

MFA Voice & Speech 1: Freeing the Natural Voice
TPP6285

Time: Period 4/5 10:40-12:35am **Days:** T,TH

Location: CON G015

Academic Term: Fall 2025

Instructor: Susan Schuld **Office Hours:** Wednesdays 4-5pm and 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 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.
- 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:

- 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.

Required Materials:

Yoga mat, Notebook

Textbook:

"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 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 an accountable space
- Relax into the discomfort

Course Calendar (Subject to Change)

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

Personal Statement:

My primary goal in voice training is to help you reconnect with the physical and vocal tools of expression that are your birthright. I recognize that traditional voice and speech training methods do not always serve every student equally. Because of this, I am committed to continuously examining and evolving my curriculum to include a broad range of topics and perspectives, creating a learning environment that is both inclusive and supportive.

As we engage with texts, videos, and poetry, we may uncover ways in which our voices have been silenced or constrained. You are encouraged to think critically and use credible, verifiable sources to analyze all course materials. This process will help you form your own perspectives and engage thoughtfully with your peers and instructor.

Please note: no lesson in this course is designed to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint or belief.

All languages and dialects are welcome in this classroom. As we communicate, remember that effective dialogue is a shared responsibility. Listeners and readers should work just as hard as speakers and writers to understand one another. This means listening patiently, seeking clarification when needed, and refraining from interrupting, finishing others' sentences, or correcting grammar—unless invited to do so.

Attendance Policies:

Students are expected to attend class and to be on time. Attendance and punctuality matter greatly and count from day one of this course.

A total of 2 unexcused absences are permissible with no penalty in this course. We can call these our 2 “freebies”. After the second freebie, the student’s overall course grade will be lowered one full letter grade (10 points) for EACH additional unexcused absence.

To be considered excused, an absence must be accompanied by appropriate official documentation (except religious holidays/observances, which do not require documentation). Only the following types of absences can be excused (and only if official documentation is provided):

- Illness—doctor's note must be on official letterhead with doctor name, address, phone number, noting date and time of visit and diagnosis verifying absence from class is warranted and doctor’s signature.
- Serious family emergency
- Special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences)
- Military obligation
- Severe weather conditions
- Participating in official university activity (e.g., music performance, athletic competition, debate)
- Court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena)
- Religious holiday/observance (documentation not required for this type of absence)

To help organize accommodations, students should inform instructor by the end of the second week of classes of religious holidays/observances of their faith that will conflict with class attendance this semester.

If you must miss a class meeting for any reason you must notify the instructor and any group partners PRIOR to the missed class; this does NOT “excuse” your absence; it is simple professional courtesy.

If absent, it is YOUR responsibility to obtain information about missed course content, which may include information or directions for upcoming assignments; class buddies, study partners, or small study groups are strongly recommended; reach out to your classmates and build community.

Three instances of lateness count as one unexcused absence (unless the lateness is excused with an acceptable reason AND official documentation). Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each class period. Any arrival after the official start time of the class as published on ONE.UF will be considered late.

Be aware that the UF policy on absence states:

The university recognizes the right of the instructor to make attendance mandatory and require documentation for absences (except for religious holidays), missed work, or inability to fully engage in class. After due warning, an instructor can prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a failing grade for excessive absences.

All requirements detailed above for class attendance and make-up exams/assignments and other work in this course are fully consistent with university attendance policies that can be found at:

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

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

Grading

Class Participation/Professionalism 20% (*punctuality, communication, attitude- see participation rubric*)

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*)

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

Class Participation and Professionalism – please see participation rubric

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. It means arriving early 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/human.

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 – 48-72 min of practice for 5 days a week

3 credits is 6-9 hours of homework outside of class

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.

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 several 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

ACADEMIC AND CAREER

- **E-Learning Technical Support:** Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- **Career Connections Center:** Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- **Library Support:** Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- **Teaching Center:** Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

- **Writing Studio:** 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- **Student Complaints On-Campus:** *Visit the [Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage](#) for more information.*

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- **U Matter, We Care:** If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- **Counseling and Wellness Center:** *Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.*
- **Student Health Care Center:** Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).
- **Sexual Assault Recovery Services:** Visit [Student Health Care Center](#) or call 352-392-1161.
- **University Police Department:** *Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 911 for emergencies).*
- **UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:** For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; *Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).*
- **Food Insecurity:** *Visit UF's [Food Pantry website](#) or call 352-294-3601 or email fieldandfork@ufl.edu for help if you are experiencing food insecurity.*
- **Veterans and Military-Affiliated Students Resources:** *Visit the [UF Collegiate Veterans Success Center website](#) or call 352-294-7233 or email yetsuccess@dso.ufl.edu for resources, community, and support.*
- **Other Concerns and Needs:** See this [comprehensive list of concerns](#) with links to UF resources for help and support.

UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA SoTD
BODY/VOICE/SPEECH TRAINING FOR THE ACTOR I
MIDTERM FALL EVALUATION

Date:	
Student Name:	
Section:	
Instructor Name:	Susan Schuld
Course:	

Area	Ranking
Professionalism: <i>courtesy, punctuality, communication & attitude</i>	
Behavioral Skills: <i>Ability and willingness to re-evaluate technique, explore new approaches to training</i>	
Preparation: <i>homework- both written and rehearsed, quizzes & exams</i>	
Awareness: <i>Elimination of old habits that interfere with the free flow of movement for voice and body</i>	
Physical Instrument: <i>alignment</i>	
Physical Instrument: <i>relaxed shoulders, free of excess tension</i>	
Breathing: <i>coordination of low breath</i>	
Vocal Energy: <i>breath connection to voice, pure vibrations</i>	
Vocal Energy: <i>free of glottal fry, falling off at the ends of lines, or unnecessary upspeak</i>	
Personal Connection to Text	

Ranking Key
 Poor = 5 - 6
 Fair = 7 - 7.5
 Good = 8 - 8.5
 Very Good = 9 - 9.5
 Excellent = 10

Comments / Suggested Goals for Student:

UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
BODY/VOICE/SPEECH TRAINING FOR THE ACTOR I
FALL FINAL EVALUATION

Date:	
Student Name:	
Section:	
Instructor Name:	
Course:	

Area	Ranking
Level of Progress: <i>commitment to new skills & application, comprehension of terminology</i>	
Professional Behavior: <i>to have shown the ability to take and utilize criticism</i>	
Preparation: <i>homework- both written and rehearsed, quizzes & exams</i>	
Physical Instrument: <i>alignment, free of excess tension</i>	
Freedom of Channel: <i>release of jaw & tongue, velum flexibility & open pharynx</i>	
Extra Capacity Breathing: <i>coordination of breath, elasticity in intercostal muscles</i>	
Vocal Energy: <i>developed tone and resonance and blending of resonating ladder</i>	
Vocal Variety: <i>melody use in story (images, phrasing, inflection)</i>	
Application of Text Skills	
Personal Connection to Poem and Heritage Story	

Ranking Key
 Poor = 5 - 6
 Fair = 7 - 7.5
 Good = 8 - 8.5
 Very Good = 9 - 9.5
 Excellent = 10

Comments / Suggested Goals for Student:

Participation Assessment Rubric*

	HIGH QUALITY	COMPETENT	IMPROVEMENT NEEDED	SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT NEEDED
CONTRIBUTION	Student volunteers one or more insightful comments, questions, or observations in every (or almost every) class meeting. Arguments, claims, or positions are relevant to the topic and supported with evidence from the readings	Student usually volunteers at least one thoughtful comment, question, or observation per class meeting. Arguments, claims, or positions are usually relevant to the topic and mostly supported with evidence from the readings	Student volunteers a reasonable or thoughtful comment, question, or observation in some class meetings. Student sometimes does not volunteer or participate in discussion, though they may contribute when the instructor calls upon them. Arguments, claims, or positions are not entirely relevant to the topic	Student rarely or never volunteers a comment, question, or observation and/or comments are usually off-topic or unsupported by readings. Heavy reliance on opinion & personal taste, e.g., "I love it", "I hate it", "It's bad" etc.
LISTENING	Student always listens to and makes collegial eye contact with peers or instructor whenever they are speaking or presenting. Always or nearly always responds to or productively builds upon peers' comments or questions. Often reminds group of comments made by someone earlier that are pertinent.	Student usually listens to and makes collegial eye contact with peers or instructor when they are speaking or presenting. Usually responds to or productively builds upon peers' comments or questions. Student is rarely distracted and is consistently attentive in class.	Student sometimes does not listen to or make collegial eye contact with peers or instructor when they are speaking or presenting. Only sometimes responds to or productively builds upon peers' comments or questions.	Student often does not listen to or does not make collegial eye contact with peers or instructor when they are speaking or presenting. Rarely or never responds upon peers' comments or questions. Student is often distracted or inattentive.
CONDUCT	Student shows respect for all classmates and instructor, both in speech and manner, and for the method of shared inquiry and peer discussion. Does not dominate discussion. Student challenges, critiques, or analyzes ideas respectfully, and encourages and supports others to do the same. Student always works with all classmates and instructor in a cooperative, professional, and supportive manner.	Student generally shows respect for all classmates and instructor and for the method of shared inquiry and peer discussion. Participates regularly in the discussion but occasionally has difficulty accepting challenges to their own ideas or occasionally may lack diplomacy or consideration when challenging or critiquing others' ideas.	Student sometimes shows little respect for a classmate(s), the instructor, or the process as evidenced by speech and manner. Student may sometimes be uncooperative, apathetic, or unsupportive of other members of the class; may sometimes demonstrate rudeness, insensitivity, or lack of support or lack of consideration for other members of the class.	Student shows a lack of respect for members of the class or the process. Often dominates the discussion or disengages from the process. When contributing, can be argumentative or dismissive of others' ideas, or may resort to ad hominem attacks.

*Participation rubric adapted from Relearning by Design, Inc., 2000 and Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, Carnegie Mellon University, 2022.