VOICING THE TEXT
ARTS-UG 1011 - 001

Gallatin School of Individualized Study
New York University
Fall 2015
Mondays, 3:30 - 6:10
1 Washington Place/715 Broadway
Room 430

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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, Hamlet, 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

Sept 14th– Introductions. Intro to constructive rest, breath work and intoning.
September 21st– Body Use and breathing

  Michael McCallion, *The Voice Book*
  "Let's have this out right here…"

September 28th – Resonators vs. articulators

  Habitual American vocal usage and tendencies that may get in the way of clear communication.

  Cicely Berry, *Voice and the Actor*

  Edith Skinner, *Speak with Distinction*

  Additional readings TBD

October 5th– Emotion and sound: The Greeks

  Medea, Oedipus

  Monologue presentations

October 13th (TUESDAY)- Rhetoric and rhetorical structure: ethos, pathos and logos.

  Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*

  Persuasive communication techniques

  Body language, Amy Cuddy

  Robert Cialdani, *Science of Persuasion*

October 19th- Persuasive communication presentations

October 26th –Persuasive communication presentations

November 2nd - Modes of expression in Shakespeare: logic vs emotion, verse and prose.

  Hamlet, Julius Caesar

November 9th– presentations from Julius Caesar

November 16th – presentations from Julius Caesar

November 23rd– Political speeches

  Frederick Douglas, Plato, Abraham Lincoln, Susan B. Anthony MLK, JFK, Barack Obama and others.

November 30th- Political speeches continued

  Character voices?

December 7th - Final presentations

December 14th - Final presentations continued

**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. We will lie on the floor in every class so dress appropriately.
Grading

Grades in this class will be based on attendance, attitude, preparation and participation. The goals of the course 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 grade for presentations will be based on your preparation, willingness to rehearse and ability to engage in dialogue about your work.

Each presentation (5 total) accounts for 15% of your final grade. General class participation is 25% of your grade.

*Participation is essential.* You are expected to observe closely and generously, and to contribute meaningfully to class discussions at least twice every class. I expect you to be engaged and observant when others are working and to offer feedback to your fellow students when asked.

Attendance:
You are allowed one excused absence during the semester. If you must be absent please let me know ahead of time. Your overall grade will drop by half a letter grade for each absence outside of the one excused absence. If you are late more than twice this will also drop your overall grade by a half letter grade.

Contacting me

Please feel free to email me anytime but I do not respond to email on the weekends. That means if you email me after 5pm on Friday I will not respond to you before class on Monday.

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.