

Fall 2012 **The Craft of Speaking I: Vocal Freedom**

Basic info

Amherst College THDA 125H
Course in the Arts of Theater and Dance
Keywords: artistic practice, writing attentive,
speaking attentive
Course meets MWFs from 11 to 11:50 a.m.
in Webster Studio 2

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Course description

The Craft of Speaking I, and its continuation, The Craft of Speaking II, provide progressive instruction in the physical technique and aural principles used in expressive speaking. The Craft of Speaking I: Vocal Freedom is a beginning studio course in the development of voice for speaking. Students develop range and tone through regular physical exercises in relaxation, breathing technique, placement, and presence. Individual attention focuses on helping each student develop the the physical, mental, and emotional self-awareness needed for expressive vocal production.

Why THDA 125H is a “half-course”

The learning in this course is largely experiential, and takes place through physical exercises that must be performed regularly to make progress with the voice. However, while this course meets three hours per week just like a “full course,” the amount of related homework is kept to a minimum.

Required Materials

The Right to Speak by Patsy Rodenburg ([available at Amherst Books](#))
A folder for holding loose papers

Clothing: wear clothing that is loose fitting around the waist, and that allows for a wide range of leg movements. However, shorter skirts are probably not a good idea.

Goals

- To become familiar with the process of breathing, your own body, and your vocal habits and possibilities.
- To expand your breathing capacity, and the range and color of your voice.
- To learn to strengthen your articulatory muscles.
- To enhance the spontaneous and expressive qualities of your speaking voice.
- To learn how to become present to others while speaking and to encourage presence in others.
- To learn beginning techniques to enhance clarity, effectiveness and self-expression in your speaking.

Assignments overview

- Two short essays
- Several short homework exercises in text analysis near the end of the semester
- A final speaking presentation: I will ask you to choose and to prepare a selection of text to speak in class during the last few weeks of the semester. Your final performance will be graded.

Course schedule

We will work together as a group in a process-oriented fashion.

Your two short essays will be due on October 12 and December 12, respectively.

After the mid-semester break, choose a poem that you love -- or part of a poem -- from between 6 and 12 lines.

Final speaking presentations will take place in class beginning December 7.

There is no exam or work during the Examination Period. The deadline for any outstanding writing is Dec. 12.

Grading and attendance policy

Excellent attendance is mandatory and necessary to make progress with your voice. Your grade will be based not on attendance *per se*, but on your progress made during class time. Your course grade breaks down like this:

Two short essays - 20%

Final speaking presentation - 20%

In-class progress in vocal technique and participation in class work generally - 60%

You will not excel in this course if you miss class. I would appreciate knowing about any planned absences in advance. In the case of unexpected illness, please send me an e-mail *before* class.

Statement of Intellectual Responsibility

Every person's education is the product of his or her own intellectual effort and participation in a process of critical exchange. Amherst cannot educate those who are unwilling to submit their own work and ideas to critical assessment. Nor can it tolerate those who interfere with the participation of others in the critical process. Therefore, the College considers it a violation of the requirements of intellectual responsibility to submit work that is not one's own or otherwise to subvert the conditions under which academic work is performed by oneself or by others.

Some implications of the Statement of Intellectual Responsibility for THDA 125H are listed here.

- Your willing and concentrated participation in class activities is your responsibility in this course.
- Experiential learning works best in an atmosphere of openness and trust. It is your responsibility to contribute to optimal learning conditions by attending all class meetings and scheduled practice sessions on time, by communicating problems openly and promptly, and by listening to peers with empathy.
- Writing that you submit to me must be your own.

REGISTRATION FOLLOW-UP

Class enrollment is determined from students who come to the first class, not pre-registration status.

If you are not pre-registered, or you do not get into the class, you will have to take follow-up action on AC DATA.

IF YOU DO NOT GET INTO THE CLASS:

- If you are pre-registered, you **MUST DROP** the class by 9/12
- If you are **not** pre-registered, you do not need to do anything.

IF YOU DO GET INTO THE CLASS:

- If you are pre-registered, you do not need to do anything.
- If you are **not** pre-registered, you **MUST REQUEST INSTRUCTOR PERMISSION** on AC DATA **AND REGISTER** for the course after you have received my permission.