



Individual Instruction: Voice MUSA 1195

Cherry Duke, Instructor

(she/her)

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Prerequisites

Placement audition for voice faculty.

What is this all about? (Course Description)

Our voice lessons are structured like this: approximately 25 minutes of vocal exercises to build your skill and technique, followed by 25 minutes of work on your assigned songs. You should learn your notes and rhythms before you come to your lessons, but I'll help you when you're having trouble.

This course (Voice Lessons) is designed to enhance your ability to use your singing voice in the healthiest and most efficient manner possible, to enhance your communication and performance skills, develop your knowledge of vocal pedagogy, and to expand your knowledge of vocal literature. Vocal performance as a means of artistic communication is emphasized and will be tailored to the your major and goals.

What should I bring? (Course Materials)

In your lessons, you to come prepared to learn, experiment and grow! To that end, I suggest:



First and foremost, bring a can-do attitude and your love for music!



You'll need to take notes, just like in any class (Pencil and notebook? Tablet & stylus? You choose.). Also, I suggest you record your lesson (most people use their phone's Voice Memos app for that).



Singing is thirsty work; bring your water.



Since we're here to make music, bring all your assigned songs, as well as any research, translations, diction notes, etc. for all those songs.



I'm going to create a digital folder we can share on OneDrive. Keep PDFs of all your songs and all your homework in this folder. That way we can both access it all the time.



By the 3rd lesson, we need your pianist to come to the second half of your lesson. They are expected to attend each lesson from that point until the end of the semester. We'll talk more about pianists later.



Check out "Duke Studio" on Blackboard. There are lots of helpful resources for you there, including my weekly schedule, the studio class schedule, and videos to help you warm up, stretch, etc.

How will we spend our time? (Course Content)

The point of voice lessons is for you to become a better singer. This means you learn to sing in a way that is healthy (physically sustainable), beautiful (in tune, clear, resonant, energetic), and flexible (even tone throughout your range, able to sing fast or slow, and with appropriate style). Most of our focus will be on classical singing, which is the foundation for healthy singing in other styles.

While you will have to learn and memorize several songs, our main focus in lessons improving the quality and efficiency of your singing.

MOST OF YOUR IMPROVEMENT WILL COME FROM YOUR PRACTICE. While I will guide you in our lessons, the real progress comes from your applying what you learn during regular daily mindful practice.

So, part of being a good singer is learning to be independent. No one can practice for you. No one can memorize for you. No one can learn for you. Studying your music (not just the notes and rhythms but also the words, the background, the meaning, etc.) takes time and will make your lessons and your music making more fulfilling.

How do I make the most of my lessons? (Course Requirements)



PAPP!

- 1) **Prepare** your songs fully before you sing them in lessons. More about this is below.
- 2) **Attend** all lessons, as well as weekly studio and recital classes.
- 3) **Practice** (more than you think).
 - a) ...your assigned vocal exercises/vocalizes. I choose exercises for singers based on what they need for their vocal growth. Practice these every day.
 - b) ...your assigned song(s). Don't just sing them through. Really work on improving. Break each song down into small chunks. We'll talk about "layering" your practice later.
 - c) Use the Practice Log provided on Blackboard ("Duke Studio") to write down the quantity of your practice and make notes about your journey.
- 4) **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.

What is "Full Preparation" for each song?

Before you work on a song in your lesson or coaching, do the following 6 steps, and show me your work.

1. **Translate every word.** Even if the song is in a language you speak, make sure you know what each individual word means, and what the overall meaning is of each sentence, and the whole song.
 - a. Write the word-for-word translation into your music and study it.
 - b. As needed, write a paraphrased translation in also, to make more sense of foreign sentence structures.
 - c. If there are any words you don't understand, look them up. Ask for help as needed.
2. **Program Notes.** This is a "formal" document to help you practice making a recital program (which you will do in upper-level lessons). See page 9 for details.
3. **Song Research.** This is a freeform assignment, in which you explore the background and expressive requirements for your song. See page 10 for details.
4. **Learn how to pronounce the words.** Write the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet—you'll learn this in Diction class) transcription of your text above your notes in your song, if it's in a language you don't speak fluently.
5. **Learn the rhythms.**
6. **Learn the pitches/notes.**

Exams

- **MIDTERM:** Perform at least 3 pieces of your assigned repertoire from memory on a mid-term exam lesson.
- **FINAL EXAM (JURY):** 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.

- BARRIER JURY requirements: At the end of the fourth semester of MUSA 1195, you must perform a “barrier jury” consisting of 5 songs from memory. Music Education and Performance majors must present songs in English, Spanish, Italian, German and French. Commercial Music majors may perform in fewer languages, and may include 2 commercial pieces. Performance majors are held to a higher vocal standard than Education majors.

Concert Attendance

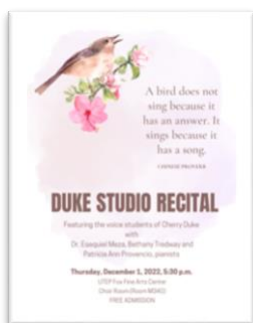
Observation of your peers and professionals in your field is one of the surest ways to improve your perspective and musicianship. In addition to attending area and departmental recitals, you are expected attend programs that are specifically relevant to your vocal study. These concerts can also serve as makeups for the departmental requirement.

1. At least one performance of each of the Opera Workshop presentations.
2. At least 2 outside professional-level concerts, recitals, operas, or musicals. At least one concert should be classical.
3. All recitals by members of Duke Studio.
4. All recitals by UTEP voice faculty.
5. All recitals by guest vocalists.

NOTE: Every effort should be made to attend performances IN PERSON.

Performances

You will publicly perform material from your solo (lesson) repertoire **at least 2 times each semester**. This can be accomplished by singing in departmental/area recital (one Friday recital performance per semester is required), performing at NATS, as a soloist on a choir concert, church services, Studio Recital and/or Opera Workshop performances. *You must work on the piece you will perform at least twice in your voice lessons for it to count towards a required performance.*



Studio Recital

Each semester, we will have a public recital, on which each Duke Studio student will sing at least one song from your current repertoire, to be determined later. The purpose of this is to allow your family and friends to watch you perform, and also to offer you additional preparation for your jury. Please mark your calendar and notify your pianist of our studio recital for this semester:

DUKE STUDIO RECITAL:

Fri, May 5, 2023, 6:00 PM @ FFA 340 (Choir Room)

Studio Class: Fridays, after Recital

Studio class is an essential complement to your one-on-one lessons. This class functions like an informal masterclass. Mr. Downen and Ms. Duke combine studios for this class, so that Ms. Duke’s students have the benefit of working with Mr. Downen, and *vice versa*. You will be assigned dates to sing, and the song you present should be memorized, and approved in advance by Ms. Duke.



1. Weekly studio class provides necessary performance opportunities and additional time to explore performance-related technical and acting issues.
2. If Recital Class runs late, Studio Class will start late and run the full time period (1.5 hours).
3. If Recital Class ends early, Studio Class will still start after a short break.
4. Location of class is generally M402.
5. You are expected to attend every studio class, unless discussed with teacher in advance.
6. Dr. Meza will be the pianist for studio class. You don’t have to pay him!

Your Partner, your Pianist

An experienced collaborative pianist (also known as “accompanist”) is an essential partner in your voice lessons. At UTEP, you have the opportunity to select your own pianist partner, and thus the expense of hiring them is your responsibility.



- **During lessons.** Your pianist should attend the *last* half of each voice lesson (if they can come 25 minutes after we start, that’s ideal), beginning at the latest during the third full lesson of each semester. This is to ensure you can work on required repertoire with appropriate accompaniment, enabling me to focus on your vocal technique and style.
- **Work with your pianist outside of lessons.** You are expected to work with your pianist a minimum of one additional half hour each week on their assigned repertoire.
- **Payment.** You alone are responsible for paying your pianist on time, according to the schedule you agree to with them. Pianists who are owed money will not play juries. It is unacceptable to hire a different pianist to avoid paying one you owe.

What’s in it for me? (Course Goals)

I encourage you to set your own specific intentions for your vocal improvement each semester. Here are some of the things I feel you will learn/improve this semester:



- Sing with confidence, efficiency, and a healthy, beautiful tone.
- Develop and utilize research skills in order to adequately prepare a piece of music for study and performance.
- Develop and utilize efficient practice skills, including warming up/vocalizing effectively.
- Develop listening skills.
- Develop the skills necessary to combine technical and expressive qualities of singing to create an artistically fulfilling performance.
- Develop organizational skills necessary for the performing artist.
- Perform assigned songs from memory with accuracy of pitch, rhythm, diction, appropriate tone quality and musical expression.

Evaluation / Grading

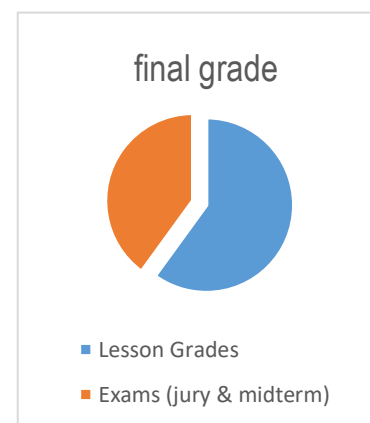
Grading Scale: 90-100% = A; 80-89% = B; 70-79% = C; 60-69% = D; 0-59% = F

As you can see from the pie chart, your progress and performance throughout the semester (what you do in voice lessons) is the most important part of your grade.

60%: Weekly lesson grades

You can see your weekly lesson grades on the bottom of each lesson form.

7. *Attendance* and punctuality (see attendance policies on page 5).
8. *Practice*: evidence of regular and consistent practice, as logged on Lesson Form/Practice Plan which must be shown to me at every lesson.
9. *Assignments*: I’ll write your weekly assignments on your lesson form.
10. *Execution* means your ability to perform exercises and repertoire as instructed. It includes evidence of having worked with your pianist, and ensuring your pianist is present at lessons as required.



40%: Exams

1. Mid-term exam grade (based on completeness of preparation and memorization).
2. Final exam (Jury) grade = average of jury grades assigned by the voice area faculty.

Departmental Recital Attendance Policy (details below) will be applied after the above is calculated.

Departmental Recital Attendance Policy

1. All students enrolled in Applied Lessons must attend a minimum of twelve (12) Area and Departmental which take place every Friday at 1:30 p.m. in the Department of Music. **Failing to attend twelve (12) required recitals will result in lowering your Applied Lessons final grade by one letter.**
2. Absences may be made up by attending UTEP Music Department concerts and recitals. Non-university recitals such as El Paso Opera, El Paso Music Forum, 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.
3. To receive credit for the makeup, you must attend a music event. The program must be signed by a music faculty member who attended the same event. The program must be brought to the Music Office to record the attendance. Your name and ID# must be on the program. Without this information students will not receive credit.
4. It is your responsibility to turn in the signed programs to the main office by 5 p.m. on Friday of Finals Week. There will be no exceptions.
5. You must sign the makeup sheet every time you turn in a program. At the end, the office must have both, the program with your information and signature matching the date. There will be no exceptions.
6. Please note: When a single area recital is cancelled, you will need to replace the cancelled recital by either going to a different area recital held at the same time or turning in a program from a makeup recital.

Duke Studio Policies

Attendance

1. Attend all scheduled weekly lessons.
 - a. **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.
 - i. If you have not put in the work expected/assigned, it will show, and your grade will reflect it.
 - ii. I have the option to cancel your weekly lesson if you are unprepared.
 - b. Lessons will be scheduled at the beginning of the semester and are a class that meets weekly at the same time.
 - c. Occasionally, I may need to reschedule your weekly lesson. Be sure to mark your personal calendar and notify your pianist.
2. Attend all scheduled studio classes and perform as assigned.
3. Attend area and/or departmental recitals as required by department. See "Departmental Requirement," below.



Absences & Tardies

1. If you are 15+ minutes late, the lesson will be forfeited and recorded as an absence.
 - a. If you are late, your lesson will still end at the usual time, so that everyone can remain on schedule.
2. One "free" absence per semester is allowed, regardless of the reason.
3. If you are sick and/or contagious, notify your teacher ASAP and do not come to your lesson.

- Absences that are not made up will result in a 0 recorded on the attendance portion of your lesson form. If you turn in your assignments and practice log, you will get credit for those. No grade will be given for “execution”. Documented emergencies will be taken into account.
- You must attend at least 8 lessons to get a passing grade. If you miss 5 or more lessons for any reason, you will not pass this course. No automatic drops/withdrawals will be given.

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**. Be sure to notify your pianist.
- 24 hours of notice is customary and courteous for cancelling of any appointment. With notice, I can be more flexible and efficient with my time, which makes it easier for me to offer makeup times.
- Documented emergencies will be taken into account.

Makeup Lessons

- If you cancel your lesson, makeup lessons are not guaranteed, and may be offered at the teacher’s discretion.
- If your teacher cancels, the lesson will be made up.
- Make up lessons may be offered in a different format, such as Zoom or an asynchronous assignment involving video.

Submitting Assignments

- You will receive a link to a OneDrive folder (which we will share) where you should upload all your assignments. Please email me when you have uploaded a new file for me to see. OneDrive doesn’t always notify me, that’s up to you.
- You will upload either a PDF, a Word document or a scan of hand-written work. All hand-written work must be legible! Program Notes should be Word documents, so you can practice the prescribed structure.
- PDFs of all of your assigned repertoire should also be kept in this folder.



Back-up plan

Submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with Blackboard, OneDrive, your network, and/or your computer, etc. I also suggest you save all your work to a cloud storage service, external drive, or on your computer as a back-up. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit.

If you are having trouble submitting your work through OneDrive, please contact the UTEP Help Desk (915-747-HELP). You can email me a link to your back-up document as a last resort.

Communication

Please communicate with your teacher in a timely manner during reasonable hours.

- Use 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 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 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 or silent study.
- Listen to your body. Give yourself appropriate rest periods.



- “Mark” (sing lightly) when you have to rehearse but are already tired.

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, audition, 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, EPCC shows, volunteer or professional choruses (such as El Paso Chorale, Bruce Nehring Consort, church choirs, Living Christmas Tree), Viva! El Paso, El Paso Gilbert & Sullivan Society, musicals and plays at The Forum, Sun City Musicals, master classes with guest artists or local teachers. AUDITION FOR EVERYTHING, and **check with your teacher before accepting** anything.

Additional Policies

Respect for Diversity

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students’ learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.



Diversity in vocal repertoire is a passion of mine, so while we will definitely explore the traditionally celebrated composers, we will also explore the music of women and other underrepresented groups, such as Mexican composers, African diaspora composers, and more.

Incompletes/Withdrawals

No automatic drops, withdrawals or incompletes will be given. If you have a problem completing this semester with a passing grade, make an appointment with me to talk about options.

Accessibility

You are encouraged but not required to share with me how I can make the class more accessible for you. Or, you may contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, or email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the [CASS portal](#). **If there’s a way I can help you succeed, please let me know.**

Sexual Discrimination & Harassment (Title IX)

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

Scholastic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. 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.

Campus Carry

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

Everyone needs help sometimes...

- [Student Outreach and Support \(utep.edu\)](#)
- [UTEP Food Pantry](#)
- [DIVE into DIVERsity \(utep.edu\)](#)
- [Resources | Borderland Rainbow Center](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Awareness | El Paso Behavioral Health \(elpasobh.com\)](#)
- [Centro de Salud La Fe](#)
- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#)



PROGRAM NOTES – Sample & Instructions

IN ADDITION to Song Research, create **Program Notes** for each song. This is practice for creating program notes and translations for your degree recital programs. That's why I ask you to use Microsoft Word, because it has the features necessary to make it easy.



How to do this assignment:

Use a computer (not a tablet or phone)! **If you don't have a computer with Microsoft Word installed**, go to the music library on the 4th floor or the main library across campus. The main library also has a technical support area on the 2nd floor where you can get more help.

Further instructions are at the bottom of this example page. You may find this same page as a Microsoft Word document on Blackboard. Use that document as your template; do not make your own from scratch! Using the template will save you time.

Use the Microsoft Word template provided in the "Duke Studio" Blackboard Course.

- Type a brief biography of composer, and whenever possible, the poet or lyricist.
- Poetic translation (**use a table***, not tabs, not columns, to make this easier, neater). One row per line of text!
- If you are copying from a printed or online source, be sure to credit your source. Plagiarism is illegal!
- Save this document *with a new name* in your shared OneDrive lesson folder. Use the following naming convention: COMPOSER-SongTitle-ProgramNotes.docx
- Keep a copy with your sheet music so you can reference it as needed.

EXAMPLE

Alma Schindler Mahler (1879–1964) (this is the name and birth/death dates of the composer)

(Write a **SHORT** biography of the composer, based on various sources (which you will cite))

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 (title of the song in the language you're singing in) <i>Poem by Richard F. L. Dehmel (1863–1920) (name of poet/lyricist)</i>	Onslaught (title of the song, translated to English) <i>Translation © 2008 by Elisabeth Siekhaus (name of translator)</i>
(original text, one line of text per row in this table)	(translated text, one line of text per row in this table)
O zürne nicht, wenn mein Begehren	Oh be not angry, when my desire
Dunkel aus seinen Grenzen bricht,	Darkly breaks through its boundaries,
Soll es uns selber nicht verzehren,	If it is not to consume us,
Muß es heraus ans Licht!	It has to come out to the light!
Fühlst ja, wie all mein Innres brandet,	You clearly can feel how I churn inside,
Und wenn herauf der Aufruhr bricht,	And when my rapture breaks to the surface,
Jäh über deinen Frieden strandet,	Abruptly inundating your peace,
Dann bebst du	Then you tremble
aber du zürnst mir nicht.	but are not angry with me.

SONG RESEARCH - Instructions

This is *in addition* to the Program Notes on the previous page. For each song, explore and let your imagination run free! Dig deep into each song you are assigned.



How to do this assignment:

In a notebook/journal, write down responses to each of the cues below. You may also type this in a computer document if you prefer.

Make it fun for yourself! Use colors, draw pictures, if that makes you happy. The point is to do a deep dive into your piece to get to know it from the inside out. **(This is in addition to the "Program Notes.")**

Background

- 1) If the song is from a musical, opera or other theatrical work, read a synopsis (summary) 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?
- 3) What was going on in the poet's and/or composer's life that may have influenced their creation of this work?

Translation

- 1) Create your own line-by-line guide with pronunciation (use IPA if you know it), original words, word-by-word translation. Then write a translation/meaning in your own words.
- 2) Write the word-by-word translation in your music.
- 3) Writing out your text this way will also help you memorize!

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 this 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.?