

University of Florida – School of Theatre and Dance

ORI 2000

SPRING

2015

COURSE MANUAL

PART I—SYLLABUS

School of Theatre and Dance
Spring 2015 SEASON PRODUCTIONS

- ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED FOR THE FOLLOWING 3 PRODUCTIONS.

METAMORPHOSES

By Mary Zimmerman
Constans Theatre
January 23 – February 1

GATOR TALES

Devised and Directed by Kevin Marshall
Nadine McGuire Black Box Theatre
February 13 – 22

COMEDY OF ERRORS

By William Shakespeare
Nadine McGuire Black Box Theatre
April 3 – 12

Weekday & Saturday performances are at 7:30 pm.

Sunday performances are matinees at 2 pm.

Students should redeem production coupons at the University Box Office as early as possible for each production (available 2 weeks in advance of each opening night). It is possible that productions may sell out and waiting until the last possible moment to redeem coupons for tickets may result in a sold-out show. This will not be an excuse for course viewing requirements. Do plan ahead. The box office will ask for student ID when redeeming coupons for reserved seats on specific performance dates.

ORI 2000 COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: Oral Interpretation of Literature

Semester: Spring 2015

Required Textbook: Gura, Timothy & Charlotte Lee, *Oral Interpretation*, 11th Edition. (Houghton Mifflin 2005.) ISBN: 0-618-30817-2

Sections/ Meeting Times & Locations/ Instructors:

Sec. 5235 / MWF, Per. 8 (3:00-3:50PM) – MCCB 3124	Abele, Grace L.
Sec. 2928 / MWF, Per. 9 (4:05-4:55PM) – MCCA 2186	Collins, Jason
Sec. 6767 / MWF, Per. 8 (3:00-3:50PM) – MCCB 1108	Lesh, Jacob D.
Sec. 6745 / MWF, Per. 8 (3:00-3:50PM) – MCCA 2186	Robinson, Christie
Sec. 2895 / MWF, Per. 9 (4:05-4:55PM) – MCCB 1108	Stancil Chelsi L.
Sec. 2962 / MWF, Per. 9 (4:05-4:55PM) – MCCB 3124	Yancey, Everett D.

Credit Hours: 3

Instructor's Office Location and Hours: See Your Instructor's Supplemental Syllabus

Contact Information: See Your Instructor's Supplemental Syllabus

Course Supervisor: Dr. Mikell Pinkney/

Office, CON Rm. 222/ Phone, 273-0512/ E-mail: mpinkney@arts.ufl.edu

1. **Course Content** – The great literature of the ages: poetry; short stories, novels; and plays; are passed down to us and record the great lessons and realizations of civilization. This course focuses on great world literature and the rhetorical devices that we use to convey these stories to an audience.
 - a. Students will perform the following for the class:
 - i. Prose Performance
 - ii. Drama/ Readers Theatre Performance
 - iii. Poetry Performance
 - iv. Professional Presentation (business or education-oriented; must incorporate at least one literary component, preferably two; e.g. short story or novel)
 - b. Students will provide a 1 page written analysis of the literature to accompany each performance. This will allow students to focus on the literature and articulate what they are trying to demonstrate in the presentation of each piece.
 - c. Students will attend 3 of UF's School of Theatre and Dance Productions, and write a 2-page paper on each, discussing the skills used by the performers to bring the literature to life before an audience. The focus of these papers will be on the performance elements observed in these productions, and will explain how the performers were effective or ineffective when orally interpreting the literature they spoke.
2. **Required Productions** –
 - a. Students will be provided with a voucher for the 3 required productions, and the ticket processing fee will be \$2 per ticket.
3. **Paperwork** –
 - a. Analysis papers must be 1 page, hard-copy, MLA format, and handed in the day of a performance.
 - b. Production papers must be 2 pages, hard-copy, MLA format, on time, and include a ticket stub stapled to the top left corner.

Student Learning Objectives

1. Students identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the discipline (Critical Thinking)
2. Students approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives (Critical Thinking)
3. Students will communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the discipline, individually and/or in groups (Communication)
4. Students demonstrate higher-order oral analytical communication (Communication)
5. Students demonstrate higher-order oral artistic communication (Communication)

For more information about General Education Student Learning Outcomes go to:
http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/Date/Sites/10/media/gened_slo.pdf

Course Goals -

- Students will be able to analyze a cross-section of world literature; poetry, short stories; novels; and plays (SLO 1, 2 & 3)
- Students will become familiar with the skills necessary for effective oral presentation of world literature (SLO 1 & 2)
- Students will develop the voice (SLO 3, 4 & 5)
- Students will relax the body to stand and move with confidence and ease (SLO 3, 4 & 5)
- Students will utilize eye contact with the audience for connection and impact (SLO 3, 4 & 5)
- Students will develop the ability to improvise within a speech or performance (SLO 2, 3, 4 & 5)
- Students will write about and discuss performances seen over the course of the semester, focusing on being able to convey the essence of the literature with the skills of effective performers (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)
- Students will apply tools used by beginning performers: objective, obstacle, and tactics (SLO 4 & 5)

Course Outline –

The following is an outline of the semester. See calendar for specific discussion days, workshops, and paper deadlines. Paper due dates are dependent on the School of Theatre and Dance's performance schedule.

Week	Topic
1	Syllabus, Calendar, Ice Breakers, how to write a critique
2	Basic principles & Analyzing Text (Chapters 1 & 2)
3	Vocal and physical work (Chapters 3 & 4)
4	Introduction to prose (Chapters 5 & 6)
5	Prose workshop
6	Prose performance
7	Introduction to Dramatic reading/Readers Theatre (Chapters 7 & 8)
8	Drama/Readers Theatre workshop
9	Drama/Readers Theatre performance
10	Introduction to Poetry (Chapters 9 & 10)
11	Poetry workshop
12	Poetry performance
13	Introduction to business related/education-related presentation (Pecha Kucha)
14	Business/Education workshop
15	Business/Education presentation

Course Materials –

- Class Manual to be purchased at Target Copy
- Required Textbook available at campus bookstore or online:
Gura, Timothy & Charlotte Lee, *Oral Interpretation*, 11th Edition. (Houghton Mifflin 2005.)
ISBN: 0-618-30817-2
- Binder or folder to store class readings, stories, monologues, poems, scenes, and papers.
- Notebook.

- A water bottle (recommended)
- Access to the internet for emailed or assigned performance viewing
- Access to movies (i.e. library, rental store, Netflix)
- Suggested readings will be brought in throughout the semester for your further development outside of the course

Evaluations and Grades –

Assignment	Points
<i>Participation</i> in story unit: workshops, discussions, exercises, etc.	50
Story <i>Workshop</i> + character analysis/scoring	50
Story <i>Performance</i> + revised character analysis/scoring	50
<i>Participation</i> in poetry unit: workshops, discussions, exercises, etc.	50
Drama <i>Workshop</i> + character analysis/scoring	50
Drama <i>Performance</i> + revised character analysis/scoring	50
<i>Participation</i> in dramatic scene unit: workshops, discussions, exercises, etc.	50
Poetry <i>Workshop</i> + character analysis/scoring	50
Poetry <i>Performance</i> + revised character analysis/scoring	50
<i>Participation</i> in business/education unit: workshops, discussions, exercises, etc.	50
Business/education pres <i>workshop</i> + character analysis/scoring	50
Business/education pres <i>performance</i> + revised character analysis/scoring	50
Production Paper #1	50
Production Paper #2	50
Production Paper #3	50
Attendance/Participation	250
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE:	1,000

Grading Scale –

Letter Grade	Points	% Equivalency	GPA Equivalency
A	930-1000	93-100% Superior Effort	4.0
A-	900-929	90-92%	3.67
B+	870-899	87-89%	3.33
B	830-869	83-86% Good Effort	3.0
B-	800-829	80-82%	2.67
C+	770-799	77-79%	2.33
C	730-769	73-76% Average Effort	2.0
C-*	700-729	70-72%	1.67
D+	670-699	67-69%	1.33
D	630-669	63-66% Minimum Effort	1.0
D-	600-629	60-62%	.67
E, I, NG, S-U, WF	0-599	0-59%	0.0

*Please note that C- is no longer an acceptable grade for any course in which a 2.0 GPA is required, for example, any course in the major. UF grading policy website:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#calculatinggpa>

Class Attendance / Demeanor Policy –

Attendance and participation in university level classes are mandatory. It is the responsibility of the student to be an active and focused participant physically, mentally, and verbally. However, UF policy allows up to three (3) unexcused absences, and two chances to be late. After these, each absence (beyond 3) is a deduction of 30 points - and each tardy (beyond 2) is a deduction of 20 points from Attendance and Participation grades. Missing class/late arrival for a partner/group work will result in a zero for that assignment in addition to the point deductions for absences.

Attendance of UF SoTD Productions –

Since production is the laboratory for all theatre courses, attendance at all mainstage School of Theatre and Dance productions is required of students enrolled in classes with the following prefix designations: THE, TPA, TPP, ORI. Critiques and/or responses to these productions may be required. Attendance at all related events is encouraged.

Students with Disabilities

The instructor will make every attempt to accommodate students with disabilities. At the same time, anyone requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (Peabody Hall). The Dean of Students will provide you with the necessary documentation, which you must then provide to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

Academic Honesty –

The university's policies regarding academic honesty, the honor code, and student conduct related to the honor code will be strictly enforced. Full information regarding these policies is available at the following link:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>

Final Note –

This syllabus is subject to change by the instructor or the course supervisor, and it is the student's responsibility to make note of any changes discussed in class. In Addition, students will receive a separate syllabus for each individual section of the course detailing specific details from individual instructors.

CLASS MANUAL

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Objectives are to allow the students to develop communication and performance skills through oral presentation of literature, and to provide the student with a greater appreciation of quality literature and performance.

Fundamentals include the ability to **stand calmly and confidently**, to **speak loudly and clearly** enough to be understood easily, and to **make eye contact with the audience**. We will endeavor to build upon this basic foundation with a wide variety of tools, designed to develop the student's expressive potential in the reading of literature before an audience.

COURSE CONTENT

Students will perform a series of **oral performances** for the class. For each project, students will prepare a **written analysis** (character analysis worksheet) to prepare for performance. This analysis includes exploring the specific genre of the period and culture of the piece. Also, for some projects, students will be given the opportunity to “workshop” the piece in class prior to performance. In these cases, students will be graded on their readiness to work (**preparation grade**). In other cases, students will be required to prepare for performance completely independently.

Students will also give a **Final** performance, which will be the last piece performed in the semester and will be performed during the last week of classes.

Attendance is required for this class. Warm-ups, lectures, and class discussion are important elements of the course. These are related to your **participation grade**. There are no more than three absences allowed in the course.

Attendance is also required at performances of the School of Theatre and Dance Mainstage productions.

PERFORMANCE GRADES

Grading criteria are outlined on the **grading sheets (See Appendix)**. Unless specifically instructed otherwise, you are responsible for giving attention to each category whether or not your instructor has covered them all in workshop.

Distribution of points shown on the grading sheets is a general guideline and may be adjusted by your instructor. For instance, for one assignment, your instructor might choose to focus your attention solely on vocal production, physical work, and audience interaction. If that were the case, you would be informed that the points for that assignment would be distributed among those three categories only, ignoring the other two.

WRITTEN ANALYSIS AND PREPARATION GRADES

When you come in to workshop your piece, you will need to have **two copies of your script, typed**, double-spaced, wide margins, appropriately marked. You also will need to turn in at that time a copy of your **character analysis worksheet (see appendix)**. It is your responsibility to know the material well enough to pronounce all the words correctly and to be able to make at least some eye contact. You should be familiar enough with your own choices shown in your written analysis and script markings to be able to execute them in performances.

PARTICIPATION

Criteria include attentiveness, participation in and/or leadership of warm-up exercises, readiness and willingness to work during workshop periods, etc.

Consider this class manual a contract between you and this instructor, and do not ask for special exceptions to be made.

You are REQUIRED to see the 3 School of Theatre and Dance Mainstage productions listed as REQUIRED, listed on Season Productions. You are required to turn in a 2-page report for each of the three productions. You must **not** include a synopsis. **Do** discuss the actors' work, being as specific as possible about the performance techniques of individual performers. The idea is **not** to **evaluate**, but rather to **report your observations**. Draw parallels between what you observe and your work in class.

EXTRA CREDIT: At instructor's discretion, may be awarded for extra work such as ushering for School production or seeing an additional on-campus School of Theatre and Dance production.

PENALTIES:

Late assignments	-20 points for each class day late
3rd tardiness and each additional tardiness	-20 points from your final grade
4th absence <u>and each additional absence</u>	-30 points from your final grade
Failure to see each mainstage performance & paper	-50 points from your final grade

Examples of **excused** absences (**Only for performance days**): Team travel, band, academic field trips with written documentation provided to instructor at least 1 week in advance. Note from a doctor on letterhead stationery stating that you are ill, provided to instructor on date you return to class. (Bill for prescription medicine is not sufficient). Notify instructor in advance by telephone if you may be absent when you are scheduled to workshop or perform.

Examples of **unexcused absences**: Car stolen; flat tire; airport delays; alarm clock failure; and short-term illnesses for which you choose not to see a physician. Instructor's sympathy for such misfortunes is witnessed by allowance of **up to three** unexcused absences without penalty.

PART II -- REFERENCE MATERIAL

Introduction

Why take ORI 2000?

What we will teach you in Oral Performance of Literature has the advantage of being relatively unchanging. Good communications skills are much the same today as they always have been. The rhetorical devices we use to enhance language are the same ones used in ancient times. What we teach will not become obsolete.

Oral Interpretation vs. Public Speaking

In many University of Florida curricula, the student has a choice between taking Public Speaking or Oral Interpretation of Literature. Both are valuable courses, and both will help you to effectively communicate in your profession. Fear of appearing before a group will lessen as your experience grows; problems you may have with diction or projection can be identified and corrected by instructors with special skills in these areas.

Public speaking proceeds from the premise that you are, in effect, portraying yourself when you speak. While certain “theatrical” techniques and rhetorical devices may be employed in a speech, the essence of such a presentation generally is non-fictional. A presentation in a public speaking course may, for example, consist of persuading the audience to adopt your point of view on an issue, or the speech may be primarily informative. Regardless of the category, however, the public speaking presentation typically does not involve the taking on of an imagined persona--a character, if you will.

Oral Interpretation, on the other hand, involves the presentation of literature. We deal, quite simply, with fiction. Even when presenting an objective, third-person narration, it must be understood that you are, at the very least, creating the suggestion of a character other than yourself. You will create the suggestion of a mood and locale that will, ideally, transport your audience.

Oral Interpretation is not the same thing as acting, although your instructors are trained actors pursuing graduate degrees in theatre performance. You will, for example, be reading from a manuscript in this course and not memorizing your lines. You will not employ all the physical techniques of the stage actor, nor will you rely on the various design and technical elements of the stage collaboration. But you will be using your imagination, your voice and your body to recreate the artificial world first envisioned by the author--and this recreation shares many of the techniques associated with stage acting.

Remember that **you are an interpreter**. Your role in this class is not simply to “read” various forms of literature out loud; you are expected, and required, to form an educated opinion about the selections you perform. You will make artistic choices about your material, and you will be expected to support these choices.

Always keep in mind, though, that there is **no one “correct” interpretation of literature**. Part of the beauty of any art lies in this simple fact. Different ages, different audiences, and different interpreters may draw vastly different meanings from a piece of literature. Look at it this way: literature does not provide answers -- it demands, rather, that questions be asked. Your performances will raise questions in the minds of your audience. Your interpretation will affect your audience; it will, ideally, make them think.

Do not infer from this that any interpretation of literature is correct. Decisions on interpretation must be supported by what the author writes. We may read various meanings from a work of literature; we may not, arbitrarily, read meaning into it.

As an oral interpreter of literature, you are expected to: **understand the piece to be presented; discover, and preserve, the author’s intent; communicate effectively; integrate intellectual and emotional responses to the work; respond both vocally and physically to the work; involve the listeners; and preserve, cultivate and share literary art.**

Underlying all this is an additional function of the interpreter. **You are expected to entertain your audience; to grab and hold their attention.** You are expected to be a performer, and the bulk of your grade in this course will come from a subjective evaluation of your in-class performances.

Selection of Performance Pieces

The four class projects will be:

- 1) Children’s Story or Short Story
- 2) Poetry or Monologue
- 3) Dramatic Literature/Scene
- 4) Business or Education-Oriented Presentation

While your instructor may give you guidance in selecting your in-class performance pieces, and will require instructor approval of final performance piece selections, the burden is placed on you to locate material. We encourage the diversity of performance choices our students traditionally have provided.

Q: Where should you look to find appropriate material?

A: Library West and local bookstores.

Q: What should you look for?

A: Material that not only meets the requirements of the assignment but that also excites you.

It is virtually impossible for the beginning interpreter to do a good job with material she/he doesn’t care for. Even experienced actors find it difficult to do their best with roles they do not like.

Length

Generally 2 to 4 minutes is a good guideline for in-class performances. If you want to do a piece that is shorter than 2 minutes you may want to supplement it with another short piece. A Shakespearian sonnet, though it will run under a minute will be sufficiently challenging to stand alone for an in-class performance. If in doubt consult your instructor.

The final may be from 3 to 6 minutes. Again, if you want to do a piece shorter than 3 minutes, supplement it with another shorter piece.

Some general considerations about the selections of material:

The views and beliefs of all members of the class must be respected. It is conceivable that some material chosen for class presentation may be objectionable to some class members. While we hope that no one would deliberately choose to present a blatantly racist or bigoted performance piece to a classroom, it would be foolish to presume that your peers feel exactly the same as you do on all issues.

This has nothing to do with freedom of speech; it has to do with common courtesy. The choice of performance pieces by the student will not be censored, but we hope that each student will respect the cultures, lifestyles and individual choices that each fellow student has made.

If a student is concerned that a particular performance piece may offend fellow students, then we encourage consultation with the instructor.

You are encouraged to listen to others with an open mind. But if you are offended by the selections made by classmates, you are encouraged to make these feelings known to the instructor.

Should you have trouble finding appropriate pieces, consult with your instructor. Remember that our primary task in ORI is to foster good performance skills. We are not here to proselytize.

TYPES OF PERFORMANCE

The first assignment is the children's story or short story. Usually this material is written in prose and encourages the expressive use of the voice.

Poetry is the second assignment. This may be somewhat daunting to some students. Poetry is, after all, quite different from day-to-day speech. We are not used to speaking in rhyme, or in a forced meter.

Nonetheless, this exercise offers some advantages to the beginning oral interpretation student. For one thing, the meaning and the power of poetry come not only from what is said, but from how it sounds. Thus, from the very outset, the student is made acutely aware of the importance of proper vocal production.

Poetry also tends to explore many avenues of meaning. A good poem is more densely written than most prose. Beginning with this exercise allows the student to sample from a broader “menu” of literary devices.

What is poetry? It is a kind of language that says more and says it more intensely than ordinary language. While the most common use of language is to convey information, literature of all kinds deals with more than this simple aspect. Novels and short stories, plays and poems--these exist to bring us a sense and a perception of life. They widen and sharpen our contacts with existence. Their concern is with experience. The poet, like all of us, has felt, observed and imagined various experiences; but unlike most of us the poet selects, combines and reorganizes these experiences so as to share them with readers.

Poetry deals with language, of course, but in poetry we see a multidimensional language usage. Poetry draws more fully and more consistently from “language resources” not common in simple spoken communication. Among these are resources dealing with the sound of the words presented: alliteration and assonance, repetition, rhythm and pattern. Poetry sounds different from regular speech; it appeals to our ears, not just our minds.

The meaning of language also takes on a different shape and construction in poetry. There is a density of allusion and reference in poetry not found in ordinary speech, or even in the prose of some fine literature.

Meter and Rhythm in Poetry

Not all poetry, of course, rhymes. Nor do all poems share specific metrical patterns. What is common to all true poetry is that the arrangement and the sound of the words are distinct from ordinary communicative speech. Poetry, generally, is meant to be read aloud.

As an aid to the study of this “sound” of poetry, a terminology of rhythm and meter has, over the years, been developed. “Rhythm” is a wavelike recurrence of motion or sound. In speech it is the natural rise and fall of language. To some degree, all language is rhythmical; there are, however, differences in degree. **Meter** implies a regular, repeating rhythm. Metrical language contains accents which occur at roughly equal intervals of time.

Poetry with a consistent meter is called verse. Not all poetry, however, is strictly metrical (consider i.e. Cummings). “Verse” and “Poetry” are not synonymous terms.

In every word of more than one syllable, one syllable typically is accented or stressed in the English language. In a sentence, certain words or syllables are given more prominence in pronunciation. In prose, this accenting is more or less haphazard; in verse, accents are made at regular intervals.

Meter also implies a sense of measurement, and thus there is a need for a unit of measurement. In “measuring” verse we use a foot, the line, and, sometimes, the stanza.

The foot is the basic metrical unit. Normally, the foot consists of one accented syllable plus one or two unaccented syllables. On rare occasions there may be three unaccented syllables--or none. Generally, a short, curved line “?” indicates an unaccented syllable; a short, horizontal line “-” indicates an accented syllable; and a vertical bar “|” indicates the division between feet.

The following are basic kinds of metrical feet:

Iamb	to-day
Trochee	dai-ly
Anapest	in-ter-vene
Dactyl	yes-ter-day
Spondee	day-break
Monosyllable	day

The line is measured by naming the number of feet in it.

Monometer	1
Dimeter	2
Trimeter	3
Tetrameter	4
Pentameter	5
Hexameter	6
Heptameter	7
Octameter	8

For example, the “blank verse” of Shakespeare frequently takes the form of *unrhymed iambic pentameter*.

Prose

What is not poetry may be classified as prose. These are, of course, many different types of oral performance which fall into this category, and each presents specific challenges to the student.

The Third-Person Narrative

This assignment--which might also be called an “unidentified” narrative, since the speaker does not take on a specific identity or “voice”--allows the student to explore the elements of prose fiction in a limited way. Since you will not be taking on a specific persona, and since your narrative will most likely not involve direct quotes or speeches, you will be able to concentrate on relatively few variables.

Third-person selections often imply a narrator who is omniscient, and one who presents a (more or less) objective view of the scene being described. We suggest that when choosing pieces you begin with selections where the narrator does not overtly judge the proceedings or accounts presented.

But the third-person narrator may also be a bit more involved in the story being told. You may find it necessary to discover some of the basic characteristics of the speaker. Who, for example, is speaking, and what do you (and we in the audience) need to know about him? Does the speaker represent the author (we call this type of figure a *raisonneur*) or the author’s point of view, or is s/he somehow removed?

What can we say about the narrator's point of view? What is the relationship between him/her and the story?

How does the narrator choose to tell the story? Is there an implied distance--in the time or space--between the events and the narration, or is there a sense of immediacy?

How does the narrator feel about the events or people described? Is the narrator reliable? Can we believe him or her?

The First-Person Narrative

Here, in this "identified" narrative, you will take on a role, or *persona*. No longer are you the objective, omniscient speaker of the previous exercise; now you have a clear opinion and a stake in the material. Now the material is personal. Generally, you will find that there is a larger emotional attachment to the events described in a first-person narrative. After all, this story "happened" to you, the reader. This exercise is closer to acting.

In creating your character, consider these questions:

- What time is it? What is the century, year, season, day or minute?
- Where am I? What country, city, neighborhood, house, room, or area of the room do I occupy?
- What occupies the space along with me? What other people or objects are in the immediate vicinity?
- What are the given circumstances? What constitutes the past, present, and future for me?
- What is my relationship to the events and characters around me?
- What do I want? What are my objectives?

Additional questions:

- What's in my way? What are the obstacles facing me?
- What do I have to do to get what I want?
- What is the physical and verbal action I must take?

In short, you must know your character inside and out. Look at the choices your character makes and the reasons behind them. Make us believe in the character!

Dialogue Reading

Here an additional variable is created. You will, in your presentation, take on two (or more) characters. You will be presenting a conversation, and thus you will need to prepare two "voices"

--both literally and figuratively.

- How can you build a contrast between these characters? What, specifically, will you have to change in your vocal presentation?
- How can you make it absolutely clear to your audience both who is speaking at any given point, and what the relationship is between the characters you are representing.

There also are physical concerns. It is not enough to change your voice when presenting multiple characters; you must also alter your physical stance and posture to convey to your audience that more than one person is speaking.

A common convention of dialogue presentation is, simply, to turn slightly to one side to indicate a change of character. Imagine that the two characters are speaking to one another, and adjust yourself so that they: “face” one another.

- Consider also the physical size of the two characters. If one is shorter than the other, you may wish to have that character look up when speaking. The taller character will then look down when it is his turn to speak.
- Be subtle when adding these physicalizations to your characters. You will, most of the time, be alone on stage. Your audience’s attention will be focused on you when you perform, and the slightest gestures and movements will clearly “read” to them.

Often, in a dialogue reading that is not strictly dramatic, you may also have to present a narration along with the characters’ speeches. This is especially true in readings taken from novels and short stories, where the narrator not only provides background information (which we call *exposition*), but also helps to move the story along.

The narrator may also provide “stage directions” that help the audience to visualize the events taking place. The narrator may also provide *segues*, or transitions, between separate events in the story. The narrator in a dialogue performance must, of course, be clearly differentiated from the characters.

Dramatic Reading

Plays are the primary source for dramatic readings. Your dramatic reading will usually consist of a monologue cut from a play script. Unlike the dialogue reading discussed above, the dramatic reading generally will not feature a separate narrator. All the information presented to your audience will come from the actual words the character speaks.

It will be useful to hold on to your monologue for future use. Should you decide to audition for a play.

Two-person scenes are a possibility. If you choose to do this be sure to choose a partner with whom you’ve already established some kind of rapport, as you will have to coordinate rehearsal times, and deal with the give and take of deciding how you will perform the piece. An alternative is to simply have a partner read in a few lines to assist you in the performance of what is essentially a monologue that you alone will be graded on.

THE SOUND OF PERFORMANCE

Since we are dealing with Oral Performance of Literature, it may be helpful here to discuss the art of pure sound. Virtually every aspect of vocal production can be broken down into the following elements:

PITCH, RATE, VOLUME, PHRASING, PAUSING, and STRESS.

Volume - The audibility of your voice is crucial to your performance. Remember you have to project your voice in order to be heard. If you're a soft-spoken individual, you will have to be especially aware of your volume. Let your volume be the guide for the emotions you portray in your performance. Think about your everyday speech. What do you do when you're frustrated, joyous, awe-inspired, etc?

Pitch relates to the physics of sound. More frequent vibrations create a "higher" pitch. While we tend to think of pitch in terms of music (someone may be said, for example, to have "perfect pitch"), this concept has a very real place in the study of oral interpretation. Experiment with various pitches. What seems to be the effect of raising or lowering pitch? Are there places in your selection where the pitch might change? When you are presenting two characters, for example, can a simple change in pitch create the needed differentiation between the two? Does your voice seem to carry farther, or more distinctly, when using a different pitch?

Perhaps more important is establishing the proper pitch for your own, natural, speaking voice. Your instructor will here be your guide; s/he, is a trained actor, has developed a highly tuned ear toward speech. Frequently, we tend to speak in a manner that is culturally dictated. Women may raise their pitch to sound more feminine; men may try to achieve a lower, huskier sound than is natural for them. Your voice--your instrument--is unique to you. Use it as it was intended.

Occasionally, though less frequently, a person's normal speech pattern may be too slow. Remember, we must maintain the interest of our audience. Sometimes this involves "pushing" the rate, and thus forcing the audience to listen more closely to our reading in order to keep up.

Rate - Keep in mind that we speak at a certain rate in everyday conversation, and we must be aware of our rate when we perform. Therefore, if you slow down when you perform, and articulate, you'll be fine.

Volume needs a little explanation. At the very least we all know that something must be loud enough to be heard. But even beyond this basic requirement of sound, how can volume be used to make our performances more effective? Volume, like rate, should be seen as variable within a performance. Do you remember the advertising campaign for a certain perfume that contained the line: "If you want to get someone's attention...whisper." There is real truth in this, providing you are loud enough to be audible, there may be real, affective power in lowering your volume in key places within your piece.

Phrasing almost invariably involves two sets of choices. The author of your piece most likely implied certain phrasing in his text. Commas, periods, semicolons, ellipsis...all these imply a certain way of putting words together. There is an implicit phrasing in poetry; unless the author puts some punctuation at the end of a line of verse it is understood that we go on to the next line without a break.

But a further phrasing choice involves your interpretation. Even within the grammar and punctuation given by your author, there are multiple ways to organize the sounds you create. Think of all the ways to say the following lines:

“To be, or not to be; that is the question.”

“Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
For loan oft loses both itself and friend
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all; To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

Closely tied in with phrasing is **pausing**. One punctuative element of phrasing is, in fact, the pause. The playwright Harold Pinter is famous for his “pauses” and silences.” As performers, we must remember that a pause does not mean that all action stops. A pause is filled with meaning. Use pauses to achieve specific effects. Make eye contact with your audience, for example, or use the moment to suggest that your character, or persona, is using this time to make a decision.

Stress involves an emphasis. Certain words, or even syllables, seem to require that we figuratively underline them. The basic arrangement of poetry, and poetic “feet,” implies a certain stress. The rhetorical devices mentioned later in this manual seem to call for the underlining of certain phrases.

VOCAL EXERCISES

Your voice is your primary instrument in Oral Interpretation. It needs to be exercised and trained. Just as athletes warm up before competition, performers need to prepare. The following are exercises designed to aid in vocal performance.

Although many are somewhat silly, give them serious attention. You will receive no benefit from these exercises if you go about them half-heartedly. Just as five-finger exercises are helpful in learning to play the piano, these will help you in the oral interpretation of literature.

Your instructor may use these as part of a vocal warm-up before performance. You also may wish to use these before class to help get your mouth loosened up.

Give me the gift of a grip top sock
A clip drape ship shape tip top sock
Not your spiv slick slapstick slip shod stock
But a plastic elastic grip top sock
None of your fantastic slack swop slob
From a slap dash flash cash haberdash shop
Not a knick knack knitlock knock need knickerbocker sock
With a mock shop blob mottled trick ticker tock clock
Not a rucked up puckered up flop top sock
Nor a super sheer seersucker pukka sack smock sock
Not a spot speckled frog freckled cheap sheik's sock
Off a hodge podge moss blotched botched Scotch block
Nothing slip shod, drip drop, flip flop, or glip glop
Tip me to a tip top grip top sock

What a to do, to die today
At a minute or two 'til two.
A thing distinctly hard to say
But harder still to do.
For we'll beat a tattoo
At a twenty to two

With a rat-a-tat, tat-a-tat, tat-a-tat, too.
And the dragon will come
When he hears the drum
At a minute or two 'til two today,
At a minute or two 'til two.

TONGUE-TWISTERS

(Remember—"perfect practice" makes perfect!

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
where is the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

Theophilus Thistle, the successful thistle sifter,
sifted a sieve of unsifted thistles.
If Theophilus Thistle, the thistle sifter,
sifted a sieve of unsifted thistles,
where is the sieve of unsifted thistles
Theophilus Thistle, the thistle sifter, sifted?

Betty bought a bit of butter to brighten her batter,
but the bit of butter made her batter bitter,
so Betty bought a bit of better butter to blend with her batter,
and the blended bit of better butter made Betty's batter better.

Amidst the mists and coldest frosts with barest wrists and stoutest boasts,
he thrusts his fists against the posts but still insists he sees the ghosts.

She sells seashells down by the seashore.

Skip shipped six thick fixed-tip sticks.

Ned Nott was shot and Sam Shott was not. Surely it is better to be Shott than Nott. Some say Nott was not shot, but Shott says he surely shot Nott. If the shot Shott shot at Nott was not shot, then Nott was not shot. But if the shot Shott shot shot Nott, Nott was surely shot. But what if the shot Shott shot at Nott instead shot Shott? Then Shott was shot, not Nott. Surely the shot Shott shot should have shot Nott, not Shott.

Ben's baby buggy with a rubber baby buggy bumper banged a baby buggy with a bigger baby bumper. The baby buggy with the bigger better baby buggy bumper bent the bumper of Ben's baby buggy backwards.

Slim Sid's second sled soon slid south.

LONGER TONGUE-TWISTERS AND ARTICULATION EXERCISES

It is absolutely necessary, in the discharge of his duty, day and night, that the engineer of your yard engine make it ding and dong and fizz and spit and clang and bang and buzz and hiss and bellow and wail and pant and rant and yowl and howl and grate and grind and puff and bump and clink and clank and chug and moan and hoot and toot and crash and grunt and gasp and groan and whistle and wheeze and squawk and blow and jar and jangle and puff and growl and thump and boom and clash and jolt and jostle and shake and screech and quiver and grumble and roar and rattle and yell and smoke and smell and shriek like Hades? Tell me, is it absolutely necessary?

I am the very model of a modern Major General; I've information vegetable, animal and mineral;
I know the kings of England, and I quote the fights historical, from Marathon to Waterloo, in

order categorical. I'm very well acquainted, too, with matters mathematical; I understand equations, both the simple and quadratic; About binomial theorem I am teeming with a lot of news, with many cheerful facts about the square of the hypotenuse.

I'm very good at integral and differential calculus; I know the scientific names of beings animaculous. But still in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral, I am the very model of a modern Major General.

PROJECTION

You will likely be told to project your voice. In simplest terms this means speaking loud enough to be heard. The term project is used to avoid simply “pushing” the sound out, but instead to think in terms of breath support and allowing the sound to come out, or releasing it.

UNDESIRABLE VOCAL QUALITIES

The following is a list of qualities you will want to avoid in order to have the most effective sound for neutral characters, and to avoid in order to preserve your voice. However, you may wish to use these qualities intentionally in order to portray a specific type of character.

- Breathy - inadequate adduction (closure) of the vocal folds, not enough support.
- Strident - example: Joan Rivers. High, tense, brassy. Hypertension of laryngeal muscles.
- Harsh - rough, raspy, gravelly, low pitch. Hypertension of the adduction of the vocal folds.
- Nasal (Hyper nasal) - twang, whining, or honking. Soft palate (velum) low, sound goes into nasal cavity.
- Denasal (Hyponasal) - no sound through nasal resonators.
- Throaty - hollow, cavernous, “goofy” sound. Retraction of tongue or too much tension in the soft palate.
- Hoarse - scratchy, strained. Example: Demi Moore. Condition gets worse with time.
- Vocal Fry - Sound like hot fat in a skillet, low pitch, gravelly, typically happens at ends of sentences. Tense vocal muscles, but loose support - insufficient sub-glottal pressure.
- Glottal Attack - hypertense vocal folds. Initial release of breath explodes. Coughing is a kind of glottal attack, and is one of the worst things you can do to your voice. Clearing the throat is also bad - try vibrating instead.
- Thinness - high pitch. example: Audrey in *Little Shop of Horrors*. Lacks richness, monotonous high pitch range. Poor breath support

PHYSICAL WARM-UPS

While primarily we are dealing with vocal production in this course, there also is a need to prepare the body for performance. We will see you as well as hear you as you perform, and your physical presentation cannot be separated from the overall effect you create on your audience.

Keep your warm-ups simple! You will not have much time to prepare for in-class performances, but you will find that even a short stretch helps. Along with stretching you should employ some limited aerobic activity. Muscles stretch better when they are warm, and you may find that increased heart-pumping activity helps to control stage fright.

Use your warm-up to fine-tune your posture and alignment. Good actors know that they must be able continually to assume a “neutral” stance. The idea is simple: to be able to create a new character or appearance, one must have somewhere to start. Have your instructor check your

physical alignment. After all, after a hard day of carrying around the over-stuffed backpacks many students use, it is easy to find yourself leaning to one or the other side.

Your instructor will demonstrate a number of effective efficient physical warm-ups. Use them; they will help!

ANALYSIS & PREPARATION

ORI is not an acting class, per se, but you will be performing dramatic literature; and even for poetry or narrative prose you will want to affect your audience emotionally. You will endeavor to assume a character or characters, to portray emotional changes, and to utilize a variety of vocal qualities. You will want any physical movement to be connected with your voice and emotional state. For these reasons actors' mental/emotional tools are useful in ORI.

Two approaches to acting are called outside-in and conversely inside-out. In class you are likely to hear some of both. Your instructor may say "louder," "bend your knees," or "look at us." On the other hand you may be instructed to work on the mental processes that would prompt you to do something naturally instead of being told to do it mechanically.

IMAGERY

A universal human trait is to be very visually oriented. Our main method of operation as actors is to paint a picture in the minds of our audience. And one of the main tools for accomplishing that is to paint pictures in our own minds. One method of reaching a desired emotional state is to recall an incident in your own life when that emotion occurred. The emotion is most likely to recur if you can reconstruct the scene visually in your mind. What kind of a room was it? Or was it outdoors? What did you SEE? Think colors, spatial relationships, what did the other person(s) look like? Be as specific as possible, not only about things like facial expressions but about hair, clothing, backdrop, etc.

The exercise of recreating your own experiences is valuable, but the next step is to use your imagination to create a scene in your mind's eye that will match the one being experienced by the character you are portraying. This is the reason the character analysis worksheet contains questions like "Where are you? What time is it?" and "Who are you talking to?" You may discover that surreal imagery works well for you, even for a realistic piece. Your own mind is free territory. You need not tell the audience what you are thinking. They will pick up the essence of it by the way it effects an emotional state which will in turn affect your voice and body.

WRITTEN ANALYSIS

CHARACTER ANALYSIS WORKSHEET (see Appendix)

WHO ARE YOU?

The answer to this question falls in one of two general categories; either you're portraying a fictional character engaged in conversation with another fictional character, or you're a narrator or spokesperson of some kind, speaking to a more general audience.

If you're portraying a character in a story or play, the answer to this question will be things like character's name, occupation, relationship to another character or characters. The answer to "**Whom are you talking to?**" would then be the other character or characters in the story whom you are conversing with, and you include information about them similar to what you did about your own character, name, station in life, relationship to you, etc.

If you're a narrator or spokesperson, you can help your analysis, hence your performance, by not simply writing down that you're a narrator speaking to a general audience, **but imagine appropriate fictional circumstances**. Are you a senator addressing a national conference? A Valedictorian addressing your graduating class? A thief conspiring with a band of confederates?

WHERE? WHEN?

Be specific. These are key questions conducive to creating the imagery in your mind that will help you reach the appropriate emotional state.

INCITING SCENE

This is something that has happened in the past that has direct bearing on what you are saying in the current scene. Obviously, you'll be in a different state of mind if you've just come from a wedding, rather than having just come from a funeral.

IMPENDING SCENE

Similarly, what you are anticipating is about to happen in the future will affect your present state of mind. Are you on death row about to be executed? Are you about to go surfing?

OBJECTIVE

It's important to get the distinction here between what you want as the actor and what you want as a character. As the actor you may just want to entertain some people, or you may be trying to communicate some deeper message that the author is trying to convey. However, the character's objective is something like "to convince her to stay," or "to mourn, or to finagle," or "to obtain a guilty verdict." If you're confused about who the character is, reread "WHO" above. The strongest objectives are usually in relation to other characters.

IMPORTANT: Think in terms of action. Ask yourself: "What ACTION do I (as the character) want the listener(s) to take as a result of what I'm saying to them?"

OBSTACLE

The obstacle is something that you must overcome to get your objective. The obstacle **must** be related to the stated objective and it **must** be related to your listeners) and your relationship to them. Are they hard of hearing? Are they opposed to your point of view? Do they speak a different vernacular?

The more challenging the obstacle, the more it can help you.

TACTICS

Not to be confused with actual physical activities, tactics should be written in the form of an active gerund (the ing form of a verb) describing what you (your character) are doing to reach your objective. Examples: **lambasting, comforting, annoying, caressing, confronting, soothing**, etc. Words such as “slap” or “caress” don’t mean that you will actually be **doing** those things, or even pantomiming them. It means that’s what you will **try** to do with the **words**.

CLIMAX

Most literature which is effective for oral performance has a climax, even if it is only a minor one within a larger work. You need to know where that point is so you can build toward it. The climax is the point of reversal or no return. something happens and the rest of the plot unravels.

EMOTIONAL ARC

Outlining the emotional arc helps you identify what your character experiences in the course of the piece you are reading. These are the emotions of the **person speaking**. If you’re doing a **monologue**, it will be obvious who that is.

In **narrative**, on the other hand, it is the **narrator** (more exactly the character you’ve chosen to adopt as a narrator), **not** the person(s) described in the story. As the narrator, you might be sympathetic to those you’re describing, then again, you might **not** be.

Don’t worry about **playing** these emotions directly. If you do all of the **other** homework, the emotions will come about of their own free will.

AUTHOR’S OBJECTIVE

Again, you will not **play** this, as the character you’re portraying is distinct from the author, but it should carefully inform the choices you make for the character.

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

Discuss the genre, period, and cultural setting of the piece. Note any general observations you’ve made about the style of writing used. Don’t be afraid to state the obvious, i.e., it’s comic, it’s tragic, it’s formal, it’s colloquial, it’s terse, it’s detailed, etc., etc. Are there devices used such as symbolism, metaphors, similes, repetition, alliteration? Does the text suggest any particular vocal quality?

Relate structural elements to author’s objective. Why were they used?

Note any additional imagery or subtext you plan to use. Space permitting, write these in your script.

Subtext is a particularly valuable part of this section, which has not been discussed yet in this manual. In many cases a little bit of imagination can yield all kinds of ideas about what your character is thinking that you are not speaking out loud. Being conscious of this subtext will add depth and credibility to your performance. Be certain that subtext grows out of the given circumstances the author creates in the literature.

For poetry, analyze rhyme and meter. This doesn’t mean you’ll be reading it that way in lockstep, but you need to at least have that background.

SCRIPT PREPARATION

The reason you are **typing** your script **double-spaced** and with **wide margins** is to allow room to write in the script. Marking the script is part of the assignment. When you come in to workshop your piece you will need **two** copies of your script. one for yourself and one for your instructor. **Both** copies must be marked.

Though your text is typed, generally your markings will be hand-written. To save time you may mark one script and then make a copy of it for your instructor, as long as your markings are dark enough to copy well.

Pick up key elements from your character analysis worksheet and write them in the margins at the appropriate places. Examples: climax, objectives, tactics, emotional state, imagery, obstacles, and subtext. Simple drawings are sometimes an effective shorthand.

Score the piece. Your instructor will give you tips on how to do so.

REHEARSING

After analyzing and scoring the piece, you must take the time to rehearse it. Rehearsal requires full-blown, out-loud repetition. It simply is not enough to go over the piece in your head; you must find a time and place to go through all the motions. We suggest you even rehearse rising from your seat, going to the front of the class, and returning to your seat--remember, your performance begins when your name is called and ends only after you have left the "stage." Act upbeat and confident, even if you are experiencing performance "excitement."

USE the analysis you've prepared when you rehearse. How will "who you are" and "whom you are talking to" affect your performance? Imagine in your own mind the imagery seen by the character. Think the character's thoughts.

Plan where, when, and how you will make eye contact. If you are playing a character who is speaking to one other person, you will need to pick a spot on the wall where the imaginary character's eyes are and use that spot consistently to establish that character in the audience's mind. You may not use a classmate as your partner even if you have his or her permission. If the character only speaks to one person, you just look at one spot and **NOT** at the audience as a whole, **BUT**, if you are a narrator or spokesperson, you **WILL** most definitely look at the audience as a whole, and will endeavor to make long enough eye contact with one individual to respond to their reaction before moving on to the next individual.

See also section under prose regarding dialogue reading.

Give yourself permission to experiment. Allow yourself to try some things that you have no intention of using in performance. Movement falls in this category. You will need to use an **economy** of movement in **performance**. **Rehearsal**, however, is under **no** such limits. Try to **rehearse** the piece as if it was an opera, or a ballet. In fact, such exaggeration is a tried and true technique of breaking new ground. A similar technique is the use of a simple repetitive physical gesture which has a direct link to the character's psychological state. Use of this gesture in rehearsal helps the performer connect with the character's psychological state. The performer then drops the gesture for performance, but allows the psychological underpinnings to remain.

APPENDIX

CHARACTER ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

&

GRADING SHEETS

ORI 2000 Character Analysis Worksheet

1. **WHO?** Who are you portraying (character/narrator/yourself)? Describe your character in detail, using clues from the text or your research. If you are the narrator or yourself, create a concrete persona that correlates with the text.
2. **TO WHOM ARE YOU TALKING?** Are you talking to a specific individual/several people/a large group? Describe your audience and your relationship to them.
3. **WHERE & WHEN?** Where are you and what do you see? Describe your location and setting in detail, using your imagination and clues from the text. (indoors/outdoors, time of day, seasons, weather, country, lighting, colors, etc.)
4. **OBJECTIVE.** What action would you (as the character) like your listeners to take as a result of what you say? Phrase it in terms of “I want...” (Example: I want them to cry/I want them to laugh/I want them to be kinder to each other). Consider the author’s objective in writing the piece, and then your own reasons for wanting to read it.
5. **OBSTACLE.** What form of resistance must you overcome to get that reaction?
6. **TACTICS.** What mental or emotional tactics is your character using to achieve his or her objective? A tactic is always a verb directed at the people or person being spoken to (example: scold, entice, probe, stroke, mollify, etc). List three below and include the line you will use that specific tactic on. (Tactics should also be marked in the scoring.)

7.

Tactic	Line

8. **CLIMAX.** What is the climax of the piece you are reading? (Climax should also be marked in the scoring.)
9. **EMOTIONAL LEVELS/TRIGGERS.** List at least three emotions experience by the person who is speaking.
10. **STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS.** Discuss the genre, period, and cultural setting of the piece. Don’t be afraid to state the obvious (i.e., it’s comic, tragic, formal, colloquial, etc.) Do research about when and why the text was written, and how this information might influence your reading.
11. **BOOK REFERENCE.** Describe three terms found in the book and then discuss how that particular term relates to your reading. Cite page numbers where you found your answers and lines from your text.

NOTE: This information will be clarified in your individual section syllabus by your instructor.

ORI 2000 / STUDENT FEEDBACK

Instructor: _____

STUDENT _____

Date: _____

TITLE _____

Author _____

Vocal Production: _____/10

- Volume/Projection
- Diction/Intelligibility
- Pitch/Quality
- Rate/Pause
- Tone color

Physicality: _____/10

- Posture
- Body language
- Muscle tone
- Eye contact
- Energy

Psychological/Emotional State: _____/10

- Objective & tactics
- Mood
- Universality/Individuality/Suggestion
- Emotional connection
- Varied & Contrast

Character Analysis: _____/10

- Spelling/grammar/punctuation
- Full description of the persona
- Full description of the locus
- Clear understanding of the text & author
- Preparation

Scoring: _____/10

- Format (typed/double-spaced/wide margins/two copies)
- Operatives
- Pauses/Shifts
- Emotional triggers (tactics/mood/climax/etc.)
- Subtext

TOTAL: _____/50

Additional Comments:

<input type="radio"/> Breathy	<input type="radio"/> Throaty	<input type="radio"/> Too many pauses
<input type="radio"/> Rushed	<input type="radio"/> Low energy	<input type="radio"/> Disconnected
<input type="radio"/> Nasal	<input type="radio"/> Wandering hands	<input type="radio"/> Wandering eyes
<input type="radio"/> Monotone	<input type="radio"/> Shifting weight	<input type="radio"/> Stumbling over words
<input type="radio"/> Vocal fry	<input type="radio"/> Face hidden	<input type="radio"/> Not familiar with text

○	○	○
○	○	○