In this arts workshop we will study vocal technique for actors 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 mean 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.

**Reading may be taken from:**

Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*, translated by M.D. Herter Norton
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 essays and 5 journal entries) and are required to rehearse and prepare oral assignments (monologues/speeches/scenes) outside of class. Written assignments may be read out loud in class.

**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.

**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.

**Grading:**

Grades is 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 open your unique free and open voice and body. 2) to be prepared, rigorous and curious as we examine, discuss and work 3) to be supportive, receptive and, when asked, to give useful, constructive criticism to your peers.

Your grade will be calculated as followed: 25% essays, 25% journal entries, 50% class participation.

*Participation is essential.* You are expected to engage in each activity, though you should modify physical participation if necessary for health reasons or injuries. In rehearsal portions of class you are expected to observe closely and generously, and to contribute thoughtfully to class discussions on a regular basis. We 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 two excused absences during this 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 those excused absence. If you are late more than twice this will also drop your overall grade by a half letter grade.

**Contacting us:**

Please feel free to email us anytime but we will not respond to email on the weekends. Since this class meets on Monday that means you must plan ahead and email before the weekend if you have time-sensitive questions.

**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.

**Schedule:**

January 25th– Introductions. Why am I taking this class?

February 1st– Opening Up
   Journal entry #1

February 8th – Anatomy of Breath
   Guest Lecture by Kathryn Amour
   Reading: *Michael McCallion, The Voice Book* pp 67-98, 110-111
   Journal entry #2
February 15th – Presidents' Day Holiday, no class

February 22nd – Taking up space. Seeing and listening with ease.
   Reading: TED talk, Brene Brown “The Power of Vulnerability”
   Essay: “Something I care about.”

February 29th - Ensemble work. Breathing together, listening as a group.
   Reading: Oedipus
   Greek Chorus project

March 7th – Oedipus Projects continued
   Reading: David Foster Wallace, This is Water
   Journal entry #3

March 14th – Spring Recess, no class

March 21rd – Scene assignments TBD

March 28th – Scene work continued

April 4th – Grounding and Releasing
   Reading TBD
   Journal entry #4

April 11th – Noticing and Inhibiting
   Reading: Letters to a Young Poet

April 18th - Ready for anything and prepared for nothing in particular
   Essay 2: “Dear Friend”

April 25th - Filling the space
   Henry V chorus speech
   Journal entry #5

May 2nd – Putting it together/asking and answering your own questions
   Reading TBD

May 9th - Final presentations