

SINGER'S DICTION
Italian/MUS 2241
Fall 2025

Instructor: Dr. Brenda Smith
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Class Meetings

Italian Diction meets M/W/F, Period 5 beginning on Monday, October 20, 2025, in Room 142 of the Music Building. This is a seven-week course that will conclude its meetings on Wednesday, December 3, 2025, with a capstone activity.

Student Office Hours

Student Office hours are posted on the door of MUB 302. Office hours are available by appointment as well. Feel free to communicate by e-mail or phone if needed.

Course Description

The course is designed to improve the capacity of singers, vocal coaches, and choral conductors to perform with ease, accuracy, and expression vocal repertoire in the Italian language. The International Phonetic Alphabet will serve as a basic tool for pronunciation study. The activities of the course will include the preparation and presentation of spoken and sung excerpts from Italian recitative, song, and operatic repertoire from all historical style periods.

Textbooks and Materials

The textbook for the course is *Diction in Context: Singing in English, Italian, German and French* by Brenda Smith (San Diego, CA: Plural Publishing 2021). *Diction in Context* is the textbook for the entire year's course. A copy is always available on the reference shelf of the AFA library.) Each student should purchase an Italian-English dictionary equipped with IPA for the Italian words as well as a copy of the *24 Italian Songs and Arias*, *26 Songs and Arias from 16th & 17th Centuries* or *28 Italian Arias* in medium high or medium low voice as appropriate. Students should consult studio teachers regarding the edition of choice.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of course, students will be able to recognize the phonemes and transcribe them using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Students will be able to enunciate clearly in Italian both in speech and song. Students will have skills to evaluate poetic meaning and historical context for texts set by Italian composers in all style periods. Through critical listening, students will gather criteria for developing an aesthetic appreciation for vocal performance of repertoire in Italian. Students will understand the use of the skills learned for further study of vocal repertoire.

Measurement Tools

Timely attendance, initiative and progress are the criteria for grading. Attendance, quizzes, dictations, self-reflection assignments, classroom presentations, concluding essay, and a comprehensive final exercise will be the measurement tools for the course. All assignments, quizzes and exercises should be completed on time. Should you have a circumstance that keeps you from completing your work on time, please consult the instructor prior to the deadline. Classes are structured as interactive group events and will begin and end on time.

Quizzes, Class Activities and Final Exercise

Quizzes and class activities, an open book final exercise, a final dictation, and an essay are elements of the course grade. The essay (prompt distributed and posted on Monday, November 17, 2025) is due on Friday, December 5, 2025.

Attendance and Participation

Due to the brevity of the semester and the importance of the subject matter for your success as a music major, please arrive on time for class daily. Regular attendance is expected. Excused absences are those officially sanctioned by the University of Florida. <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Class Presentations

Each student will be expected to present to the class Italian texts in spoken and sung form. Presentations will be evaluated for the depth and clarity of preparation and the accuracy of the diction. Class presentations are scheduled from the beginning of the semester and should be given on the date assigned. In case of illness, please notify the instructor at least 24 hours prior to the day of the scheduled presentation. Assessment forms will be distributed prior to presentations, allowing students to understand the elements being assessed. IPA transcriptions should be original work and done by hand **in pencil and legible**. All references (information gleaned from online, printed, or recorded materials) should be cited. The grading criteria for class presentations are musical and textual preparation, diction accuracy, poetic, and historical score study. Each student will receive feedback from peers and the instructor.

Dates for Class Presentations (Note: Dates are subject to change.)

First Class Presentations (graded S/U): November 5 and 7, 2025.

Final Class Presentations (worth 25% of grade): November 19 and 21, 2025.

Final Essay

The final essay prompt will be discussed in class and posted on Canvas.

Grading

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

Attendance/Participation*	10%	(2 x 5 points each)
Quizzes	10%	(2 x 5 points each)
Self-Reflection Assignment	10%	(10 points)
Final Exercise	20%	(20 points)
Class Presentations	25%	(25 points)
Final Essay	25%	(25 points)
	=====	
	100%	

*Italian Diction is a 7-week course with essential material for success as a voice major at UF. Attendance is taken through a daily roll call. 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, accommodation can be arranged. As a courtesy to others, please notify the instructor or a classmate prior to class if you anticipate arriving late.

*Participation is defined as prepared for class and active in-class discussion. Because the class 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 & GPA equivalent:

Percent	Grade	Grade Points
93.4-100	A	4.00
90.0-93.3	A-	3.67
86.7-89.9	B+	3.33
83.4-86.6	B	3.00
80.0-83.3	B-	2.67
76.7-79.9	C+	2.33
73.4-76.6	C	2.00
70.0-73.3	C-	1.67
66.7-69.9	D+	1.33
63.4-66.6	D	1.00
60.0-63.3	D-	0.67
0-59.9	E	0.00

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. **Note: The syllabus is subject to change.**

Proposed Weekly Plan

The details of this plan may vary. Watch for “This Week in Italian Diction” emails (ufl.edu) and notices on Canvas.

October 20-24	<p>Monday: Introduction to course/Discussion of Presentations and “Singing in Italian”/Bel Canto and its Pure/ Open/Closed Vowels</p>	For Monday: Bring Textbook and Italian Art Song Anthology Discussion will cover p.105-108
	<p>Wednesday: “Italian language and Thought”/Importance of Dante/Petrarch in the development of Italian literature and culture and Auxiliary Verbs Discussion of the Letter “e” “Selve Amiche” on p. 109</p> <p>Friday: Discussion of the letter “o, ” Question Words; Consonants, “c”, “g” and “sc”</p>	<p>For Wednesday: Read p. 134-141 Study textbook p. 126: Present Tense essere (to be) and avere (to have) verb forms.</p> <p>For Friday: “Ombra mai fu” p. 110</p>
October 27-31	<p>Monday: First Quiz (Auxiliary Verbs) Songs and Arias of the 17th and 18th c./ How they survived.</p> <p>Wednesday: Single and Double Consonant Practice Italian Arias- old and new: Scarlatti and Donaudy p.147-148 “Sento nel core”</p> <p>Friday: Other Italian Composers of the early era/ p. 142-44 “Intorno al’idol mio”</p> <p>Rehearsal for First Presentations TBA outside of class</p> <p>Materials for First Presentations due in Class</p>	<p>For Monday: Study p. 110-112 of textbook, “Va tacito e nascosto” P. 112-113.</p> <p>For Wednesday: Read textbook p. 147-148</p> <p>For Friday: Read textbook p. 142-44 Arrange Rehearsal with Dr. Nansi Carroll</p> <p>Prepare for Presentation: Arrange rehearsal time with Dr. Nansi Carroll</p> <p>Materials for First Presentation due in Class</p>

November 3-7	<p>Monday: Musical Terms, Presentation Skills, and Early Italian Opera Traditions</p> <p>Wednesday and Friday: First Class Presentations S/U <i>The instructor provides program notes 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 brief poetic analysis and sings the selection.</i></p>	<p>For Monday: Read p. 145-148 Be prepared to answer discussion questions 3 and 5 on p. 148.</p> <p>For Class Presentations: Prepare to recite the text as you intend to sing it, and to share with the class your reflections on the poetry and musical settings. You will be asked to respond with constructive feedback. Bring your Anthology to class.</p> <p>Attendance both days is mandatory.</p>
November 10-14	<p>Monday: Introduction to Italian Vocal Music in the 19th century</p> <p>Wednesday: Gioacchino Rossini</p> <p>Friday: Vincenzo Bellini</p> <p>(Rehearsals for final presentations will be scheduled between November 10 and 19.)</p>	<p>For Monday: Read textbook p. 149-155</p> <p>For Wednesday: Review Parts of Speech and Elements of Grammar p. 115-134</p> <p>For Friday: Prepare to sing with your peers :Duetto: “Là ci darem la mano”/Musical Terms and Question Words</p> <p>Materials for Final Presentations due in Class on Friday, November 14 Self-Reflection Due at 5 pm on Canvas</p>
November 17-21	<p>Monday: Gaetano Donizetti and Giuseppe Verdi Essay Prompt Distributed</p> <p>Wednesday and Friday: FINAL PRESENTATIONS</p> <p>Remember that attendance is mandatory on days when you do not perform. Your presence and feedback are important to your peers. Should you have any questions about the essay, please ask them before you leave for Thanksgiving Break.</p>	<p>For Monday: Read p. 151-157 Expect a practice dictation in class that will be collected for evaluation.</p> <p>FINAL PRESENTATIONS Presentation includes a reading of the Italian text as it will be sung, program note information about the poet, composer, context of the work, and an accurate performance of the selection.</p>

November 24-28	THANKSGIVING BREAK! Remember: There are only two (2) remaining class periods (12/1 and 3), with graded work both days. (Final Dictation and Final Exercise).	Travel safely and enjoy the break!
December 1 December 3 December 5	Monday: Final Dictation Wednesday: Final Exercise LAST DAY OF CLASS <i>December 4 and 5 are “Reading Days” – No Classes.</i> FINAL ESSAY and Printed Program Note with cited sources DUE FRIDAY, DEC. 5, 5 PM DELIVER AS AN UPLOAD TO EMAIL: bsmith@arts.ufl.edu. PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT ESSAY OR PROGRAM NOTE ON CANVAS.	Monday: Final Dictation Bring a pencil to complete your IPA transcription. Wednesday: Final Exercise Bring textbook, class notes, and dictionary for use in the open book, in-class final exercise. PLAN AHEAD! Deliver your work to email: bsmith@arts.ufl.edu before 5 pm on Friday, December 5, 2025 <u>Late work compromises your final grade.</u> PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT ESSAY OR PROGRAM NOTE ON CANVAS.

Keys to Success

Phonetic Transcriptions: It is important to develop distinct and clearly legible IPA penmanship. Use **pencil** to allow for easy correction. Transcriptions should be **original work from your hand**. Feel free to consult published sources (online or print) as reference tools, but it is **not** acceptable to submit a published source instead of your work.

Poetic Interpretations: Please present poetic interpretations in your own words.

Research Citations: Please cite your sources for all class presentations requiring research.

Quizzes: Quizzes are announced one week in advance. Prepare carefully using flashcards and/or group study. Mnemonic devices or charts are not allowed on the quiz form.

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

Final Dictation: Be prepared to transcribe in IPA the text **as the performer sings it**.

Final Essay: Follow every aspect of the Essay Prompt. Use only the textbook and your class notes. Write your essay in your own words without outside sources.

<https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>

