

FRENCH LYRIC DICTION – MUS 3942y

University of Western Ontario
Don Wright Faculty of Music

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PREREQUISITE

MUS 2942y (Italian/German lyric diction) or Similar

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Intensive study of French lyric diction and mélodie performance practice; including IPA assignments, tests, transcription and pronunciation practice, study of French composers of song, and performances of three songs. The second semester involves application of lyric diction study in 3 performances of works in French and English by Canadian composers and by contemporary French composers. Study and performance of French opera recitatives will be included. Songs will be assigned for the Winter semester. Students will choose their own songs in the fall semester.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

For the student to learn correct pronunciation of French in singing, to gain facility in the use of IPA for this purpose, and to build an understanding of the syntax and word stress of the French language and French poetry used in French art song. Singers are to gain basic knowledge of composers of mélodie and learn the correct interpretive style for singing mélodie, employing it in performance.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

UWO Bookstore Coursepack: T. Donnan: French Lyric Diction. American University Press.

P. Bernac: The Interpretation of French Song. New York: Norton, 1976.

Recommended: Graham Johnson, Richard Stokes: A French Song Companion New York: Oxford U. Press 2000

Recommended: C. Kimball: SONG- A guide to Art Song Style and Literature. Hal Leonard, 2006

Recommended: Personal copy of French/English dictionary: Larousse French/English Dictionary or Petit Robert
Songs of Berlioz, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Bizet, Massenet, Duparc, Chabrier, Chaminade, Chausson,
Fauré, Debussy, Satie, Caplet, Roussel, Ravel, Viardot, Chaminade, Poulenc, Hahn, Milhaud, Boulanger,
Messiaen, Jolivet, Dutilleux, Papineau-Couture, Garant, Hétu, Pépin, Smallman, Laurin

The Coursepack is required in class in the first 6 weeks of fall semester.

The Bernac is required in class from Week 8–12.

There will be required readings from Bernac in the first 6 weeks of the fall semester.

COURSE PIANISTS

Pianists are assigned to this course to accompany you. Decide your songs early, and prepare the scores for your assigned pianist, providing them the music no later than **Oct. 4th**. It is your responsibility to book a rehearsal with your pianist to take place in the 2 weeks preceding your class performances. If you do not arrange a rehearsal, the pianist is not obliged to accompany you, and you must provide your own pianist for your performance. It is your responsibility to know the text and the score when you arrive at your rehearsal. For **SONG C** you must provide a copy of your song to the pianist by **NOVEMBER 8th**. This song must be memorized.

COMMUNICATION

Important class announcements and information may be sent to you by email. It is your responsibility to check your e-mail regularly and respond as necessary.

MÉLODIE PERFORMANCE & ACCOMPANYING WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Performances:

Fall Semester: You will perform two songs in class; one each chosen from List A and B (following). *One will be sung from memory.* The Exam performance of Song C will be performed in January from memory.

Our library has an excellent collection of French art song. Use this rather than online sources. Your performance will include recitation (memorization encouraged) of the song text in French and demonstrated knowledge of both the word-for-word translation and the poetic meaning. With consultation, performing songs not found on the list is allowed. All songs from Debussy forward should be sung in original keys. Indication of correct keys can be found in composers' Works list in *New Grove Dictionary of Music*.

Winter Semester: You will perform one song in English and one in French by a Canadian composer, and one song by a contemporary French composer. Solo and group recitatives will be performed. All songs and recitative repertoire will be assigned. All performances in French will require the IPA and translation as described below. A song profile is required for each song performed.

If due to illness or family emergency you are unable to sing on the day you are scheduled, you must notify me and your pianist as soon as possible, and always PRECEDING CLASS TIME by telephone, text or email. Be sure the contact is confirmed.

Written Assignments:

1. **Song IPA:** Texts of songs must be written out in French, IPA and English on three consecutive lines. Word-for-word translation and IPA *must be written by hand. Keep a copy. DUE:* 2 weeks before your performance in hard copy. The corrected work will be returned to you the following week in class.

2. **Song Profile :** Due at the beginning of class the day of your performance.

3. **Listening Assignment:** *May be handed in anytime up until NOV. 23rd.*

Listen to a single CD of French mélodie. Write a report, listing the composer, title and date of recording, performers and the label. Provide an outline of what you found to be the most important details in the music and the poetry, as well as the interpretation and vocalism. For EIGHT (8) songs, give the song title and the poet's name, voice type and tessitura, vocal difficulties of the song and a short précis of the meaning of the text (not a translation). This must be presented in hard copy; preferably typed.

FALL MIDTERM EXAM

This written exam will include IPA transcription, as well as questions on vocabulary and on diction rules.

EVALUATION

Fall Term:

IPA / Song Profile / Listening Assignments	30%	
First Mélodie Performance	15%	includes recitation of song text
Second Mélodie Performance	15%	includes recitation of song text
Midterm Exam	15%	written exam
Third Mélodie Performance (January)	15%	includes recitation of song text
Attendance, Repertoire, Participation	10%	

Winter Term:

IPA of 2 Songs and 1 Recitative, 3 Song profiles	45%
4 Performances	45%
Assessment based upon correct spoken and sung diction, correct pitches and rhythms, and overall style, and includes memorization of one song in French.	
Attendance and Participation in class	10%

ELECTRONICS

The in-class use of electronic devices without permission is expressly prohibited.

Students found using devices will be asked to leave the classroom.

Take this opportunity to learn as much as possible by listening to your colleagues sing.

IMPORTANT UWO POLICIES

i) **Course Prerequisites:** MUS2924y. Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed.

ii) **Grading scale:** A+=90-100%, A=80-89%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, D=50-59%, F=0-49%.

iii) **Academic Consideration for Student Absence & Missing Work (≥10%):** Students are responsible for making up any missed classes or assignments as soon as possible. The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. Academic Consideration provides students with consistent, fair, and pedagogically appropriate consideration, without compromising the academic integrity of the course or program, when they have been unable to complete some component of a course due to short-term extenuating circumstances. Students who have long-term or chronic medical conditions (physical or mental) that may impede their ability to complete academic responsibilities are directed to seek Academic Accommodation through Accessible Education ([Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)).

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the end of the period of absence covered, to the Academic Counselling unit or Office of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (TC210), of the student's Home Faculty together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the academic consideration being requested. Students are directed to read the Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness at the following website for further details regarding various requirements and procedures for the supporting documentation:
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf

Whenever possible, students who require academic consideration should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

iv) **Academic Consideration for Missing Work (<10%):** In cases where students miss work that is worth less than 10% of the total course grade (ie. two or fewer assignments / lessons, or equivalent in applied studio courses) due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if documentation is voluntarily submitted to the Associate Dean's office and the Associate Dean grants an accommodation, then the missed assignment(s) or quiz(ze)s will be discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course. If documentation is not voluntarily submitted then the missed assignment(s) will receive a grade of zero. Students who have been denied accommodation by an instructor may appeal this decision to the Associate Dean's office but will be required to present appropriate documentation.

v) **Academic Offences:** Submission of work with which you have received help from someone else (other than the course instructor or TA) is an example of plagiarism, which is considered a major academic offence. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, as found at:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

vi) **Mental Health & Wellness:** Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to the Health and Wellness at Western page (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or to go to the Wellness Education Centre located in Thames Hall, room 2170. **Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in Thames Hall 2170 or to click on the big green "I Need Help Now" button on the Health and Wellness page above.**

vii) **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Students work with Accessible Education which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

viii) **Religious Accommodation:** Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays (other than statutory holidays), and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. The Diversity Calendar from

the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion provides information on multi-faith, multicultural and diversity related holidays and observances and links to resources for more information. <https://www.edi.uwo.ca/resources/2816-2023-Diversity-Calendar-PDF.pdf>

ix) **Contingency Plan:** Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, should any university-declared emergency require some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience), the course will adapt accordingly. The grading scheme will **not** change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

x) **Gender-Based and Sexual Violence:** Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, either recently or in the past, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca or call 519 661-3568.

xi) **Electronic Devices in Exams:** Electronic devices of any type will not be permitted during the Midterm Test and/or Final Exam in this course (unless required for accessibility reasons based on an approved accommodation request from Accessible Education).

xii) **Electronic Devices in Classrooms:** The in-class use of electronic devices (other than for instructor-approved in-class uses) is expressly prohibited. Students found guilty of disrupting the class with electronic devices will be asked to leave the class and may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

xiii) **Plagiarism Detection Software Usage:** All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism, which includes AI writing detection tools. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

xiv) **Computer-marked Multiple-choice Tests or Exams:** These may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

xv) **Online Etiquette:** Some components of this course may involve synchronous online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please observe the following general considerations of “netiquette”:

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.
- Be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing.
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment.

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of “Zoom-bombing” a class, or of other serious online offenses, may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.