Speaking aloud is an act often taken for granted, but how the voice is used affects the power of communication in every aspect of our lives. In this class we will study vocal and performance technique, as well as the art of rhetoric and persuasive communication. We will put these two studies together to practice and investigate how to communicate thought and evoke pathos, understanding and action from our audiences. Students will discuss, analyze and perform texts from classic and modern plays and poetry, as well as ancient and contemporary political texts. This course will ask questions such as: What is the difference between texts that are intended to be heard versus texts that are intended to be read? How do the musical qualities of the voice (such as tone, timbre and inflection) affect the content and reception of the message? How does a performer give voice to a playwright's words? How do our vocal habits affect our ability to communicate clearly? How can we each use our natural voice to its best and most profound effect?

All students in this course must be comfortable speaking and performing in front of the class, and must be willing to stretch outside their comfort zone. You may be required to meet in small groups outside of class time and will be expected to complete readings and written/spoken assignments when they are due.

Readings:

Readings will be taken from Michael McCallion, The Voice Book; Edith Skinner, Speak with Distinction; Cicely Berry, Voice and the Actor; Aristotle, The Art of Rhetoric; Euripides: Medea, Shakespeare: Julius Caesar, and other readings as well as video and podcasts. In addition, students may be expected to research other texts and bring in choices of their own.

Technology policy:

Please use paper notebooks during class and not laptops or iPads. Please turn your phones off and do not take them out during class except on the break.
Calendar

January 27th – Introductions. Intro to constructive rest and breath work.
Body Use and Breathing

February 3rd – The Greeks: Sound and Emotion
Resonators vs. articulators
Euripides, Medea
Michael McCallion, The Voice Book, chapter 1
Jordan Gaines, “Why you hate the sound of your own voice”
Video: Open University, The Greek Theater

February 10th – Baby Voice and Don Draper Syndrome
Habitual American vocal usage and tendencies that may get in the way of clear communication.
“Success and Likeability” Cheryl Sandberg, Lean In
Podcast: Lexicon Valley, “Creaky Voice”
Podcast: Slate XX: “Do you like the way we sound?”
Packet: “Performing Gender Identity, “Language and Sexuality”
and “Men Talk”

Introduction to persuasive communication techniques

February 17th – Presidents’ Day Holiday, no class

February 25th – Persuasive communication presentations
TEDtalk: Body language, Amy Cuddy
Robert Cialdani, Science of Persuasion
Patricia Hamm, “Teaching and Persuasive Communication”

March 4th - Modes of expression in Shakespeare: logic vs emotion, verse and prose.
Shakespeare, Julius Caesar
Aristotle, The Art of Rhetoric

March 11th – Julius Caesar continued.
Politics and Rhetoric
Political speeches TBD

March 17th – Spring Recess, no class

March 24th – final presentations

Attendance

You must attend every class. Be ready to work. Be fired up. Care. Be willing to try something and fail: you will learn something if you risk and fail; you will learn nothing if you don't. Watch and listen attentively and actively. Support each other.
Communication requires both the speaker and the listener -- we are all in this together. You must attend every class to get an A for your final grade.

**Clothes**

You must wear appropriate rehearsal clothes to class. This means clothing you can move comfortably in, and don’t mind getting sweaty/dirty/etc. Please do not wear tight jeans or skirts.

**Grading**

Grades in this class will be based on attendance, attitude, preparation and participation (see above). The goals are 1) to be brave, bold and honest as you seek to find your unique free and open voice. 2) to be prepared, rigorous and curious as we examine and discuss rhetoric and the structure of argument. 3) to be supportive, receptive and, when asked, to give useful, constructive criticism to your peers.

Your final grade will be penalized one half grade for every class you miss (barring exceptional circumstances.) If you miss class due to illness, you may bring me a doctor's note and I will take it into consideration but it does not guarantee that you will not be penalized for the absence. In addition, tardiness, missed deadlines or unprepared presentations will severely affect your grade. If you must be late or leave early for any reason you are expected to let me know well ahead of time.

*Participation is essential.* You are expected to observe closely and generously, and to contribute meaningfully to class discussions at least twice every class.

**Academic Integrity**

Students in this seminar will be expected to uphold the high standards of academic integrity outlined for all NYU students in your handbook. Plagiarism of any kind is strictly prohibited, and will result in a failing grade, and subsequent punitive action by the Gallatin School.