

Iowa State University
MUS 118A – Applied Voice for Performing Arts Musical Theatre Majors
and Non-Majors
Spring 2024 Syllabus

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Welcome to your private voice studio at Iowa State University! Studying voice in an individual setting is an intense and deeply personal undertaking. Where it takes you is entirely dependent on the effort, heart, and mindset that you bring to your study. Each singer's journey will be unique in learning style and pace, in resonant quality and range, in vocal genre and style. I encourage you not to compare yourself to others and to bring as much curiosity and grace to the process as you do dedication and expectation.

ATTENDANCE

Being present to do the work, observe, and absorb is critical to your success in this field of study. Attendance is *required* at all lessons and is highly encouraged at voice division recitals, general recitals, ensemble concerts, and department of theatre performances. Your communication about any absence for your lessons should be as far in advance or as soon after an unexpected absence as possible. Even if you discuss an absence verbally, please also send an email. *Any unexcused absence will lower your final grade by one letter (A to A-, A- to B+, etc.)*

Illness Policy

If you are sick or have a last-minute emergency, make every effort to let me know by 10:00am on the day of your lesson. Any lessons missed because of my absence will be made-up. We will attempt to make-up any lessons missed because of excused or unexcused student absences as possible.

If either instructor or student suspects they are contagious with any illness or has tested positive for Flu or COVID-19, they should not come to an in-person lesson without notification. Please text or email as soon as the condition is known to discuss how to proceed. *Never knowingly bring a virus into a singing space without communication and precautions.* If your lesson can be conducted online, we will arrange for that. If not, we will attempt to make-up the lesson.

REPERTOIRE

The choosing of repertoire is a collaborative undertaking and all final decisions regarding repertoire that studied in studio will be made by the instructor. It is the goal of voice study to provide a balance of vocal concepts and scope of languages, genres, and historical eras appropriate to the goals of the individual.

It is highly recommended that students compile a list of repertoire from past study and one of aspirational pieces. This task is required for Performance Arts majors (see Assignments section below).

RECORDING AND PRACTICE

Students are highly encouraged to record lessons and develop a familiarity and practice with listening to and assessing their recorded voice. No need to purchase an expensive device, a cell phone will do just fine.

Students are expected to form a routine of regular practice. A minimum of five hours per credit hour per week of practice/study time is recommended. The nature and length of practice time will be dependent on vocal dose (see vocal health section below) and other voice-focused activities. Vocal conditioning exercises should happen most every day, even for 5-10 minutes. Repertoire practice is expected to include both vocalization and musical preparation.

All assigned literature is expected to be memorized for performances.

ASSIGNMENTS

Repertoire Assignments:

For each song assigned in studio, the student will provide a brief document containing information about this piece, e.g., historical context, translation, pronunciation notes. **For each piece, this repertoire document is due at the second lesson after the piece has been assigned.** 10% of your grade will be based on the successful completion of these reports.

Concert Reviews:

Students are required to attend a minimum of six performances per semester. These may include faculty and student recitals, ensemble concerts, plays/musicals, dance concerts and art exhibitions. At least four of the events must have a sung vocal component. One recording of a full-length concert, opera, or musical may be included and one concert in which you performed. For each, a performance review will be written and submitted to Canvas by the last day of finals week. Reviews may be brief (average of 250 words) but should be rich in vocal/artistic observation and content. Include concert title, date, and brief description of type of performance and repertoire. Then spend the majority of the review observing musical choices and technique. 10% of your grade will be based on the successful completion of these reports.

Rep Book Creation and Maintenance (Performing Arts majors only):

Performing Arts majors must demonstrate a working system for organizing your professional repertoire, including audition readiness. You are free to choose your organizing method, but it should at least include audition-ready material and other repertoire that has been learned. A list or file of aspirational roles or songs is recommended. You must have music (hard-copy or digital) of your audition-ready pieces and that set must include a variation of tempo, character, and genre. You must show your rep book system and additions for the semester to the instructor by the end of finals week. 10% of your grade will be based on the successful completion of this assignment.

GRADING

Active participation and growth are the core of the grade for voice study and includes:

- Preparedness for lessons (completion of repertoire worksheets, required memorization, evidence of practice and work ethic)
- Professional engagement (timeliness, communication, professional bearing in performance settings)
- Artistic investment (curiosity, interpretation, emotional and musical expression)

COURSE MATERIALS

1. Course materials will be determined by the instructor in consultation with the student, to create a well-rounded list of repertoire.
2. Students are encouraged to purchase original copies of music to build a personal library. When that is not feasible, remember that the ISU library has a good-sized collection of scores and resources.
3. Students should provide a recorder at lessons, for reflection and note taking. This can simply be a cell phone.
4. The instructor may require or suggest reading materials throughout the quarter to help students deepen their understanding of the vocal mechanism.

VOCAL HEALTH

Your vocal health is critical to your overall well-being and to the success of our study. If you are experiencing voice fatigue, chronic stress, or discomfort, please talk with me immediately. If you are vocally compromised, but not contagious or needing to stay at home, please inform me of your situation at the beginning of our lesson.

If you are contagious or suspect you may be contagious, do not come to your lesson and refer to the illness policy above.

Studying voice as an academic major means that you should consider yourself a voice professional regardless of your vocational choices after college. You must be aware of your normal daily vocal dose and what activities or conditions are unusual. We will discuss this in more details during vocal seminars.

OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of each level, students will:

- Perform the required repertoire from memory with musical and stylistic accuracy.
- Demonstrate development in vocal technique, pedagogy, breath management, history, and clarity of diction in the assigned languages.
- Demonstrate the ability to successfully contribute to a cooperative learning environment.

INCLUSION AND RESPECT

I am committed to fostering this inclusive space and addressing all barriers that would prevent students from fully investing in our work together. My door (virtual or physical) is open to all students should difficulty or discomfort arise. Among my commitments to you are those in regard to:

Gender Identity/Expression: Please know that class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me accordingly early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Free Expression: Iowa State University supports and upholds the First Amendment protection of freedom of speech and the principle of academic freedom in order to foster a learning environment where open inquiry and the vigorous debate of a diversity of ideas are encouraged. Students will not be penalized for the content or viewpoints of their speech as long as student expression in a class context is germane to the subject matter of the class and conveyed in an appropriate manner.

Disability and Accessibility: In addition to the ISU policies for accommodations and intolerance of discrimination and harassment based on disability status (below and found at www.sas.dso.iastate.edu), I wish to ensure that our performance and rehearsal spaces and structures are accessible and comfortable for all who wish to sing. Iowa State University is committed to assuring that all educational activities are free from discrimination and harassment based on disability status. Students requesting accommodations for a documented disability are required to work directly with staff in Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to establish eligibility and learn about related processes before accommodations will be identified. After eligibility is established, SAS staff will create and issue a Notification Letter for each course listing approved reasonable accommodations. This document will be made available to the student and instructor either electronically or in hard-copy every semester. Students and instructors are encouraged to review contents of the Notification Letters as early in the semester as possible to identify a specific, timely plan to deliver/receive the indicated accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are not retroactive in nature and are not intended to be an unfair advantage. Additional information or assistance is available online at www.sas.dso.iastate.edu, by contacting SAS staff by email at accessibility@iastate.edu, or by calling 515-294-7220. Student Accessibility Services is a unit in the Dean of Students Office located at 1076 Student Services Building.

Religious and Cultural Practice: Iowa State University welcomes diversity of religious beliefs and practices, recognizing the contributions differing experiences and viewpoints can bring to the community. There may be times when an academic requirement conflicts with religious observances and practices. If that happens, students may request the reasonable accommodation for religious practices. In all cases, you must put your request in writing. The instructor will review the situation in an effort to provide a reasonable accommodation when possible to do so without fundamentally altering a course. For students, you should first discuss the conflict and your requested accommodation with your professor at the earliest possible time. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the Dean of Students Office at 515-294-1020 or the Office of Equal Opportunity at 515-294-7612.

Contact Information for Academic Issues

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