

**Singer's Diction**  
***English/MUS 2211***  
**Fall 2020**

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**Student Hours**

Student hours in person or virtual are available by appointment as well. Feel free to communicate by e-mail or phone, if needed.

**Class Meetings**

The class meets Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 5th period (11:45 a.m.) synchronously on Zoom. The course ends with a capstone in-class activity on Monday, October 12, 2020.

**Course Description**

The course is an interactive workshop that develops lyric diction skills in the English language. The International Phonetic Alphabet, the standard tool for proper pronunciation in all languages, serves as the basis for our study. The principles shall be applied to the delivery of text in vocal repertoire (including song, musical theater, opera and oratorio) of the British Isles and America. Classroom activities provide students practical procedures for achieving a confident performance of texts to be sung in English. Aspects of vocal health will be discussed throughout the seven-week term.

**Textbook and Materials**

The required textbook for the course is *Diction in Context: Singing in English, Italian, German and French* by Brenda Smith, (San Diego, CA: Plural Publishing 2021). A copy of the textbook is always available on the reference shelf of the Architecture and Fine Arts library. The textbook can be purchased in the campus bookstore or online. (*Diction in Context* is the textbook for the entire year's course.) Another English diction book entitled *Communicating in English: A Singer's Guide to English Diction* by Kathryn LaBouff (New York NY: Oxford University Press, 2008) is recommended as a reference but not required for purchase.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of course, students will be able to recognize the phonemes for the English language and to transcribe the symbols for them, using the International Phonetic Alphabet. Students will be able to enunciate clearly in English both in speech and song. Students will have skills to evaluate poetic meaning and historical context for texts set by British and American composers. The acquired skills are applicable for further study of vocal repertoire in foreign languages.

### **Measurement Tools**

Attendance, initiative and progress are the main criteria for grading. The measurement tools for these criteria are: a.) attendance and class participation b.) quizzes, class activities and homework assignments, c.) class presentations d.) final exercise and e.) a final project.

### **Quizzes, Class Activities, Final Exercise and Listening Log**

Quizzes, class activities and homework assignments are intended to evaluate a student's command of newly introduced material. The final exercise is comprehensive in scope, demanding knowledge of the International Phonetic Alphabet and its application to written and oral texts in English. The exercise includes a dictation and a survey of rules and historical data. Prompt attendance for any quizzes and the final exercise is required. Under extenuating circumstances, please notify the instructor of anticipated absences and provide documentation for verification. Throughout the course, the class will engage in comparative listening. Please maintain a log of your reflections on the listening and related discussions. Your listening log is the basis for your final project.

### **Attendance and Class Participation**

Singer's diction helps to prepare students for a professional life in music. Because of the brevity of the course (7 weeks) and its importance to students in the limited access majors of music or musical theatre, prompt class attendance is expected. Lateness is at times unavoidable. Please text or call the instructor's cellphone before 11:45 am. Be careful to deal with anticipated absence or lateness in the manner described above. There are no discretionary absences in the course. Excused absences are those officially sanctioned by the University of Florida.

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academicregulations/attendance-policies>.

### **Class Presentations**

Each student will investigate poetic British and American English texts in spoken and sung form and present the work in class. There are two class presentations during the term. The first presentation is a pass/fail exercise that will prepare each student for the graded final class presentation. A template for both presentations will be distributed during the first week of the course. Each student will prepare and perform the presentation repertoire with the course accompanist. Students should perform on the assigned day. In case of extenuating circumstances, please notify the instructor at least 24 hours prior to the day of the scheduled presentation. The grading criteria for class presentations are musical and textual preparation, IPA and diction accuracy, poetic and historical score study. An assessment sheet will be distributed early in the term. Each student will receive constructive feedback from peers and the instructor.

### **Final Project**

Select one British or American poem of your choice that has been set by more than one composer. Create an IPA transcription of the text. Listen to two performances of each setting. In a short essay (ca. 500 words), reflect on your response to the poetic text, the musical settings and your preferred performance.

### **Dates for Class Presentations**

First Class Presentations (graded S/U): September 21, 23, 25 (Rehearsals 9/17 and 8)

Final Class Presentations (25% of final grade): October 5, 7, 9 (Rehearsals TBA)

## **Grading**

Using the plus/minus scale, the course grade will be calculated in the following way:

Attendance*	10%
Participation*	15%
Final Exercise	15%
Class Presentations	25%
Final Project	35%
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Total	100%

\*Attendance is an essential element for success in this course. As stated above, there are no discretionary, unexcused absences. Should extenuating circumstances arise that prevent your prompt attendance, please notify the instructor by email or phone as indicated above. Given prior notice, accommodations can be made.

\*Participation is evaluated through in-class activities that include quizzes, dictation practices and daily discussion. Because the course activity is interactive, please set all cell phones and other comparable devices on “off.” In case of an emergency, please inform the instructor prior to class and adjust your equipment to “vibrate.”

Grading Scale by Points & GPA equivalent:

A	93.4 - 100
A-	90.0 - 93.3
B+	86.7 – 89.9
B	83.4 – 86.6
B-	80.0 – 83.3
C+	76.7 – 79.9
C	73.4 – 76.6
C-	70.0 – 73.3
D+	66.7 – 69.9
D	63.4 – 66.6
D-	60.0 – 63.3
E	0 – 59.9

More information on grades and grading policies is here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Please feel free to consult with the instructor at any time regarding your status in the course.

## Keys to Success

### *Phonetic Transcriptions*

Because many symbols have similar shapes, it is important to be distinct in your IPA penmanship. Make phonetic transcriptions that are neat and clearly legible. It is wise to use pencil. Transcriptions should be original work from your hand. Please do not print phonetic readings directly from Internet or published sources

### *Poetic Interpretations*

Please present poetic interpretations in your own words.

Research Citations: Please cite your sources for all class presentations requiring research. A field trip to the Architecture and Fine Arts Library will provide you the tools for research sources and citations.

### *Quizzes*

You will know the date of a quiz one week prior to the class period in which it occurs.

Flashcards, group study and practice exercises will help you prepare for the quizzes.

### *Final Exercise*

The final exercise is an in-class, open book activity requiring access to a textbook and your class notes. Prepare accordingly.

## Weekly Plan

August 31- September 4	Monday – Introductions, Syllabus and Class Orientation Wednesday – Discussion of Singer’s “Diction in Context”  Friday – Quiz on Syllabus Visit from SOM Ambassador Discussion of Vocal Health and Diction	Acquire the Textbook Read pg. xi-xiv Introduction and Message to Students for Wednesday  Read pg. 1 – 15 “Gathering the Tools” for Friday. Be prepared to discuss your answers to the paragraph heading questions.
September 7 - 11	No Class on Monday (Labor Day)  Wednesday – IPA and English Vowels (Announcement of first quiz)  Friday – Discussion: How is Poetry Defined? Who write poetry, why and how? How does a poem become a song? Why is important for a singer to understand the parts of speech?	Read for Wednesday pg. 26-27 (IPA History and Use) and pg. 45-47 (The Sounds of English and English Vowels: The Cornerstones of Singer’s Diction) Read for Friday, pg. 15-23 (Singer’s Diction: Poetry in Song through “Come again, sweet love”
September 14-18	Monday – Comparative listening and Close Reading, Why and How  Wednesday – First Quiz (IPA for English vowels) Symbolism in Poetry and Song/ Diphthongs & Triphthongs (pg. 48-49) and Consonants (pg. 50)	Read for Monday pg. 23-26 and answer the Discussion questions on pg. 26. Prepare for Quiz  Read for Wednesday, pg. 56-59 (Shakespeare and Early English Song)

	<p>Friday – Analysis and Critical Listening of “Go Lovely Rose” in solo and choral settings First Dictation Practice (Vowels only)</p> <p>Rehearsals for First Presentations will occur TBD outside of class.</p>	<p>Read for Friday pg.60-63 “Go, Lovely Rose” Be prepared to discuss questions on pg. 61</p> <p>Materials for First Presentations Due in Class (Text and legible IPA transcription)</p>
September 21-25	<p><b>First Class Presentations S/U</b> <i>Instructor provides program note regarding poet, composer and musical style.</i> <i>Student completes and reads the poem as it will be sung using the IPA transcription, gives a poetic analysis and sings the selection.</i></p>	<p>Be prepared to share with the class your reflections on the poetry and musical settings. Listen attentively to the performances of your peers. You will be asked to respond with constructive feedback.</p>
September 28 – October 2	<p>Monday - Blake, Brownings, and Rossetti: English Poetry and Music in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century In Class Dictation Practice</p> <p>Wednesday – Ivor Gurney, poet/composer and A. E. Housman, the singer’s poet</p> <p>Friday- Dickinson and Whitman, American Song in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries</p> <p>Rehearsals for Final Class Presentations will occur TBD outside of class</p>	<p>Read for Monday, pg. 76-85, Be prepared to respond to discussion question 2 on pg. 80 in class. Create an IPA transcription of “How do I love thee” on pg. 81, Be sure the vowels “rhyme”. Due in class.</p> <p>Read for Wednesday, pg. 86 -93, Write a brief reflection on discussion questions 1 and 3 on pg. 93, Due in class.</p> <p>Read for Friday, pg. 94 -101. Be prepared to answer the discussion questions on pg. 101.</p> <p>Materials for Final Presentations Due in Class (Text and legible IPA transcription.)</p>
October 5 - 9	<p><b>Final Class Presentations Graded</b> <i>Student presents program note regarding poet, composer, and musical style. Student will read the poem as it will be sung using the IPA transcription and sing the selection. Sources should be cited fully.</i></p>	<p>Be prepared to share with the class essential information about the composer, poet and musical setting. Feel free to reflect on the poetry and your experience as a singer. Listen attentively to the performances of your peers. You will be asked to respond with constructive feedback.</p>

October 12	Final Exercise Open Book in Class  Program Note from Final Presentation and Final Project Due by 5 pm	Bring Textbook and all Class Notes to assist you in completing the exercise.  Upload completed Program Note from Final Presentation and Final Project by 5 pm.
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### Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/publicresults/>.

### University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conducthonor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

### Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

### The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations.