

Vocal Pedagogy - MUS 4961y/9510 - Course Outline (2023/24)

Instructor: Torin W. Chiles, lecturer
Graduate Teaching Assistant:
Junmeng (Autumn) Zhao, DMA candidate



Purpose: This course is offered to help singers acquire and develop an understanding of vocal function (anatomical, acoustic, and artistic) and the traditions of *Bel Canto* voice training. A survey of historical treatises and the traditions of vocal pedagogy will be made from the earliest roots of *Bel Canto* to the most recent scientific studies of voice technique and quality of tone. ***It is a premise of the course that the students are already offering voice training to students. Students will apply the knowledge acquired through the lectures, reading and course work to the voice instruction they offer their students.***

Textbooks:

1. Stark, James. *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
2. Miller, Richard. *The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1996.

Methods of Evaluation:

	Attendance.....	10%
Class Participation, monthly Teaching Logs and Class Presentations.....		15%
	October 27 th Anatomy Test.....	15%
	December Mid-Term Exam.....	20%
	Research Paper.....	20%
	April Final Exam.....	20%

Attendance:

The nature of a survey/lecture course requires students' presence for each class. A mark of zero will be recorded for each absence and the corollary ratio deducted from the 10% Attendance component of the final grade.

Class Participation etc:

Weekly participation is expected in the class discussion based upon the readings, lecture, and audio/video recordings. Students will present their research paper to the class in March. The Instructor and GTA will monitor the monthly Teaching Logs kept by the students as well as each student's engagement based upon the student's readings for their research paper, course readings and class discussions.

Research Paper:

Due by April 5th, 2024 — an Abstract/Proposal is due by March 1st, 2024. The papers and bibliographies will be gathered and bound into a *Festschrift* at the end of the year. *(Previous Festschriften are on reserve in the library and may be a useful source of inspiration as well as research.)*

*Please call me Torin – everyone does!
I keep regular hours in my studio from 8:30am-5:30pm each weekday and I am happy to chat as my applied teaching schedule allows (posted on my door).*

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The Fine Print:



i) **Course Prerequisites: 1920 for 4061 and none for 9510.** 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. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

ii) **Grading scale:**

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

Graduate: A=80-100%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, F=0-59%.

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 due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, please consult with the instructor to discuss an accommodation. 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 multifaith, 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.

xiv) **Electronic Devices in Exams:** Electronic devices of any type will 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).

xv) **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.

xvi) **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/>).

xvii) **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.

xviii) **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.

The topic for your *research paper* is something to consider carefully and to discuss at length with the instructor and especially the GTA who will mark your papers at the end of the second term. Often, people consider possibilities during the first term and settle on a topic upon which they can read and write throughout the second term. Our GTA, *Autumn Zhao*, will be a valuable resource for you as you develop your ideas, research your topic, and begin to write early drafts.

First Term Exam – December 2023

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Please respond concisely and elegantly (essay format) to each of the following points:

1. Trace the historical and artistic origins and evolution of *bel canto*. (10marks)
2. Describe the Phonatory Process using appropriate anatomical terms and relevant physiological, myoelastic and aerodynamic principles. (20 marks)
3. Outline an approach (or approaches) to Breath Management and the “Supported Voice” with specific references to the respiratory cycle and the relevant thoracic and abdominal anatomy. (25 marks)
4. With specific references to ideas and terms developed by Caccini, Mancini, Garcia, Lamperti, Helmholtz, Fant, Sundberg and perhaps others, outline an evolution of the concept of Vocal Resonance. (20 marks)
5. Using specific terms and citations outline the theories of Vocal Registers and strategies for vocal registration (including vowel modification). (25 marks)

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- *Please ensure that your name is inscribed on each exam booklet that you submit or that your electronic file has your name in the filename.*
 - *There is no need to respond in numerical order but please ensure that each response is clearly numbered.*
 - *There is paper available for rough notes.*
 - *The exam period runs for up to three hours.*
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Second Term Exam – April 2024

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Please respond concisely and elegantly (essay format) to each of the following points:

1. Define and explain what Stark calls *Vocal Tremulousness*. Outline various types of vocal tone modulation and their causes. Outline some of the controversies surrounding the application of this "ornament". (20 Marks)
2. Demonstrate the challenges of teaching voice students "Idiom and Expression". (15 Marks)
3. Discuss the importance of repertoire as a didactic device. (10 Marks)
4. Outline various approaches to lesson planning and structure. (10 Marks)
5. Define the following terms as they relate to the principles of *bel canto* voice technique. (5 Marks **each**)
 - *agilità*
 - *sostenuto*
 - *messa di voce*
6. Describe the qualities of vocal tone displayed in **each** of the attached spectrographic images. [Figures 1-3] (5 Marks **each**)
7. Write an adjudication for the recordings of the following singers. (10 Marks **each**)
 - Angela R.
 - Graham B.
 - Tim K.

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- *Please ensure that your name is inscribed on each exam booklet that you submit or that your electronic file has your name in the filename.*
 - *There is no need to respond in numerical order but please ensure that each response is clearly numbered.*
 - *There is paper available for rough notes.*
 - *The exam period runs for up to three hours.*
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TA: **Junmeng (Autumn) Zhao**, DMA Candidate
Office hours: ?
Room: TC ?
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2023/24 Vocal Pedagogy Lecture Schedule:

Sept. 8th – Introductory Seminar (Aesthetics & Practice)
Sept. 15th – *Bel Canto*; Context, Evolution and Controversy
Sept. 22nd – Laryngeal Anatomy
Sept. 29th – **Truth & Reconciliation Day (no class)**
Oct. 6th – Phonation 1
Oct. 13th – Phonation 2
Oct. 20th – Breath Management 1
Oct. 27th – Breath management 2 (Anatomy Quiz)
Nov. 3th – **Study Break (no class)**
Nov. 10th – Resonance 1 (NB Remembrance Day)
Nov. 17th – Resonance 2
Nov. 24th – Registration 1
Dec. 1st – Registration 2
Dec. 8th – Exam Review Class

Jan. 12th – Second Term Introduction
Jan. 19th – Vibrancy
Jan. 26th – *agilità, sostenuto, messa di voce*
Feb. 2nd – Idiom and Expression
Feb. 9th – Didactic Repertoire (guest lecturer? grad auditions)
Feb. 16th – **Reading Week (no class)**
Feb. 24th – Teaching Styles
March 1st – Lesson Planning and Structure
(Research Paper Abstracts due!)
March 8th – Private Studio Management
March 15th – Ethics/Presentations
March 22nd – Presentations
March 29th – **Good Friday (no class)**
April 5th – Presentations (Research Papers Due!)
TBA – *Optional* Exam Review Class

Learning Outcomes:

After taking this course students will have surveyed the literature (historical treatises to most recent research), techniques, vocal aesthetics and traditions of *Bel Canto*. They will demonstrate their ability to verbalize this knowledge through the November Anatomy Quiz, a research paper and the long essay answer exams. Armed with the specific and accurate knowledge of *what* to teach and *how* to teach it, they will be effective teachers of singers of all voice types, all ages and all levels of ability. Students will develop their vocal diagnostic skills (through a written adjudication process) and be able to respond prescriptively and diplomatically to singers to identify and correct vocal faults, and skillfully and insightfully train voices in the *Bel Canto* tradition.