Theatre Speech
THR 223-001 / 22049
Spring 2019

Professor: Rosie Brownlow-Calkin / brownlowr@sfasu.edu

Class Time: TTH 12:30-1:45
Room: 311
Office Hours: MWF 8:30-10:30 AM or by appointment

“The actor must discover those resistances and obstacles that hinder them in their creative task. Thus the exercises become a means of overcoming these personal impediments...by a personal adaptation of the exercises, a solution must be found for the elimination of these obstacles which vary for each individual actor. That is what I mean by via negativa: a process of elimination”


Theatre Speech is a bit of a misnomer for this class. It is primarily a voice class, and involves both an overview and a deep dive into Fitzmaurice Voicework. The course will also include an introduction to Knight-Thompson Speechwork.

Fitzmaurice Voicework, conceived and developed by Catherine Fitzmaurice, is based on two distinct but interrelated practices for effective breathing and speaking on stage - Destructuring and Restructuring. First, we will explore Destructuring, which is a method of freeing breath and body through chaos-inducing bioenergetic tremors based on yoga poses. Once we have learned the Destructuring sequence, we will cover the anatomical mechanisms responsible for breathing, and then we’ll move to Restructuring, which is a breathing technique designed to maximize presence, openness, control, efficiency, and connection to breath, text, body, other, and environment. Our study of Destructuring will continue to evolve and deepen as we work on Restructuring. We will supplement our Restructuring work with an exploration of resonance, linguistic detail, and vocal variety.

Our Speechwork curriculum was devised by Dudley Knight and developed by him and Phil Thompson. It is a progressive, non-judgmental, flexible, experiential approach to Speech, and we will use it to lay a foundation for what might be required of you Speech-wise as you move into the study of accents and your eventual career. We’ll focus on anatomy (the processes and body parts that are responsible for producing breath and shaping sound) as well as increasing flexibility and release through experiential observation.

Core Values
• Experiential curiosity
• Patience
• Drive
• Rigorous and nonjudgmental attention to our work
• Acting, Voicework, and Speechwork are never separate.

Grading
Participation / Effort 40%
Assignments 20%
Journals 20%
Quiz 10%
Paper 10%
The largest percentage of your grade will be a product of your active participation in class. However, several outside-of-class assignments and readings will be assigned and these should be completed thoughtfully, thoroughly and on time.

This class involves one anatomy quiz. Any student who scores below a B on this quiz will be required to retake.

If you complete assignments to the best of your ability, embody the core values listed above, and stay inquisitive, open, thoughtful and focused in class, you will do very well in this class.

**Classroom Materials**
- *Speaking With Skill* by Dudley Knight
- Yoga Mat (optional)
- Zafu (optional)
- Pen and paper for notes
- Recording device (smart phones work well)
- Comfortable black clothing that permits free movement

**Journals**
One of the most fundamentally important parts of your process this semester will be keeping a journal about your day-to-day work in and outside of class. This journal offers you a space to reflect on your progress and the challenges you’re facing, to work out your evolving understanding of your instrument and of our work as they engage with each other, to ask questions, and to receive feedback from me. Resist summarizing the exercises we’ve completed (although you’re encouraged to take meticulous notes about our in-class activities on your own, for your personal use!). Focus instead on *how* you’re engaging with the work. I’m interested in hearing mostly about your experiences with the Voicework. Thoughts on speech should be included only if are important to your journey as an actor.

Journal entries should be at least 1.5 pages double spaced, 12 point font.

**Papers**
As part of your coursework, you will complete one paper this semester about the voicework in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, due Sunday, May 12.

**Assignments**
All assignments should be handed in in class. Journals are an exception and are due by 11:59 PM via e-mail. Assignments are marked down 10% per day late.

**Classroom Policies**
- NO CELL PHONES for any reason. Any instance of cell phone use during class counts as a tardy.
- Please call me by my first name (Rosie) in person and via e-mail.
- Submit all written work via email as a Word or PDF attachment.
- No gum chewing or eating are allowed in class.
- Any drinks must be in a non spill container.
- Wear black clothing that permits you to move freely and comfortably.
- Always come to class with writing utensil and paper.
- Our work this semester will involve bodies in close quarters. Practice good personal hygiene.

**Attendance/Tardiness**
Because acting happens in the moment and depends on partners and observers showing up, the class suffers when people are absent, and it is impossible to make up work from home. Furthermore, because acting involves a high degree of vulnerability and concentration, latecomers can cause unpleasant disruptions. Therefore, my attendance and tardiness policy is as follows:

• You may miss two classes without penalty. If you can, e-mail me in advance so I can make a plan.
• Each absence beyond two lowers your semester grade by 5%.
  Exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis in case of serious emergency or illness and will require documentation. Please let me know if you would like me to consider an exception.
• Three instances of tardiness, cell phone use or leaving class early counts as one absence.
• It is school-wide policy that 7 or more absences will result in an automatic semester grade of F.

If you are sick and either feel unable to participate in class or are contagious, I prefer that you come to class, sit in the back, observe, take notes, participate in discussion and write me a ½ page-long report on your observations, due three days later. You will get full participation points for the day. Obviously not all illnesses allow for this. Your call.

**Extra Credit**
You may write one extra credit production paper on any Downstage production of your choosing, due one week after the production closes. If the paper is B quality or above and you have more than two absences, the paper will make up for one absence. If you have two or fewer absences, the paper will push you into a higher grade bracket if you have a final grade ending in 9. (If you have an 89 and one absence and turn in a B quality paper, I will award you an A for the class).

**Diversity and Inclusion**
This class may engage in material covering a diverse range of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, and disability. While I encourage you to formulate and express your thoughts and opinions throughout the semester, discriminatory remarks will not be tolerated and may constitute disruptive behavior under the student code of conduct.

**Students with Disabilities**
Throughout this class you will be asked to share your thoughts in class and in writing. If English is not your first language or if you experience a speech, vision, hearing, or other learning difficulty, please bring this to my attention.

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/

**Program Learning Outcomes Supported in this Course**
4) The student will demonstrate an understanding of the component areas of theatrical creation, process, production, performance, and study, and their interrelationships. (All degree plans)
6) The student will demonstrate intermediate to advanced competence in one or more theatre specializations. (BA)
8) The student will be able to complete and document a major project as a stage manager, as a designer or technician, or as an actor or director, demonstrating advanced competence in the student’s specialty. (BFA)
9) The student will be able to present an effective presentation appropriate to the student’s specialization. (BFA)
Student Learning Outcomes Supported in this Course (and supported PLOs)

- A working understanding of Destructuring and Restructuring (PLOs 4, 6, 8, 9)
- Proficiency in IPA, both reading and transcribing (PLOs 4, 6)
- Proficiency in RP (PLOs 4, 6)
- An understanding of the physical mechanisms that produce breath and sound (PLO 4)
- A freer, more flexible vocal and physical self (PLOs 4, 6, 8, 9)
- Increased body awareness (PLOs 4, 6, 8, 9)
- A more effective use of breath (PLOs 4, 6, 8, 9)

Course Description: Study of voice and diction for the actor.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

January and February

Thurs 1/24  Introductions and syllabus
            Intro to destructuring

Tues 1/29  Destructoring
            Due: Read “The Via Negativa”

Thurs 1/31  Destructoring

Tues 2/5  Destructoring
          Anatomy
          Due: Read SWS Chapter 2

Thurs 2/6  Destructoring
          Anatomy
          Due: Read “Interview with Catherine Fitzmaurice”

Tues 2/12  Destructoring
          Anatomy
          Due: Read SWS p 35-36, 48-62

Thurs 2/14  Destructoring
            Anatomy Review
            Due: Journal

Tues 2/19  Destructoring
            Anatomy Quiz

Thurs 2/21  Destructoring
            Empty obstruent chart

Tues 2/26  Destructoring
            Omnis
            Due: Read SWS ch 1

Thurs 2/28  Destructoring
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>March</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 3/5</td>
<td>Destructuring</td>
<td>Omnish</td>
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<td>Thurs 3/7</td>
<td>Destructuring</td>
<td>Oral Posture</td>
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<td><strong>Due: Read SWS Preface and Introduction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 3/12</td>
<td>Take yourself through the sequence</td>
<td>Oral Posture</td>
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<td>Thurs 3/14</td>
<td>Take a partner through the sequence</td>
<td>Oral Posture</td>
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<td><strong>Due: Journal</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SPRING BREAK</strong></td>
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<td>Tues 3/26</td>
<td>Restructuring</td>
<td>Pitch</td>
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<td>Thurs 3/28</td>
<td>Restructuring</td>
<td>Articulation</td>
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<td><strong>April and May</strong></td>
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<td>Tues 4/2</td>
<td>Restructuring</td>
<td>Resonance and Linguistic Detail</td>
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<td><strong>Due: Read “Breathing is Meaning”</strong></td>
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<td>Thurs 4/4</td>
<td>Restructuring</td>
<td>Resonance and Linguistic Detail</td>
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<td>Tues 4/9</td>
<td>Restructuring</td>
<td>Resonance and Linguistic Detail</td>
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<td>Thurs 4/11</td>
<td>Breath puppets</td>
<td>Resonance and Linguistic Detail</td>
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<td>Tues 4/16</td>
<td>Restructuring</td>
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<td><strong>Due: Journal</strong></td>
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<td><strong>APRIL BREAK</strong></td>
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<td>Tues 4/23</td>
<td>Restructuring</td>
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| Thurs 4/25 | Restructuring  
|         | Prosody                                   |
| Tues 4/30   | Restructuring  
|         | Heroics                                   |
| Thurs 5/2   | Restructuring  
|         | Work monologues                           |
| Tues 5/7    | Partner teaching                          |
| Thurs 5/9   | Final presentation of monologues          |

*Due: Comprehensive Journal*