

Opera Workshop MUSA 2253/3253

Mondays, Wednesdays 3:00 pm–4:20 pm, Recital Hall (sometimes in M340 or M402)
& Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:30–11:50 am Choir Room (M340)

Cherry Duke, Instructor
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Office Hours:

½ hour prior to class time, and by appointment. Don't hesitate to ask when you need to see me. I'll make time.

Prerequisites

None; however, course will be most valuable to those with some prior performing experience. Students should be able to independently learn assigned music (notes, rhythms, diction) from operatic and musical theater repertoire.

Course Description

Exploration and practice of vocal, acting/communication, movement and analytical skills needed for success in performance of staged musical drama, culminating in at least one public performance per semester (see addendum or handout for schedule). Additional study and evaluation in the areas of audition preparation, role preparation and analysis, structure of song and scene, dance, technical aspects of theatre, and self- and peer evaluation.

See Addendum for course schedule, performance details and additional rehearsals.

Course Content

- Group activities to develop performance, acting and movement skills, including improvisation, dance and facial and physical expression.
- Written and reading assignments, covering character preparation, role preparation and theatrical terminology.
- Preparation, rehearsal, and performance of staged opera, shows and/or scenes as scheduled. Collaborations with El Paso Opera, El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestras and other arts organizations are possible.
- Production assignments, including but not limited to: building and moving scenery, costuming, makeup, set up and strike of stage, creating and posting publicity materials.
- Community outreach presentations.
- Readings from various articles and books online and/or on reserve in Music Library.
- Research and written and verbal reporting on various operas and characters.
- Private and group coaching of assigned scenes as well as songs and arias from applied studio repertoire.
- Study and practice of opera audition techniques and best practices, including dramatic presentation of songs and arias, appropriate attire, résumé writing, monologue preparation, etc.
- Master classes, coachings and/or workshops with guest artists.
- Utilize technology (YouTube, Spotify, etc.) as an evaluative and research tool.

Course Objectives

- Recognize and put into practice industry-accepted standards of professionalism, on- and off-stage.
- Increase body awareness, progressing toward elimination of unconscious physical habits.
- Explore and demonstrate many possibilities of dramatic expression, in every rehearsal as well as every performance.
- Independently research and prepare selections for performance.
- Utilize interpretative and critical thinking skills necessary to present quality performance.
- Understand the steps necessary for successful and complete role preparation.

Course Outcomes

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

- Conduct themselves professionally in auditions and performances.
- Independently prepare selections from the operatic repertoire.
- Accurately identify and use theatrical terminology in verbal and written form.
- Perform assigned selections with accuracy of pitch, rhythm, and dramatic expression.
- Prepare and perform assigned repertoire to a level acceptable for public performance at UTEP and in the community.
- Evaluate self and peer performances with appropriate terminology and constructive commentary, in person and in writing.

Course Requirements

In order to achieve these objectives, the student will:

- **Review Syllabus and Schedule regularly, including updates** to be given throughout the semester.
- Attend all class sessions and additional tech week rehearsals as assigned (see "Absences," below).
- Submit all assignments on time.
- Read and demonstrate comprehension of all assigned articles and texts.
- Memorize words, songs, scenes, movements, etc. by scheduled deadlines (see Schedule).
- Respect and assist all class participants, student assistants, teaching assistants, consultants, guest artists and instructors(s) in a positive and professional manner.
- Complete production (crew) duties as assigned.
- Communicate regularly and effectively with colleagues and faculty. Check for and reply to instructors' emails daily.
- Participate in all course performances as assigned, to the best of your ability.
- Explore the possibilities! Be open to new ideas.

Materials and Personal Equipment

- TEXTBOOK: *Singing, Acting, and Movement in Opera* by Mark Ross Clark
- Especially if you are a vocal performance major, you are encouraged to purchase scores for operas in which you have scenes.
- Sign up and pay for an account (usually \$24/semester; cost is waived for Spring 2017) with www.CollabraMusic.com to record rehearsals, review recorded lessons and take assessments. (You will receive a document with instructions on how to sign up for your account. Course code: **38733n4k877ab**)
- Printed musical scores* for your scenes are required. Photocopies should be printed front-to-back, clearly organized in 3-ring binder. You may NOT use a phone to review scores. Bring your music to class every day.
- Pencil(s) and highlighter marker. Tablets* are not encouraged.
- Recording device (e.g., smartphone + recording app), for coachings, etc.
- On movement/dance/staging days, you must wear clothes you can move in comfortably, and closed-toe shoes.
- Regular access to a reliable computer (not a tablet or smart phone) with Internet connectivity.
- Character shoes

* If using tablet (i.e., iPad) for score study, you must utilize a *music score reading app*, such as ForScore (available for download around \$10) and that you become fast with using it. You may NOT use a phone for score reading. Using a PDF or image reader is inefficient and can waste valuable rehearsal time. If your device or software is slowing you down, you will be asked to bring a paper score. If your device becomes a distraction (i.e., you are using your device for non-class related activities), you will not be allowed to use it in class.

Grading & Guidelines

- Attendance and Participation = 40%
- Written & Other Assignments = 20%
- Preparation = 20%
- Final Exam (Sing-Out) = 20%

Attendance & Participation

On-time attendance to ALL classes/rehearsals is required. “On time” means being ready to work when the session is scheduled to begin. Arrive *5 minutes before* class time if at all possible. If you are running late or unable to attend any class or rehearsal, notify me as soon as possible, knowing that lateness and absence negatively affects you, your scene partners and your grade.

If you are sick, DO NOT ATTEND. Contact me immediately to let me know you will not be in class. You will be responsible for materials and/or performances/evaluations missed. I am an active performer and also need to stay healthy, just as all your colleagues do.

Participation will be evaluated daily. If you are present, on-time, and giving your best effort all the time, your grade will be high. If you appear “checked out,” are not paying attention (using your phone, etc.), are asleep in class, are not fully invested in your own improvement or you are letting your scene partners down, your grade will be lowered accordingly.

Written & Other Assignments

Throughout the semester you will be given a variety of written assignments and assessments including but not limited to: character analysis, reports/reviews of live and online performances, scene mapping, etc. Due dates will be clearly communicated, and all assignments must be turned in on time.

If you miss a day, it is your responsibility to check with me or a classmate to determine whether or not an assignment was given and get the applicable materials. **Some assignments may require using Blackboard, Collabra or another online tool.** If you miss a graded assessment, test, quiz or date to turn in an assignment, it is *your responsibility* to ask for a makeup in a timely manner.

Preparation

Prepare and execute every assignment *completely* to the best of your ability, and bring to class the appropriate tools, materials, music, etc. If you are not able to learn your translations, notes, rhythms, diction, etc. on your own, get help. This may mean hiring a pianist/coach, tutor, teaming up with friends, buying accompaniment tracks, etc. If you don't know what to do, ask me.

For each Deadline (see Schedule), you will be given a letter grade based on the *completeness* of your preparation. For example, if on the day you are to be fully memorized, you are only about 75% memorized, you will be given a grade of 75.

Final Exam

The final evaluation of the class will consist of a mock audition, or “Sing-Out,” similar to the “Sing-In” held at the beginning of the semester. This performance and the self-evaluation which follows represent the course's final exam. You should demonstrate your ability to present yourself professionally, with your piece prepared to the best of your ability, musically and dramatically. You should prepare for this performance adequately in advance so that you will demonstrate improvement from your Sing-In.

Crews (Technical/Production/Publicity Assignments)

All students are expected to assist with publicity of Opera UTEP events and technical aspects of productions as necessary, including sets, costumes, stage management and lighting construction and operation.

Every student will sign up for a “Crew” and will be expected to help as-needed with jobs specific to their crew. Crews may include (but are not limited to):

- Publicity
- Sets
- Costumes
- Lighting
- Supertitles
- Outreach

How ATTENDANCE affects your grade:

- ☑ You are allowed one absence. For every absence after the first, **your attendance and participation grade will be lowered significantly.**
- ☑ 2 tardies will be counted as one absence.
- ☑ If you are absent because you're sick or have an emergency, proper documentation will be taken into account.
- ☑ You may request extra credit assignments will be available to make up for absences.

Public Performances

Full preparation and best effort is required, including professionalism, responsiveness, clear and prompt communication and responsibility toward all assigned crew duties, colleagues and scene partners.
WE WORK AS A TEAM.

Course Expectations

Phones

All cell/mobile/smart/dumb phones must be switched to silent and airplane mode and put away before the start of class. They will remain put away unless you have permission from the instructor to take pictures, video, or make recordings to assist with some aspect of class.

Communication

You are expected to **check your UTEP email twice a day**, according to Department recommendation. I further encourage you to check and respond to text and Facebook messages at least once a day and in general to respond to my messages within 12 hours, if not sooner. If your contact information changes (email, phone number, home address, etc.), let me know immediately.

Reply to all emails, even if just to say "Got it." This is common courtesy, and is *necessary* for planning and keeping on top of assignments.

We have a Facebook Messenger group for quick class communications. If you would like to be a part of this group, please ask me or another member to add you.

Getting Help

You are expected and encouraged to communicate with me, the TAs and/or the stage management about your needs, concerns, and to *ask for help when you need it*.

Additional Policies

Incompletes/Withdrawals

No automatic withdrawals or incompletes will be given.

Graduate Credit

This course is available for Graduate level ensemble credit. Students taking this course for Graduate Credit are required to complete additional coursework beyond the requirements of the undergraduate students enrolled in the course. This work may include additional assignments, technical work, or performances. Graduate students will also be expected to assist with research, coachings and coordination of undergraduate students in technical roles. Additional required course work will be established and communicated to the student by the instructor.

Academic Integrity

Cheating and plagiarism is dishonest, unethical and not acceptable. Refer to

<http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity> for further information.

Accommodations

If you need classroom accommodations, visit the Center for Accommodations (CASS) website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass.

Sexual Discrimination & Harassment (Title IX)

If you have a concern related to sexual harassment or violence, visit admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=68750 for more information.

Religious Beliefs and Perspectives

Regardless of the discussions and opinions that may arise as we explore the literature, etc., be aware that others may not share your beliefs. Approach this class with respect for all and an open mind.

Opera Workshop Syllabus Acknowledgment

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have received and read this *entire* syllabus and schedule for Opera Workshop and understand all course requirements, deadlines and expectations. *Turn this signed acknowledgment into Ms. Duke by January 19, 2017.*

Student Name (print): _____

Sign: _____

Date: _____