THE OPEN VOICE
ARTS-UG 1037-001

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

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In this arts workshop we will study vocal technique for performance and public speaking in a truly interdisciplinary manner using: the physical practices of vinyasa yoga and qigong; the voice techniques of Cicely Berry, Chuck Jones and FM Alexander; and readings from ancient and contemporary philosophers and poets. Every class will fully engage the body, voice and mind, ultimately seeking to unify these three components of the self so that each student can use his or her unique instrument most efficiently and effectively. This course will ask questions such as: What does it means to “be present” as performers, creators, public speakers and citizens? How can a performer use his/her vocal instrument in the most open and free manner? How do we listen on stage? How can we each be at the center of our own rehearsal process? How do individuals form a collective ensemble? What is mindfulness? Students will explore these questions both intellectually and physically throughout the semester.

Requirements:

This is a physical course; you need not have any previous experience with yoga or performance but you must be willing and able to be physically active. Please let us know about any previous physical or vocal injuries that you are concerned about and please modify accordingly.

You are required to wear appropriate movement clothes and to bring a yoga mat and blanket to every class. You must also bring a notebook and pen to every class.

Course Objectives:

• For each student to gain an understanding of how the body and voice are integrated.
• For each student to gain an understanding of the basic anatomy of breath and vocal production.

• For each student to gain an understanding of how to release his/her individual, natural voice.

• For each student to better understand his/her instrument: the whole body, voice and mind.

**Required readings:**

Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*, translated by M.D. Herter Norton
Euripides, *Medea*, translation by Robin Robertson
Michael McCallion, *The Voice Book*, Chapter One
David Foster Wallace, *This is Water*
Pema Chodron, *Wisdom of no Escape*
Brene Brown, *The Power of Vulnerability*, TED Talk

Additional readings and video clips to watch may be handed out, emailed or posted on NYU Classes.

**Assignments**

Students will be required to complete written assignments outside of class (two or three short papers and weekly journals) and are required to rehearse and prepare oral assignments (monologues/speeches/scenes) outside of class. Written assignments my be read out loud in class.

Journals: Every Tuesday beginning on February 3rd there will be a short journal entry due on NYU Classes. 2-3 paragraphs or more reflecting on observations or questions you have about Monday’s class/readings and physical practice.

**Attendance**

You will be penalized one half grade for each absence. Lateness will count as a half an absence. You may make up one absence during the semester by doing a karma yoga project outside of class and writing a 2 page essay about the experience. You must hand it in within two weeks of your absence.

**How class will begin:**

Every class will begin with a yoga practice at 3:30. You must arrive early enough to set up and be ready to begin at 3:30. Leave your shoes outside the studio, quietly store your things in a cubby, turn off you phone, set up your mat, blanket and props.
We will take a 5-10 minute break between yoga practice and voice/performance work. At the top of this break you will roll up your mat and clear the space for the next half of class.

**Schedule:**

January 26th – Introductions. Intro to yoga practice. Why am I taking this class?

February 2nd – Body Use and breathing, making a big open sound.
   - Essay: “Something I care about”

February 9th – Taking up space, being seen. Seeing and listening with ease.
   - Reading: TED talk, Brene Brown “The Power of Vulnerability”

February 16th – Presidents' Day Holiday, no class

February 23rd – Emotion and sound: the Greeks
   - Reading: *Medea*
   - Monologues: *Medea*

March 2nd – *Medea* monologues continued

March 9th – Ensemble work. Breathing together, listening as a group.
   - Reading: David Foster Wallace, *This is Water*
   - Greek Chorus project

March 16th – Spring Recess, no class

March 23rd – Poetry/Text Assignments
   - Assignments TBD

March 30th – Poetry/Text Assignments Continued

April 8th – Noticing and Inhibiting
   - Reading: *Letters to a Young Poet*
   - Essay 2: “Noticing is a win”

April 15th – Filling the space
   - Field Trip to a theater
   - Henry V chorus speech

April 22nd – Ready for anything and prepared for nothing in particular
   - Reading: Pema Chodron, *Wisdom of no Escape*, selected sections

Auditions and interviews
April 29th - Auditions and interviews continued
    Reading TBD

May 6th - Final presentations

May 13th - Final presentations continued