**Individual Instruction – Voice**  
(MPVA 300, 301, 501)

Insert info: Day of week, time, Room #  
Instructor Name:  
Instructor USC email: ---@usc.edu  
Mailbox # in Ramo Hall (RHM):  
Office Hours: *by Appointment*

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**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Course Description**  
Vocal techniques are taught in a private lesson format as a healthy foundation for solo performance in all singing styles. Students will engage in practical methods to improve vocal production, and will perform in one or two public recitals (depending upon their number of units). By the completion of this course, students will have a fundamental understanding of standard musical and vocal terms, and will have learned practice methods to improve vocal production and performance techniques to enhance live performance. The emphasis is upon pursuing voice study with the same care and discipline that one would apply to the study of any instrument. Self-discipline in adhering to a regular practice schedule is a must. Singing is an athletic activity; therefore, students enrolled in this course must commit themselves to a heightened level of good health in order to ensure success in this course.

**Learning Objectives:** The aims of this course are to help students:

- Establish and maintain a healthy vocal technique for singing that is applicable to many different singing styles.
- Learn effective practice techniques.
- Learn basic vocal and musical vocabulary.
- Develop techniques to address performance anxiety.
- Learn how to work effectively with another student musician collaborator (i.e. accompanist).
- Unlock the communicative and expressive power of their own voices.

**Course Information**

- Students may register for:
  - 1 unit = 30-minute lesson
  - 2 units = 60-minute lessons
  - 7.5 total hours of instruction over one semester
  - 15 total hours of instruction over one semester

- Students will meet once a week for a half hour or one hour lesson (depending upon their number of units).
- Day of week and time of lesson are arrived at by mutual arrangement between Instructor and student.
• Lessons should be treated as a course that meets at the same time every week; lessons are not ‘appointments’ that can be cancelled and re-scheduled.
• The student will utilize online resources for this course.
• It is a course requirement for enrolled students to frequently check their USC email and the course website site for course announcements and updates.
• This is a performance-based class: excellent attendance and full participation is expected.
• The instructor will provide specific vocal exercises, methods and ideas with which to practice individual repertoire.
• Repertoire: Choice of repertoire forms the backbone of the course and while it will be a collaborative effort between student and instructor, the ultimate choice of repertoire is at the instructor’s discretion.
• Repertoire chosen will be from acoustic traditions that do not depend upon electronic enhancement; therefore, most repertoire chosen will come from the classical, musical theatre and folk genres. Rock, and pop styles are generally not taught in this course because they are microphone dependent styles. Care is taken to ensure that each student experience at least several different languages and/or musical styles.
• Students are expected to adhere to the weekly practice requirements listed below.
• Full hour students will perform in both the midterm and final recitals; see below.
• Half hour students will perform in the final recital only; see below.

**Required Course Materials & Equipment**
- Card access to the University Gateway building to utilize practice rooms.
- Notebook for class notes, handouts and music.
- A pencil (or erasable writing utensil) to mark music.
- A recording device such as a smart phone, digital voice recorder, or “Garage Band” (etc.) on your laptop to record lessons & rehearsals.
- It is expected that students have all their assigned music and any handouts with them for each class meeting.
- Photocopy budget and/or access to a photocopier or printer.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES**

**Attendance & Active Participation**
This is an experiential learning course - there is no way to learn the course material other than being physically present and actively participating. Participation in class involves contributing thoughtful and constructive discussion, making a concerted effort to carry out suggestions given by the instructor, and coming prepared for class. Be prepared to sing, by yourself, in front of the class! Participation and attendance will be noted every class and figures into the final semester grade. *(See "Grading & Attendance," below).*

**Out-Of-Class Time**
In addition to your lesson contact hours, all courses at USC must also meet a minimum standard for out-of-class time, which accounts for time students spend on homework, readings, writing, and other course-related activities. For each unit of in-class contact time, the university expects two hours of “out of class” student work per week over a semester.
For this class, the “Out-Of-Class Time” breakdown is as follows:

- 1 unit = 2 hours total per week “out of class” time to achieve a minimum grade of “average” (C).
- 2 units = 4 hours total per week “out of class” time to achieve a minimum grade of “average” (C).

The majority of out-of-class time for this course is mostly comprised of practicing. Read on:

**Practice Requirements**

Practice Rooms are available in the Gateway Building on campus. You may gain card access to the Gateway practice facility after you have gone to the Music Operations Office in Booth Hall 100 and received the proper clearance.

For this class, the breakdown is as follows:

- 1 units = 30 minutes four times per week to achieve a minimum grade of “average” (C).
- 2 units = 4 hours of practicing spread out over 4 to 6 times per week to achieve a minimum grade of “average” (C).

Productive practicing is the key to achieving vocal success. You should practice the vocal exercises assigned by the instructor, as well as work on your music the way the instructor recommends. Be smart about practicing – do not try to cram a week’s worth of work into one practice session. Tip: Schedule your practice sessions and write them into your calendar.

**WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS**

The following assignment is a two-part *Voice Journal Entry*, due weekly, comprised of: 1) *Lesson Summary* and 2) *Weekly Practice Reflection*. These 2 assignments are short journal entries, and may be put together on the same page; Ask your instructor for his/her preferred format.

**Part 1) Weekly Lesson Summary**

All students will write a *Weekly Lesson Summary* about the previous lesson.

- **Goal & Content:** The *Lesson Summary* should be an accurate record of what was attempted and learned. So, document exactly what happened in the lesson. You’ll need to listen to your lesson recording in order to do this. The lesson should serve as a template for how to practice the rest of the week.

- **Length:** There is no prescribed length for the *Lesson Summary*; about 3-5 sentences will usually suffice; more is ok. Some weeks you will have more to record than other weeks. This is not busy work; there is strong evidence that “journaling” boosts motor learning.
Part 2) Weekly Practice Reflection

- **Goal:** For this assignment, you “reflect back” upon the practice week you had and write a short summary.
- **Length:** Short!
- **Content**
  - Number of practice sessions this week?
  - **Place** you practiced?
  - Average **Length** of practice?
  - **An overview** of your practice week in 2-3 sentences: Here are some Prompts:
    - Overall, how was your practice week?
    - What repertoire did you work on?
    - What technical aspects did you work on?
    - What was challenging/easy this week?
    - What was your assignment for the week, and did you accomplish it?
    - Add any important issues/questions/observations for discussion at lesson, if you feel they are relevant to your voice study.

Further requirements for Voice Journal Entry

- **Quantity:** There are 15 lessons per semester. Not counting the first lesson, if no lessons are missed, each student will post 14 Voice Journal Entries over one semester.
- **Due:** The Voice Journal Entry is to be sent electronically to the instructor no later than 9 am the day of your current lesson. Postings after this date will not be accepted. You should use your lesson recording to complete the Voice Journal Entry.
- **Format:** Ask your instructor for his/her preferred format.
- Be sure to label your summary with your last name and the date: ex. Smith_Lesson Summary_9_12_15
- **Grade:** Timely Voice Journal Entry posting will be reflected in the semester grade.
- **Absence:** If a lesson is missed, students should complete an extra Concert Review instead of a Voice Journal Entry.

Other Written Assignments: Concert Reviews

You must attend one live performances of a solo vocal music performance and write a concert review. If any lessons are missed, you must attend additional concerts and write additional concert reviews to receive credit. Read the following guidelines:

- **Solo:** The performance must feature, or be mostly comprised of solo (not group or choral) vocal music.
- **Professional:** Singers must either be professional themselves, or in training with a professional; ex: USC Thornton School Voice Majors’ degree recitals.
- **Repertoire:** Students should attend concert which feature “classical” vocal repertoire. For example: student voice recitals, USC Thornton School opera productions (both are free to students) or a symphonic/choral work features solo singing. On campus concerts are listed at: insert link here; this link should also be posted on the class Blackboard website. The instructor will indicate which concerts count as “classical.”
- **Credit:** To earn course credit, turn in a written review of both performances, along with a ticket stub or printed program.
• **Rubric:** Concert reviews must follow the *Concert Review Rubric* (given as a handout); Reviews must:
  - Be typed (not hand written) using a 12pt font 1.5 spaced.
  - Use terminology as discussed in class
  - Be objective and not framed by “I liked/I didn’t like” statements.
  - Be proofread and free of spelling and grammatical errors. Grammar, spelling, and composition will be taken into consideration during grading.

• **Due Dates:** The concert review is due on the day of your last lesson. In order to receive credit, concert reviews must be handed in as hard copy (printed). Electronic submissions will not be accepted.

**RECITALS: STUDIO MIDTERMS & FINALS FOR NON-MAJORS**

As part of the course, all private students are required to perform in the Non-Major Voice Recitals as follows:

- Students enrolled for 30 minute lessons are required to perform one piece from memory in the *end of the semester Non-Major Voice Recital*. Students will receive a graded comment sheet regarding their performance.
- Students enrolled for 60 minute lessons are required to perform in both the *midterm Non-Major Voice Recital* as well as the *end of the semester Non-Major Voice Recital*. 60 minute students will sing different repertoire for each performance. Students will receive a graded comment sheet regarding their final performance.
- Students must attend the entire recital in which they are performing, and observe *Common Courtesy Rules Of Concert Etiquette*; (see below).
- The head TA will issue instructions for how to sign up for both the performance date/time and a rehearsal time.
- It is the student’s responsibility to sign-up for a recital time and a rehearsal time.
- Students who miss their assigned rehearsal time may not re-schedule, because only a limited amount of rehearsal time is available.
- Students who do not sign up by the required deadline for a performance date/time will not be allowed to perform in the recital, and this will be reflected in the final semester grade.

**Format for Recitals:** There are no printed programs for the Non-Major Voice Recital. Instead, each singer will come to the floor and announce some/all of the following items, as appropriate (the * items are required):
1. *name*
2. *title of piece as well as larger work if from an opera, show or oratorio
3. *composer’s name*
4. *brief* literal English translation of the text (if in non-English); *brief* = 2 or three sentences.
Appropriate Attire for Recitals

- **General:** No jeans, flip-flops, caps or tennis shoes.
- **Neckties** are optional; (neckties often feel too constrictive; feel free to advise your students on this point.)
- **Heels:** Advise your students against wearing anything higher than 2” heels. Extremely high heels produce excessive abdominal tension, which hinders breathing and pours gasoline on the fire of performance nerves!
- **Other:** Attire which is excessively bare (ex. very low tops, very high cut skirts) often produces exactly the opposite of their intended effect – a negative effect on the performance.
- "Dress as if you were going to a job interview and wanted to impress someone. You’ll sing better if you look sharp!"

**Recital Dates / Fall 2016**

**Midterms:**
Wednesday 10/5/2016 6:00 PM 9:00 PM
Schoenfeld Symphonic Hall (138A)
Friday 10/7/2016 5:00 PM 8:00 PM
Schoenfeld Symphonic Hall (138A)

**Finals:**
Wednesday 11/30/2016 6:00 PM 9:00 PM AES
Schoenfeld Symphonic Hall (138A)
Friday 12/2/2016 5:00 PM 8:00 PM MUS
MacDonald Recital Hall

**Common Courtesy Rule Of Concert Etiquette**

Follow the “Golden Rule” – “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”
Live performance is real – its not TV. That's why they call it “live.” Performers can see what audience members are doing. Therefore, anything other than paying total attention, with open eyes and un congested ears, is at best, inattentive. Rude behavior is Texting, Facebooking, web surfing, or chatting (out loud) during a performance. Students who do not follow the Common Courtesy Rule Of Concert Etiquette may be asked to leave the concert hall and should expect a decrement in their recital grade.

**Grading**

**Weekly Lesson Grade**

Students earn a **Weekly Lesson Grade**, based on any/all of the following criteria:

- Lesson preparedness
- Overall Lesson performance
- Consistent progress
- Vocal health (responsibility for)
- Memorization (if assigned)
- Attendance, punctuality, and materials in hand

- Attitude: embrace of challenge, willingness to experiment with vocal sounds.
- Timely weekly delivery of written assignment

**Semester Grade**

70%: Weekly Lesson Grade
20%: Recitals (midterm & Final, or final alone)
10%: Concert Attendance & Review
**Mid-Term Grades**

At midterm, students receive a record of *weekly lesson grades* averaged as a midterm letter grade. The midterm letter grade = the average of the weekly lesson grades only; no other grades included. Letter grades carry the following descriptions:

- **A** = exceptionally high
- **B** = substantial
- **C** = satisfactory
- **D** = minimal
- **F** = unacceptable

**Grading Scale**

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93 and above</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78</td>
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<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td>Failing</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

- Due to the limited amount of one-on-one time, there are no minimum number of student absences listed as acceptable.
- Students should only miss lessons due to illness, illness, emergency or death in the family, and therefore absences can be considered excused due to these circumstances only.
- Please notify the instructor (via insert preferred method) before your lesson of your absence. If notification is not received before your lesson, it will be considered an unexcused absence.
- Emergencies may require documentation in order to be considered excused.
- Excessive absences (whether excused or unexcused) will affect your final grade negatively.
- Excessive tardiness will affect your final grade negatively.
- Students should not leave lessons early (except, of course, in case of illness or emergency). Early departure for reasons other than these will affect your final grade negatively.

**Unexcused absences and No-Shows**

- Unexcused absences and no-shows will be assessed a lesson grade of F.
- Unexcused absences and no-shows will not be made up.
- Missed Makeup lessons will be assessed a lesson grade of F and not be rescheduled.

**Cancellation and Make-Up Policy Simple Version:**

All lessons missed by the teacher, for whatever reason, will be made up.

Lessons missed by the student may, or may not be made up, at the discretion of the instructor.
Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct
Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” https://policy.usc.edu/student/scampus/part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Discrimination, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, and harassment are prohibited by the university. You are encouraged to report all incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity/Title IX Office http://equity.usc.edu and/or to the Department of Public Safety http://dps.usc.edu. This is important for the health and safety of the whole USC community. Faculty and staff must report any information regarding an incident to the Title IX Coordinator who will provide outreach and information to the affected party. The sexual assault resource center webpage http://sarc.usc.edu fully describes reporting options. Relationship and Sexual Violence Services https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp provides 24/7 confidential support.

Support Systems
A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute http://ali.usc.edu, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://dsp.usc.edu provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information http://emergency.usc.edu will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.