

Syllabus for Voice Lessons in James Tener's Studio

Music 290F, Sect. JT and Music 490F, Sect. JT

Spring Semester, 2016

Behavioural Objective: Through the use of careful technical vocal training, coaching of musical selections, and performance opportunities, students should be able to demonstrate improved singing ability in studio performances, seminar performances, auditions, and special performances using songs assigned by Mr. Tener. For those who choose to emphasize sight singing, these students should be able to demonstrate increased ability to sight read exercises that are assigned and unassigned each week and in a scheduled final exam of sight singing of unrehearsed exercises. These exercises are generally found in the book *Sing at Sight* by William Appleby or in the Oxford Folk Song Sight Singing Series.

1. 290 F Course Description: This course can be taken for 1 or 2 credits, graded A-F or Pass/Fail.

One credit = one 30 minute lesson per week.

Two credits (by approval of instructor) = 60 minutes of instruction per week. The class may also be audited for no credit.

Cost: \$300 per credit to be charged to the University Bill as an extra charge.

a. Acceptance into voice lessons for credit is dependent on registration for choir and approval of the voice division chair. Exceptions to the choir requirement are performing arts majors and minors, music minors, music majors (not voice), and others with special approval by the voice chair.

b. Those wishing to continue lessons past your first semester as choir students but cannot schedule a choir, you should contact your instructor for your options. Usually one semester of voice is allowed.

2. 490F Description (does not apply to 290F students):

a. Acceptance into 490F is subject to approval by Mr. Tener and the chair of the voice division. You must satisfy 1a. above. You must have studied voice for 4 semesters. Cost is the same.

b. Course requirements are the same as item 4 below but with an increased repertoire requirement. You will be expected to memorize three songs for your final for 1 credit or five songs for 2 credits. Also, for 2 credits you will be required to sing a faculty jury and have the additional option of participating in the final studio recital. Sight singing can also replace part of the repertoire requirement.

3. A-F Grading system:

a. Total points = 100. A = 96, A- = 92, B = 88, B- = 84, C = 80, C- = 76, D = 72, D- = 68

b. Semester work = 80% of grade. Final = 20% of grade

c. Grade deductions: Unexcused absences: 2 lowers grade to B, 3 lowers grade to C, 4 lowers grade to D, 5 is automatic failure. Tardiness: when tardiness equals 30 minutes it will count as one unexcused absence. Attendance deductions are applied first.

d. Further deductions: 5-10 point deduction for not fulfilling seminar attendance and singing requirement. See 4d below. 5-10 point deduction for poor preparation for lessons.

e. Final performance: Grade based on overall performance, preparation and memory work, general improvement or lack of improvement over the semester.

4. Course requirements:

a. **Attendance** at lessons on a weekly basis and seminars as scheduled. If you come each week you will receive 14 lessons. Lessons will consist of vocal technique training and vocal repertoire development with optional sight singing training, all at Mr. Tener's discretion.

b. **Repertoire:** Preparation of 2, 3, or more songs, at least one in a foreign language (Italian, French, German, Latin, or Spanish). Performing arts majors will perform repertoire from Musical Theatre or other contemporary genres.

c. **Formal practice:** Practice rooms are provided in the basement of the music building. Any unlocked practice room is available for your use. Develop a schedule for practicing. You will not progress if you do not practice. Keep notes on lesson procedures and recreate these in practice sessions. You are welcome to record your lesson and use the recording during your practicing. You will be graded on your preparation for lessons & seminars. It is expected that you will practice a minimum of 2 hours of formal practice per week for every hour of credit you receive.

d. **Seminar attendance:** Seminars are held as an integral part of this class. You will sing songs that you are preparing in your lesson and receive constructive help from your colleagues. Seminars are held on Monday afternoons at 5:10 pm in the choral room as announced. You must attend 5 seminars and sing at 2 seminars to receive full credit for seminar attendance. Class conflicts with seminar times must be worked out with Mr. Tener. Other performances in other venues can be counted toward the performance requirement at Mr. Tener's discretion.

e. **Alternate Sight Singing Program:** Due to numerous requests for extra work on sight singing from choir members, you may choose to spend 50% of repertoire time on sight singing. You will be graded heavily on your improvement in this area and your seminar requirement will be reduced to one performance and your final repertoire requirement will be decreased to one song. There will be no change in the vocal technique part of the lessons. Lessons will be based on the Sol-Fa (solfeggio) approach. This option is not available to Theatre majors and minors.

5. **Finals:** Your final for this course will be one of the following: (See 2b. for 490F jury)

a. The final requirement is to sing one memorized song in a seminar sometime during the semester. This requirement can be fulfilled in one of the two required seminar performances. If you have not sung one of these memorized, then you will be required to sing a third song in seminar.

b. Private Final is often chosen for those who are very inexperienced singers or have a problem with stage fright. In this option, your memorized final is sung in the final lesson of the semester.

c. For 490F final, see 2b. above.

6. **Absences, Excuses, Make-ups:** (I adhere to these rules without exception!)

a. **Basic:** Your contract is for 14 lessons of approx. 25-30 minutes in length for one credit.

b. **Sick Leave for Instructor:** Your instructor may need to be absent due to sickness. I will make every effort to make up these lessons. I will send an email and/or text when I will be absent.

c. **Make Up Lessons:** In this studio there will be no scheduled make up lessons for excused absences unless you have more than 1 excused absence. There are no make up lessons for missed make up lessons. Rules for excused and unexcused absences apply to make up lessons as well. Make up lessons are typically offered at the end of the semester. It is your decision whether you take the make up lessons that you are offered. There is no negative result from not taking make up lessons.

d. **Excused absence:** an absence because of illness, family emergency, class conflict, or other acceptable reason **AND** is preceded by communication to the teacher in advance of the student's lesson. (Phone call, voice mail, email, or text are acceptable. I do check the phone briefly for calls, emails, or texts during lessons in case one of you is cancelling.)

e. **Unexcused absence:** an absence for a reason that is not considered adequate (oversleeping, studying, forgetting lesson, going home for the holidays early, etc.) **AND/OR** a lesson that is missed and no contact is made in advance of the scheduled lesson time.

f. **Sickness:** If you are sick, call, text, or email in advance to cancel. If you attend your lesson while sick, I reserve the right to cancel the lesson and send you home. This protects your voice and my health. See number 16 below.

g. **Contact Info:** The following should be used to communicate with Mr. Tener:

Studio: 294-6096. Cell (voice or text): 515-291-5494. E-mail address: jtener@iastate.edu. Please use the cell number for most phone communication. I am only in the studio when teaching.

7. **Books & Materials:** Students are not required to purchase books. Bring assigned songs, vocalises, and a note book to each lesson. Take notes during lessons or immediately after your lesson. Performing arts students are expected to build a repertoire notebook. Those choosing the sight singing alternative (see 4e above) will be required to purchase a sight singing book. (Sing at Sight by William Appleby). I will provide copies of songs if I have them in my files. If not, learn to use Music Notes.com. Occasionally I will order the song myself if I want to own it in my files.

8. **E-Mail/Text:** All class communication outside of studio will be handled by e-mail and/or text. You are required to check your e-mail/texts daily and respond when a reply is required. Lesson schedules, make up lessons, special announcements, jury rehearsals, final exam arrangements, etc. will be handled by e-mail. **I expect my emails/texts to students to be read within 24 hours of mailing them.** Do not ignore them. You are responsible for the information sent to you by email. Check them on the day of your lesson or seminar and shortly before your lesson or seminar in case any last minute changes have occurred. There are computers all over this campus. Use them.

9. **Solos:** If you are asked to sing solos at church, at a club, for an audition, for a show, for a wedding or funeral, etc. bring the song(s) to your lesson and we will work on them. Bring solos from ISU choir selections or shows to prepare for auditions. Solo opportunities or playing the lead or supporting lead in a musical can count toward your repertoire requirement.

10. **Accompanist:** Your teacher usually accompanies for your lessons and for seminars. Your teachers usually accompanies private finals and perf final seminars. You are welcome to bring a qualified accompanist to lessons and seminars, but this person must be approved by Mr. Tener in advance.

11. **Special notice:** Yell Like Hell: Students in this studio are not to participate in this Greek activity as it can cause serious damage to the vocal cords. Discuss this with your leaders and show them this syllabus item. If you feel you must participate, mouth the words.

12. **Recitals:** If you are interested and approved for a solo recital, it can be arranged and is usually shared with another student. Singing a recital or partial recital will replace the final performance requirement in #5 above. Recitals are usually held at St. John's Episcopal Church.

13. **Guitar or Piano Self-Accompaniment:** If you are a pianist or guitarist (harp, drums, etc.) and wish to learn to accompany your singing using one of these instruments, an arrangement can be made to include training in self-accompaniment in this studio, subject to Mr. Tener's approval. As a guitarist and pianist myself who accompanies myself on these instruments, I can be very helpful in this regard and have helped past students improve as combined singers/players.

14. **Auditioning to become a Voice Major:** Often students in this studio decide to try to become voice majors. You should announce this to Mr. Tener as soon as a decision to do this is made. The direction and focus of the lessons will shift to preparation for these auditions. Auditions usually take place in February and the student is required to sing two songs of different styles, languages, etc. There is also a sight singing component and a pitch memory component. Acceptance into the Voice Major program depends on vocal ability, musicianship (intonation, expressiveness, ability to sing complex repertoire, etc.), competition with other auditioners, and available openings in the program.

15. **Performing Arts Major Notes:**

- a. If you are a performing arts major and plan to sing in your senior seminar, be sure to make this known to Mr. Tener so we can prepare your vocal repertoire together. If you need him to accompany your senior seminar, arrange this as early as possible.
- b. If you are taking the Musical Theatre Classes with Mr. Dell, it is often possible to combine lesson repertoire with Mr. Dell's class repertoire. Discuss this with Mr. Tener if this applies to you. (During the 2015-16 school year I am the official accompanist for these classes.)
- c. Please make sure you are on the perfs.edu list serve. If not, contact James Trenberth to be included.

16. **Healthy Lifestyle:** It is essential that singers adopt healthy lifestyles so that ill health does not keep them from singing. University campuses are rife with viruses and bacteria, especially those that cause flu and upper respiratory illnesses, like sinus infections, bronchitis, mono, colds, viral or bacterial laryngitis, etc. While no one can avoid all illness, the following suggestions, if adopted, can help:

- a. Avoid physical contact or proximity to people who are ill. Stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing in your direction, even if it means physically moving during classes, lunches, etc. and avoiding direct contact with roommates, boyfriends or girl friends, friends, etc. while they are sick.
- b. Do everything you can to build up your immune system. Eat well from the various food groups, including vegetables, fibres, and fruits. Vitamin supplements can be very helpful. (I take a daily dose of vitamin B12, and when I start to feel a cold coming I add a zinc supplement. Vitamin C and other anti-oxidants can be helpful but the research is not clear. If you are not eating a well rounded diet, a complete vitamin supplement should be considered. Talk to your parents and doctor and do your research.)
- c. This campus is full of viruses because of the large number of students and faculty. Door knobs, crash bars, lavatory sinks, flushers, etc. are touched by thousands of people per day, many of whom are passing viruses around. Public computers, even pens that are used by lots of people, etc. Practice hygiene in public bathrooms. If you must touch metal surfaces, wash your hands carefully and use paper towels to turn off the faucets and open the doors.
- d. Be aware of how viruses are spread. Getting viruses on your hands and then touching your mouth, nose, eyes, ears, etc. gives the viruses an opening into your body. Use anti-bacterial hand soap and lotion when possible. Upper respiratory viruses often are air borne from coughing, sneezing, talking in close range, etc. Be careful when going home for breaks and be aware of viruses at home. Keep up your vigilance. Many students come home from breaks with viruses.
- e. Stay rested. Get your 7 or 8 hours of sleep every night. Manage your schedule so that you are not doing all nighters or staying awake until the wee hours of the morning. Kick people out of your room when your bed time comes. Your body needs sleep to repair and renew itself. And remember, missing sleep one night cannot be repaid the next night. A weakened body can get sick now. It doesn't wait until later.
- f. Exercise, do recreation, keep your body and spirit strong.
- g. Stay hydrated. Water, milk, fruit juices, etc. Caffeinated, soda, or alcoholic beverages do not count in figuring hydration.
- h. Avoid bad habits that tend toward bad vocal issues:
 1. Don't smoke. Smoking irritates the vocal cords and limits the lungs ability to support singing.
 2. Be careful regarding use of soft drinks, energy drinks, and alcohol. Only put things in your body that are healthy.
 3. Dental hygiene is very important to good health. Brush and floss once or twice per day. Bad teeth or dental disease can cause illness. Bad dental hygiene is also gross.
- i. Most importantly, see the doctor when you begin to get sick. Don't wait until it gets worse. Consider whether or not you should have a flu shot with your doctor. Discuss with your doctor whether you are up to date on your immunities.

In short, take responsibility for your health. Sickness doesn't have to happen so often. Follow these suggestions and you may find that you are not sick so often. I am seldom sick and when I do get sick I find that the duration of the illness is shortened because of my healthy lifestyle. As a professional singer

and teacher, I have learned the various ways to stay healthy so I can be ready when a gig comes around or there are students who need instruction.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Disability Accommodation

Iowa State University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Sect 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you have a disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please contact (instructor name) to set up a meeting within the first two weeks of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your need. Before meeting with (instructor name), you will need to obtain a SAAR form with recommendations for accommodations from the [Disability Resources Office](#), located in Room 1076 on the main floor of the Student Services Building. Their telephone number is 515-294-7220 or email disabilityresources@iastate.edu . Retroactive requests for accommodations will not be honored.

Harassment and Discrimination

Iowa State University strives to maintain our campus as a place of work and study for faculty, staff, and students that is free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and harassment based upon race, ethnicity, sex (including sexual assault), pregnancy, color, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, or status as a U.S. veteran. Any student who has concerns about such behavior should contact his/her instructor, [Student Assistance](#) at 515-294-1020 or email [dso- sas@iastate.edu](mailto:dso-sas@iastate.edu), or the [Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance](#) at 515-294-7612.

Religious Accommodation

If an academic or work requirement conflicts with your religious practices and/or observances, you may request reasonable accommodations. Your request must be in writing, and your instructor or supervisor will review the request. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the [Dean of Students Office](#) or the [Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance](#).

Contact Information

If you are experiencing, or have experienced, a problem with any of the above issues, email academicissues@iastate.edu.