

**MFA Voice & Speech 1: Freeing the Natural Voice  
TPP6285**

**Time:** Period 4/5 10:40-12:35am **Days:** M,W

**Location:** CON G013

**Academic Term:** Fall 2021

**Instructor:** Susan Schuld **Office Hour:** by appointment

**Email:** sschuld@ufl.edu

*The recommended method of communication outside of scheduled class time is email*

**Course Description:**

Practicing the fundamentals of Kristin Linklater's voice production allows students to focus intensely in exploring their sense of "self" through identity politics, poetry, and heritage stories. Actors will cultivate vocal ease, power, range, stamina, and responsiveness to impulse. Vocal anatomy and physiology are covered and the actor builds a personal regimen for vocal health and stamina. The program includes concepts and exercises from Kristin Linklater, Moshe Feldenkrais, and F. M. Alexander.

**Course Statement to disrupt race, class, sexual orientation discrimination:**

Diverse languages and dialects are welcome in this classroom. As we communicate with one another, keep in mind that the reader/listener should work as hard as the writer/speaker in the communication process. This means that we will listen patiently, work to understand one another, seek out clarification when necessary and avoid finishing each other's sentences or correcting grammatical errors unless invited to do so.

**Course Goals:**

- Begin the progression of Kristin Linklater's *Freeing the Natural Voice* to improve the actor's vocal production by releasing tension, connecting to the breath and opening the actor's natural resonance.
- Discover the barriers you or certain groups face in the struggle for equality
- Examine writings, videos, and poetry that address racism, gender, sexuality, patriarchy, and feminism shape the way (primarily Western/American) ideology operates
- Develop internal and external awareness
- Develop your actor's process including considerations of awareness, judgment, discipline, curiosity, and a whole-self approach to creative work
- Discover the efficiency of alignment, breath, and sound

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Develop compassion and understanding as well as examining prejudices that hinder human beings from relating to one another
- To identify physical vocal habits and original speaking pattern .
- Learn vocal anatomy and optimal vocal alignment
- Develop a personal physical and vocal warm-up
- To improve vocal production by releasing tension, connecting to breath, and opening resonance.

- To develop a physical awareness of breathing and eliminating tension in the actor's instrument

### **Course Overview:**

This course aims to address the voice in the context of human communication. Students will explore a progression of exercises developed by Kristin Linklater that aims to free, develop and strengthen the voice. The objective, as stated in *Freeing the Natural Voice*, is "a voice in direct contact with emotional impulse, shaped by the intellect but not inhibited by it." Voice work will progress from physical awareness, the discovery of sound in the body to opening the channel for sound and the exploration of resonance and vocal freedom. Students learn text and imagery exercises and apply these skills to their Poetry and Heritage Stories in their final presentation. This class is a playground for the creative imagination, a boot camp for the actor's instrument, and a laboratory for the actor's process. Explorations include body-and-voice based approaches to acting and creating actor-generated original work in addition to applying these new skills and technique to texts.

### **Personal Statement:**

My primary goal in voice training is to reacquaint you with the tools of physical and vocal expression that is your birthright. I am acutely aware of how traditional voice and speech training practices were created for a majority white population of theater artists and how they do not enhance minority students' experiences. Therefore, I am committed to continually interrogating my course curriculum and practices to include diversity, equity, and inclusion topics in order to carefully create a supportive setting.

### **Required Materials:**

Yoga mat, Notebook

### **Textbook (Optional):**

"Freeing the Natural Voice: Imagery and Art in the Practice of Voice and Language" by Kristin Linklater (2nd edition - yellow cover) ISBN: 9780896762503

### **Content Warning:**

In this course, we will cover content and materials that some may find difficult. It is important that in a voice and speech course, we do not shy away from engaging with materials that may be controversial or challenging. I will do my best to give you advance notice when specific materials or content covered may contain images, language or perspectives that some may find difficult, and I encourage you to reach out to me if you are struggling with the course materials. In class, if you need to step away for a period of time as we are covering particular content, you may do so without penalty, but I ask that you remember that you are responsible for any information covered in your absence. We are looking to:

- Build our capacity for uncomfortable conversations
- Allow our classes to be a "Brave Space not a Safe Space"
- Relax into the discomfort

### **Some Texts and Video's used in Course (available for viewing anytime on Canvas):**

*Freeing the Natural Voice* by Kristin Linklater

*My Grandmother's Hands Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* by Resmaa Menakem

Selections from *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide when the Rainbow is Enuf*- Author:

Ntozake Shange, NY: First Scribner Poetry edition, 1997

Poem: "Exotic" Suheir Hammad

Essay: Excerpt from *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) - W.E.B. Du Bois

Ted Talks "How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime by Nadine Burke Harris

Video "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome. How is it Different from PTSD"

PBS News Hour "PTSD effects may linger in body chemistry of next generation"

Article Discover magazine "Grandma's experiences leave a mark on your genes"

### **COURSE CALENDAR (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

Unit 1- Regaining Our Birthrights to Stand, Breathe, and Speak

Week 1: Intro, Awareness, Spine, Create Voice Pictures & Poems

Week 2: Continue Spine, releasing tension, Intro to Breathing, Touch of Sound

Week 3: Alignment, Spine, Humming, Releasing Vibrations

Week 4: Solar Plexus, Sacral Plexus, Floor Work & Releasing Tension

Unit 2- Freeing the Floodgates

Week 5: Freeing the Channel/Jaw

Week 6: Freeing the Jaw/ Intro to Tongue

Week 7: Freeing the Tongue/ Intro to Soft Palate

Week 8: Progression Review through Soft Palate, Heritage Stories

Unit 3- Vocal Power and Ease

Week 9: Throat awareness Intro to Resonators

Week 10: Progression through Resonators

Week 11: Swings, Strengthening & Developing the voice, Heritage Stories

Week 12: Swings, Strengthening & Developing the voice

Unit 4- Putting it All Together

Week 13: Voice Workout onto Poems and Heritage Stories

Week 14: Voice Workout onto Poems and Heritage Stories

Week 15: Voice Workout onto Poems and Heritage Stories

### **Student Responsibilities:**

- Students are expected to participate daily in warm-ups, exercises, and performances
- Students must be dressed in appropriate movement clothing for every class and performance
- Students must be supportive and respectful of their fellow classmates
- Students must complete all assignments and performances on their assigned due date
- Students must contribute focused and creative participation in all class exercises, assignments, and discussions

## **Attendance Policies:**

**Please email/text me/communicate with me when you are sick and won't be in class.**

Any students who are absent from class for reasons related to illness, inclusive of COVID, should not attend rehearsals or performances. If you are sick, stay home and self-quarantine. Please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire and schedule your test for no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 (or email [covid@shcc.ufl.edu](mailto:covid@shcc.ufl.edu)) to be evaluated for testing and to receive further instructions about returning to campus. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the [UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website](#) for more information.

- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.
- If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.

## **Tardiness:**

Tardiness is disruptive to a class of this nature and will not be tolerated. Any tardiness will be recorded along with attendance. Attendance will be taken promptly at the start of class. If you enter the room after the roll-call has been completed, you will be considered tardy. If you enter the room anytime after 20 minutes of the official start of the class you will be marked absent for that class day.

2 tardies = 1 absence

## **My Communication Policy:**

Avoid using words such as "um", "like" or "kinda" when making observations or sharing with the group. This class' focus is on you expressing yourself more clearly and these words will not aid you in that purpose. If you feel a certain way about something, stick by it, don't take the power out of your observations and speech with these weak words.

## **Grading**

Class Participation/Professionalism 20% (*punctuality, communication, attitude*)

Conceptual Information 45% (*homework, quizzes, blogs, papers*)

Midterm 15% (*level of progress in voice skills, application of acting skills, and text skills*)

Final Performance 20% (*level of progress in voice skills, application of acting skills, and text skills*)

## General Grade Guidelines

### **A Exceptional Work** (Outstanding Work)

Inspired Work

Imaginative and through solutions to problems

Shows continuous and exceptional (above average) growth

Shows understanding of basic ideas and methods taught through exceptional application in projects

Timely preparation and submission of class work

Regular and constructive classroom participation in critiques and/or discussion as appropriate to class and subject

Perfect attendance

### **A - Exceptional Work** (Noteworthy Work)

### **B+ Above Average** (Well Above Average Work)

### **B Above Average** (Above Average Work)

Good workable solutions to problems

Shows some insight into problem solving

Shows continuous and above average growth

Shows understanding of basic ideas and methods taught through skillful application in projects

Regular attendance

### **B- Above Average** (Narrowly Above Average Work)

### **C+ Average** (Average in all respects)

### **C Average** (Marginally Average in all respects)

Appropriate solutions to problems

Shows understanding of basic and methods taught through application in projects

Most class work is prepared and submitted in a timely manner

Participates in classroom critiques and/or discussions

Regular attendance

### **C - Average** (Narrowly Average in all respects)

### **D+ Below Average Work** (Marginally Acceptable)

### **D Below Average Work** (Narrowly Acceptable)

Inconsistent solutions to problems

Shows little growth

Shows inconsistent understanding of basic idea and methods taught and applied to projects

Class work is often not prepared and submitted in a timely manner

Rarely participates in classroom critiques and/or discussions

Inconsistent and poor attendance

**D- Below Average Work** (Barely Acceptable)

**F Unacceptable Work** (Failed to meet requirements of the course)

Incomplete or no solutions to problems

Shows little or no growth

Shows little or no understanding of basic ideas and methods taught and the applications of these ideas are often missing or inconsistently presented in class work

Class work is not prepared and/or presented on time or at all

Participates rarely or not at all in classroom critiques and/or discussions

Poor attendance

Letter Grade	% Equivalency	GPA Equivalency
A	100-94	4.0
A-	93-90	3.67
B+	89-87	3.33
B	86-84	3.00
B-	83-80	2.67
C+	79-77	2.33
C	76-74	2.00
C- *	73-70	1.67
D+	69-67	1.33
D	66-64	1.00
D-	63-60	.67
E, I, NG, S-U, WF	59-0	0.00

Please note that a C- is not an acceptable grade for any course in which a 2.0 GPA is required, for example, any course in the major.

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:

[UF Graduate Catalog](#)

[Grades and Grading Policies](#)

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

**Class Participation and Professionalism**

20% of your grade for this class is based on your Participation and Professionalism in discussion and the physical explorations.

Participating in the physical component of the class, means having a positive and rigorous attitude with exploring new work. In other words, resistance to change or negative attitudes towards the work or feedback from the instructor is not participating. It means arriving early, suited up, and ready to move right when class starts.

Participating in discussion does not necessarily mean talking a lot or showing everyone else that you know or have studied a lot. ‘Good discussion’ participation involves trying to build on, and synthesize, the physical experience that has transpired. It also involves showing, respect and appreciation for others’ comments and contributions and learning how to “agree to disagree”.

If you find yourself talking a lot in the feedback sessions, some of the most helpful things you can do are allow for a quiet interlude. Learning to live with unanswered questions is a valuable skill as an actor/artist.

**Skills that define a Professional Attitude are:**

1. Demonstrate empathy, integrity, honesty, good interpersonal skills, curiosity, courage, and desire for change.
2. Ability to adapt to a working environment that is both rigorous and demanding.
3. Ability to show flexibility to changes.
4. Ability to function in the face of uncertainties questions and stresses, which are inherent in the training and artistic process, as well as the profession.
5. Ability and willingness to respond physically to appropriate verbal and tactile cues given by their teachers.
6. Acknowledgment that the work is the discipline and self-discipline will lead to the attainment of one's goals.

**Mistakes to Avoid:**

1. Refusing to Ask for Help
2. Not Being Able to Handle Feedback
3. Gossiping
4. Being Afraid to Make Mistakes
5. Not Admitting You Made a Mistake
6. Having a Bad Attitude
7. Not Learning from Your Classmates
8. Not Being Prepared
9. Comparing your Artistic Journey to Another's Journey

**Work Expectations:** You will have to plan on reading, watching videos, and/or practicing your voice/acting exercises outside of class. A good general rule is to spend two to three hours studying—practicing, reading, taking notes, for each credit hour. Examples of how to manage your time include:

1 credit is 2-3 hours of homework outside of class / 2 credits is 4-6 hours of homework outside of class / 3 credits is 6-9 hours of homework outside of class

4 hours or 240 minutes of homework = 48 min of practice for 5 days a week

5 hours or 300 minutes of homework = 60 min of practice for 5 days a week

6 hours or 360 minutes of homework = 72 min of practice for 5 days a week

**Classroom Behavior:** Please keep in mind that your classmates come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will study engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

**Dress:**

Please wear clothing in which you can breathe and move easily as this course will frequently involve floor-work and expansive movement.

**Touch:**

At some points during the course work, it may be helpful for me to place my hands on your body to facilitate your release of tension, assist with alignment, or to bring awareness to a specific place in your body. This touch is not meant to make you feel uncomfortable or nervous and will always occur with your permission.

**Students Requiring Accommodations**

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

**Course Evaluation**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing [online evaluations](#). Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students on the [Gator Evals page](#).

**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](#) 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.

**Software Use**

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

**Student Privacy**

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the [Notification to Students of FERPA Rights](#).

## Campus Resources:

### Health and Wellness

#### **U Matter, We Care:**

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:** [counseling.ufl.edu/cwc](http://counseling.ufl.edu/cwc), and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

#### **Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)**

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

**University Police Department** at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or [police.ufl.edu](http://police.ufl.edu).

### Academic Resources

[E-learning technical support](#), 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu).

[Career Resource Center](#), Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.

[Library Support](#), Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

[Teaching Center](#), Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio](#), 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

[Student Complaints Campus](#)

[On-Line Students Complaints](#)