

Opera Workshop :: MUSA 2253

Class Times:

Mondays and Wednesdays 3:00 pm–4:20 pm, Fox Fine Arts Recital Hall
(sometimes in M340 or other locations as announced)

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Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30–11:50 am Choir Room (M340)
or other locations as announced.

Ms. Cherry Duke, Instructor/Director

Fox Fine Arts Center, M442

(915) 747-6220 office or (917) 312-5598 mobile

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Office Hours

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 and accurately* learn assigned ensemble and solo 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.

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. Emphasis placed on skills needed for a career as a professional performer in opera and music theatre.

>> *See attached "Schedule" for this semester's course schedule, performance details and additional rehearsals.*

Course Content

- Group activities to develop performance, acting and movement skills, including improvisation, dance, movement, body awareness and facial and physical expression.
- Written and reading assignments on 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, promotion of performances on social media.
- Community outreach performances.
- Readings from course textbook and various articles and books online and/or on reserve in Music Library.
- Research and written and verbal reporting on various shows and characters.
- Private and group coaching of assigned scenes as well as songs and arias from applied studio repertoire.
- Study and practice of music theatre/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, Vimeo, Spotify, Apple Music, 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 class and rehearsal as well as every performance.
- Independently research and prepare selections for performance.
- Utilize interpretative and critical thinking skills necessary to present quality performances.

- Understand and practice 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 rehearsals, auditions and performances.
- Accurately identify, understand and use theatrical terminology in verbal and written form.
- Independently prepare selections from the operatic and/or musical theater repertory.
- Perform assigned selections with accuracy of pitch, rhythm, and dramatic expression.
- Prepare and perform assigned repertoire to a level acceptable for public performance.
- 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).
- Memorize words, songs, scenes, movements, etc. by scheduled deadlines (see Schedule).
- Submit all assignments on time.
- Read and demonstrate comprehension of all assigned articles and texts.
- 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 instructor’s emails or other messages daily.
- Participate in all performances as assigned, to the best of your ability.
- Perform (as a soloist) in front of colleagues in class several times during the semester.
- Explore the possibilities! Be open to new ideas.

Materials and Personal Equipment¹

- Pencil(s) and highlighter marker.
- Textbook: *Singing, Acting, and Movement in Opera* by Mark Ross Clark
- *Printed* musical scores² for your scenes are required. PDFs will be provided, which you should print out. *You may NOT use a phone to read your music.* Photocopies are acceptable and should be printed front-to-back, organized in a 3-ring binder. Bring your music to class *every day*.
- Recording device (e.g., smartphone + recording app), for coachings, etc.
- On movement/dance/staging days, wear clothes you can comfortably move in, and closed-toe shoes, preferably the shoes you will perform in.
- Dance shoes: Character shoes for women, jazz shoes for men.
- Regular access to a reliable laptop or desktop computer (i.e., not a tablet or smart phone) with Internet connectivity. Computer labs are available in the music library on the fourth floor of Fox Fine Arts, in the main university library, the Liberal Arts Building and the student union.

¹ See Blackboard for information on recommended stores for purchasing materials.

² If you must use a tablet (i.e., iPad) for score study, you must utilize a *music score reading app*, such as **ForScore** (around \$10) and that you become fast with using it. You must be able to actively take notes and make marks in your music. Again, you may NOT use a phone for reading your music. Using a PDF or image reader (as opposed to an app specific to MUSIC) is inefficient and wastes valuable rehearsal time. If your device 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.

- Especially if you are a performance major, you are encouraged to purchase published scores for operas or musicals in which you have scenes or solos.

Grading & Guidelines

- Attendance and Participation = 40%
- Preparation = 20%
- Written & Other Assignments = 20%
- Final Exam (Sing-Out & Self-Evaluation) = 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* the start 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.

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to ask what you missed, keep up with assignments, and initiate a makeup, as applicable.

Participation will be evaluated daily. If you are present (physically and mentally!), on-time, engaged 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 and/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. All assignments must be turned in by the stated due date.

If you miss a class or rehearsal, it is your responsibility to determine if 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. 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. You will also be graded on your active participation in the viewing and commenting on your peers' performances.

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.
- ☑ Extra credit opportunities may be available to make up for up to 2 absences.

In-Class Performances

Sing-In

During the first week of the semester, every student in the class will perform a solo with piano accompaniment. This performance will be video recorded, and may serve as an audition for roles in the semester's production. Students should dress up and sing a song from memory that demonstrates their current level of vocal development. Repertoire may include an operatic aria, art song or "legit" musical theater song.

Master Classes

In a master class, a student sings a piece in front of the class and the instructor or guest artist works with the student to improve his/her performance while the rest of the class observes. Master classes are most effective when the student is fully memorized and knows the complete translation of the song.

Music for the Pianist

Sheet music should be delivered to the class pianist at *least* 24 hours prior to any performance. Be sure every copy has *all the notes*, is clearly marked and easily readable. It is your responsibility to ensure that your pianist has your music in advance, every time.

Crews (Technical/Production/Publicity Assignments)

All students are expected to assist technical aspects of productions as necessary, including sets, costumes, stage management and lighting construction and operation as well as publicity and audience development for performances.

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 & Outreach
- Sets & Locations
- Costumes & Makeup
- Technical Needs
- Supertitles
- Hospitality

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 & Devices

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 are specifically asked by the instructor to take pictures, video, or make recordings to assist with some aspect of class. You may not use a tablet (iPad, etc.) or phone in class unless you have specific permission from the teacher and are using it strictly for class business or other activities specified by the instructor.

Courtesy & Respect

Walking out of class (even for a few moments) in the middle of a class, workshop, presentation, performance, lecture or other focused activity is disruptive. Please get your water and use the restroom *between* classes so that you may give your full attention and respect during class. Arriving to class after it has begun is similarly distracting. Be on time every day. This is especially important when we have guests.

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.

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

Getting Help

You are expected and encouraged to communicate with the teacher/director, the Graduate Teaching Assistant(s) and/or the stage management about your needs, concerns, and to *ask for help when you need it*. If you are unsure about your responsibilities, please ask.

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.

Return this signed acknowledgment to the instructor by the end of class on the first Thursday of the semester. Complete the syllabus test on Blackboard by 6pm on the first Sunday of the semester.

Student Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____