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, and work on personal public speaking presentations. 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 various texts and handed out or emailed. You do not need to purchase any books for this course.

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, breath work and intoning. Body use and breathing.

February 3rd– Resonators and Articulators
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?”
Kulick and Cameron, “Performing Gender Identity,” “Language and Sexuality,” “Men Talk”

February 17th – Persuasive communication presentations

Body language, Amy Cuddy
Robert Cialdani, Science of Persuasion
Patricia Hamm, “Teaching and Persuasive Communication”

February 24th- Persuasive communication presentations continued

March 3rd- Emotion and sound: The Greeks

Medea, Oedipus
Monologue presentations

March 10th – Medea monologues continued

March 24th- Modes of expression in Shakespeare: logic vs emotion, verse and prose.

Rhetoric and rhetorical structure
Julius Caesar
Aristotle, The Art of Rhetoric

March 31st– presentations from Julius Caesar

April 7th– presentations from Julius Caesar continued

April 14th – Political speeches

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

April 21st- Political speeches continued

April 28th - Final presentations

May 5th- Wrap up, final presentations continued if needed
**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 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 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, and please ask a classmate to share their notes and information about assignments. Your overall grade will drop by half a letter grade for each absence outside of that 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.

**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.