by the voice area faculty.

## Studio Policies

---

### Studio Class: Fridays from 2:30–4pm

1. Weekly studio class provides necessary performance opportunities and additional time to explore performance-related technical and acting issues.
2. All students will split the cost of the pianist for the class. Exact cost to be determined by number of students, and should be nominal (around \$25).
3. If Recital Class runs late, Studio Class will start late and run the full time period.
4. If Recital Class ends early, Studio Class will still start at 2:30.
5. Location of class will be posted on the studio schedule, on the instructor's door.

### Lesson Attendance

1. Students are expected to **arrive physically and mentally ready and able to sing at the designated start time**, with all materials and assignments. Since much of the learning and course work is accomplished during lesson time, attendance and engagement are critical to your success. If you know this will be difficult for you, please discuss this with me ahead of time.
2. Lessons will be scheduled at the beginning of the semester and constitute a class that meets weekly at the same time.
3. Occasionally, your teacher may need to reschedule your weekly lesson. Be sure to mark your personal calendar and notify your pianist.

### Absences & Tardies

1. One absence per semester is allowed, regardless of the reason. All other absences will impact your lesson grade.
2. If you are sick, contagious and/or unable to sing, do not come to your lesson.
3. If you are more than 10 minutes late, the lesson will be forfeited and recorded as an absence.
4. If you are tardy, that does not mean you will get extra time at the end to make up for your lateness.

### Lesson Cancellation

- If you must cancel your lesson, contact your teacher as soon as possible, but **no later than 8:00 a.m. on the day of your lesson**.

### Make-up Lessons

- Make-up lessons are not guaranteed, and may be offered at the teacher's discretion.

### Communication

Please communicate with your teacher by phone, text or email. When time is of the essence, call or send a text message. *If you do not receive a reply, follow up* using a different method of communication until you know your message was received.

Official communications from your teacher will be sent to your university email account. Please check this account twice daily. (I can show you how to set it up on your smartphone.) *A prompt reply (within 24 hours) is expected.* If time is of the essence or in case of emergency, communication will be by text message or by phone call.

## Vocal Health

**PRACTICE.** Regular, effective practice is very important in order to progress toward your vocal and performance potential. However, excessive practice or singing “full out” in excess of two hours per day can be counterproductive and dangerous to your vocal health. A lot of progress can be made with quiet study. Listen to your body. Give yourself appropriate rest periods.



**CARE FOR YOUR BODY.** Stay hydrated, do not smoke, avoid overuse of caffeine and alcohol, get adequate sleep (7 hours per night should be a *minimum* goal), stay healthy and do not abuse your voice (i.e., talking over loud environments, yelling at sporting events, concerts). Wash your hands frequently and avoid contact with sick people. If you may be contagious, stay home for the sake of the health of others, as well as yourself!

**HYDRATION.** Many singers find it necessary to use a humidifier, especially in this dry climate, to keep their voice working at their best. For chronic sinus trouble, a saline rinse (“neti pot”) can be very useful and economical.

**WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR:** If your voice is compromised by infection or overuse, see an otolaryngologist (also known as an ear, nose and throat doctor (ENT)). Dr. Kevin Bright (915) 544-1350 is the recommended ENT for singers in El Paso.

## Extracurricular Opportunities

According to the Vocal Area Handbook, **your applied voice teacher must approve all performance and/or coaching opportunities outside this studio and its assignments.**

This includes, but is not limited to: El Paso Opera, UTEP Dinner Theater, Theatre Department productions, volunteer or professional choruses (such as El Paso Chorale, Bruce Nehring Consort, church choirs), Viva! El Paso, El Paso Gilbert & Sullivan Society, master classes with guest artists or local teachers. **AUDITION FOR EVERYTHING**, and check with your teacher before accepting anything.

## Additional Policies

---

### Incompletes/Withdrawals

No automatic withdrawals or incompletes will be given.

### Academic Integrity

Cheating and plagiarism is dishonest, unethical and not acceptable. Refer to <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html> for further information.

### Accommodations

If you require classroom accommodations, visit the CASS website at <http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass>.

### Sexual Discrimination & Harassment (Title IX)

If you have a concern related to sexual harassment or violence, visit <https://www.utep.edu/titleix/>.

### Campus Carry

Fox Fine Arts Building is an “Exclusion Zone.” Refer to <https://www.utep.edu/campuscarry/> for further information.

---

## Voice Studio Syllabus Acknowledgment

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have received and read this *entire* syllabus for Voice Lessons and understand all course requirements, deadlines and expectations.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student’s signature

Date received by  
teacher:  
\_\_\_\_\_

# 5 Steps to Get an “A” in Your Voice Lessons

---

1. SHOW UP for lessons, on time, ready to sing (warmed up!) and prepared!
2. PREPARE – before bringing a song to your teacher...
  - a. Learn your notes and rhythms.
  - b. Learn the translation and background of your song.
  - c. Write the IPA (pronunciation) into your sheet music and practice the diction.
  - d. Prepare your Program Notes and Song Research to turn in.
3. PRACTICE regularly, at *least* 5 days a week, 1 hour a day.
4. PERFORM
  - a. Area Recital at least once
  - b. Sing in Studio Class at least once, preferably memorized.
5. Be PRO-ACTIVE. Always look for ways to improve as an artist. Discuss your ideas with your teacher.

(PRO TIP: Write deadlines and goals into your personal calendar, and refer to it frequently to be sure you're on track.)

# Song Research (or Research Journal)

*This is in addition to the Program Notes on the next page.*

## ***For each song, explore!***

---

On a separate sheet of paper, or in a blank book/journal, **dig deep** into each song you are assigned.

### **Background**

- 1) If the song is from a musical, opera or other theatrical work, read a synopsis of the larger work, and read the entire scene (in the libretto or script) that precedes the song.
- 2) What were the trends culturally surrounding the composer and/or the lyricist/poet when the song/poem were written?

### **Translation**

- 1) Create your own line-by-line guide with pronunciation, original words, word-by-word translation. Then write a translation/meaning in your own words.
- 2) Write a word-by-word translation in your music.

### **Expression**

- 1) Identify the dramatic ideas in the piece
- 2) What is the trigger for you, your character, or the song's implied narrator to sing these words with these music?
- 3) What actions are suggested by the words of the song?
- 4) How can you relate the emotions/actions/situation to something in your life, or a situation you recognize from a friend's life, a TV show, book, etc.?

# Program Notes (Example)

## ***Alma Schindler Mahler (1879–1964)***

---

Born in 1879, the daughter of a Viennese painter, Alma Mahler inspired the passionate love and devotion of an astonishing array of creative artists of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. She married three of them—the composer Gustav Mahler, the architect Walter Gropius, and the writer Franz Werfel—and had a host of admirers and lovers, including the painters Oscar Kokoschka, Egon Schiele, and Gustav Klimt. The composer Alban Berg dedicated his opera *Wozzeck* to her and a violin concerto to the memory of her daughter, Manon, who died of polio.

Despite showing promise as a composer under the tutelage of Alexander von Zemlinsky, she agreed to stop composing after marrying Gustav Mahler. Not unsurprisingly, this limitation put a strain on the marriage, which perhaps led to her dizzying array of lovers. Later in life, Mahler recanted and encouraged his wife to compose, even helping her to publish some of her songs. Only fourteen songs have survived to be published and recorded. (Compiled from Britannica.com and Wikipedia.com)

### **Ansturm**

*Poem by Richard F. L. Dehmel (1863–1920)*

O zürne nicht, wenn mein Begehren  
Dunkel aus seinen Grenzen bricht,  
Soll es uns selber nicht verzehren,  
Muß es heraus ans Licht!

Fühlst ja, wie all mein Innres brandet,  
Und wenn herauf der Aufruhr bricht,  
Jäh über deinen Frieden strandet,  
Dann bebst du  
aber du zürnst mir nicht.

### **Onslaught**

*Translation © 2008 by Elisabeth Siekhaus*

Oh be not angry, when my desire  
Darkly breaks through its boundaries,  
If it is not to consume us,  
It has to come out to the light!

You clearly can feel how I churn inside,  
And when my rapture breaks to the surface,  
Abruptly inundating your peace,  
Then you tremble  
but are not angry with me.

## ***INSTRUCTIONS for Program Notes sheet***

---

**In a Microsoft Word document (see example following, and in your Dropbox lesson folder):**

- a) Type a brief biography of composer, and whenever possible, the poet or lyricist.
- b) Poetic translation (use a table\*, not tabs, to make this easier, neater).
- c) If you are copying from a printed or online source, be sure to credit your source. Plagiarism is illegal!
- d) This is practice for creating program notes and translations for recital programs.
- e) Save this document on your computer or a flash drive!
- f) Share a copy with your teacher AND *keep a printout in your music binder.*

**\*How to use tables in Word:**

<http://www.pcworld.com/article/2459947/how-to-create-and-customize-tables-in-microsoft-word.html>