

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Course Syllabus for VOIC 1201/3201/3202 – Fall 2017

COURSE TITLE: Applied Voice (VOIC 1201/3201/3202)
PROFESSOR: Dr. Debi Popham
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CLASS TIME: Arranged weekly time between professor and student
CREDIT HOURS: 2
OFFICE HOURS: Arranged on an individual basis between professor and student.

TEXT: You should purchase at least one book of repertoire per semester. The voice instructor will select all vocal technique books and repertoire for each student. Your assigned repertoire serves as the main text for this course.

Music is available through numerous sources including:

Newton Gresham Library: 1st floor, Music Listening Room
Classical Vocal Reprints: <http://www.classicalvocalrep.com/>
AMC Music: 713-802-2900 www.amcmusic.net
Opus 1 Music: 1-800-376-7871 or www.opus1music.com
Sheet Music Plus: www.sheetmusicplus.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Voice meets three times a week: one private 50-minute session, a Studio class session (to be arranged by the instructor), and Wednesdays from 12 noon to 1 pm (Vocal Seminar). This course is for students who have chosen voice as their major instrument in preparation for a career in vocal performance, music education, composition, or music therapy. Students enrolled in this course have demonstrated, by previous audition, a working knowledge of music and musical skills and have deemed voice as their primary instrument.

COURSE GOALS

Each student will:

- ❖ Refine the principal of posture, breath management and healthy tone production for the singing voice.
- ❖ Learn elements of good musicianship, including phrasing, dynamics, intonation and rhythmic accuracy.
- ❖ Learn techniques for preparing a song for performance, with attention focused on diction (with emphasis on the four singing languages), background and style, performance poise, and interpretation.
- ❖ Learn about the function and care of the voice and about his or her own vocal potential.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Each student will implement the course goals listed above in the preparation and delivery of the appropriate number of pieces stipulated by their level of study. Requirements for each level of study are listed later in the syllabus.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Many of the requirements below can be found in the Vocal Area Student Handbook. Each student must take the time to read and adhere to all requirements and policies outlined therein. This document provides further information specific to this studio.

❖ **Attendance:**

Unexcused Absences

- You are not permitted to have more than two (2) unexcused absences in either Studio Class or Vocal Seminars. If your total unexcused absences exceed two (2), this will result in a five (5) percent deduction from your final grade for each additional unexcused absence.
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 - •This policy does not apply to Vocal Lessons. Every unexcused absence will still result in a failing grade for that particular session.
 - •*This attendance policy is a completely separate requirement from the attendance policy required for Vocal Area Recitals. Please see the heading below, Vocal Area Recitals, for further clarification.*
- **Voice Lessons** – You will receive a minimum of twelve 50-minute lessons per semester. Attendance is mandatory. Dress appropriately for lessons; this is a professional environment and should be treated as such. Prior notice is required for excused absences due to illness, family obligations or University sponsored trips. Call me at least 24 hours in advance if you cannot make it to your lesson. I will give you the same courtesy. If I miss a lesson, I will make sure to give you an opportunity to make it up; if you miss a lesson, do not expect to receive a makeup lesson unless I have time. You may not call at or during your lesson time – failure to give proper notice will result in an unexcused absence. Students who arrive more than ten minutes late to their scheduled time will forfeit their lesson and will be counted absent.

In addition: All absences must be excused. Every unexcused absence will still result in a failing grade for that particular session

Studio Class – Studio Class will be held **Fridays** from 12:00–12:50pm. **Attendance is mandatory.** Studio class is an opportunity to sing in a less formal setting and a chance to give and receive feedback from your peers. It is crucial for your growth as a performer, educator and music therapist. You will be scheduled to sing several times throughout the semester and must be prepared each and every time you are scheduled to perform. You are expected to dress appropriately with your music memorized and researched prior to your performance. The more you care about your overall presentation, the better your performance will be. (If you are a new student and have a class conflict with studio time, you need to speak to me ASAP.) Failure to perform when required (i.e. sing when scheduled) will be counted as an unexcused absence. Please submit program notes to the studio for each piece performed. The notes should contain a paragraph for Composer, Poet, Style Period and a translation of the text.

***The use of cellphones, computers, or other electronic devices and/or doing homework during Studio Class is strictly prohibited. **Students who are caught using electronic gadgets or focusing on homework during Studio Class will be asked to leave and this will count as an unexcused absence.**

Voice Seminar – Voice Seminar meets throughout the semester on Wednesdays, 12-12:50 pm in the Recital Hall of the Performing Arts Center. A schedule will be posted on the Vocal Area bulletin board located on the 3rd floor of the Music Building. In addition to vocal performances by students, these Seminars present many enriching and informative sessions pertaining to what we do as performers, educators and therapists. If you are performing in Voice Seminar, you must e-mail your

repertoire and information to Dr. Asel (nxa041@shsu.edu) the Monday before seminar at noon. The repertoire must be approved by your studio teacher before this time. The repertoire must be sent (with all of the required information) as a Microsoft word document, formatted according to the template attached on the SamSings Facebook page. If you are not able to access the template, please e-mail Dr. Asel and request a copy. If you miss a seminar performance because of illness, you may send your information on weeks that you are not scheduled to sing. If time allows, you will be added to the program. It is your responsibility to find out, from Dr. Asel or your studio professor, if you are scheduled to sing.

- **Attendance will be taken at each Vocal Seminar and is mandatory for all students who are currently enrolled in voice and whose principal instrument is voice.** Performance majors are encouraged to perform on at least two (2) Seminars as time permits; Juniors and Seniors preparing recitals are encouraged to perform on at least two (2) Seminars as time permits. Everyone is required to perform on at least one (1) Seminar each semester. Music Therapy majors are required to perform 6-8 minutes of music on a Vocal Seminar in their last semester of vocal study. Failure to meet the Seminar requirement will result in a **five (5) percent deduction from your final grade**. If you do not fall into one of the categories above but want to perform, please discuss this with your teacher. We will do all we can to give every student an opportunity to perform.

***The use of cellphones, computers, or other electronic devices and/or doing homework during Vocal Seminar is strictly prohibited. **Any student who are caught using electronic gadgets or focusing on homework during Vocal Seminar will be asked to leave and this will count as an unexcused absence.**

- **Vocal Area Recitals - All students who are currently enrolled in voice and whose principal instrument is voice are required to attend four (4) student recitals.** Recital attendance is important, as it gives you an opportunity to learn by watching other students in the recital process, it creates a supportive environment among colleagues, and it provides opportunities to earn concert attendance credit. In order to receive an attendance grade for recitals and opera, each student must present a program from the performance to their teacher, who will maintain a record of attendance for these events. *Note that this is a separate attendance record from the concert attendance records kept by the School of Music.* **However, these recitals can count towards the School of Music required recital attendance as well. If you do not meet the minimum 4 recitals required, each deficiency will be counted as an unexcused absence.** This will result in a five (5) percent deduction from your final grade for each deficiency.
 - A schedule of recitals for the fall semester will be handed out at an upcoming Vocal Seminar. Attendance at these recitals is required. If you have a legitimate schedule conflict with a recital, you must discuss it with your teacher and get approval from the Vocal Area Coordinator prior to the performance to be excused from the performance. Each student must attend the Honor's recital at the end of the Spring semester, along with the SHSU Song/Aria Contest.
- ❖ **Collaborative Artist:** A studio accompanist will be contracted based on your scheduling needs. There is a fee for the accompanist. The fee for the studio accompanist is calculated as follows: # of studio classes x pianist's fee for class ÷ # of students.

Respect your pianist. Students must notify collaborative pianists of absences in a timely manner. If proper notice is not given, the student will be charged for the time missed. Failure to pay the pianist will result in the pianist not being required to attend the student's lesson, which will result in a lowered studio grade. If a student fails to pay their pianist as agreed, it will also result in a grade of "incomplete" until payment is made.

This calculated fee will be due by the sixth (4th) studio class. If payment is not received by the fourth studio class, a penalty of one letter grade will be deducted from the semester grade. Additionally, students will be provided a schedule of their performances; plan ahead, it is the student's responsibility to provide their accompanist with their music in advance. Students that fail to do so will not be allowed to sing and will receive a 0 (zero) for that scheduled performance.

❖ **Practice Procedures:**

It is expected that you come to your lesson prepared. Daily practice and preparation is essential to your vocal development. You are required to spend a minimum of 30 minutes each day with your assigned vocal exercises. Additional time should be dedicated to your repertoire and any other vocal activity you have been assigned. How much time you spend practicing depends on how quickly and thoroughly you acquire the necessary vocal skills, learn and memorize your repertoire, etc. The Vocal Division Handbook outlines the following minimum hours of weekly practice:

Composition, Music Ed./Therapy = 8 hours per week
Vocal Performance = 10 hours per week

You receive credit in this course for your weekly practice and preparation (see information under Voice Notebook heading on page 5). Set aside time each week for practice on what we covered in your lessons. Make your practice a planned part of your schedule so you can receive the full benefits and get the best results of your private study.

❖ **Instructor's Personal Message/Philosophy:**

The objectives of this course are to learn and reinforce the principles of healthy vocal technique, to apply these principles to the interpretation of solo vocal repertoire and to polish performing skills.

The main objective of voice lessons is to *improve* one's overall vocal and artistic ability. While each student begins and ends in a different place, the pacing and approach will differ from one student to another. However, some objectives remain the same for each student. All students enrolled in voice lessons will complete a jury in lieu of a final exam. When the student has a recital, the student and the teacher will collaborate to choose appropriate literature, which will demonstrate the student's comprehensive knowledge of vocal repertoire (including a variety of languages and styles). By the end of vocal study, the student will have established a technical base, and improved upon the quality of vocal production. Also, the student will have made significant steps toward becoming an *artist*, and will have tools with which to give educated and inspired performances.

In order to improve, it is imperative that the student takes care of their instrument, i.e., their body. Proper rest, nutrition, and hydration are essential to good phonation.

I will assign repertoire that is appropriate for your voice and that will best help you to accomplish our technical goals for the semester. I also encourage you to do lots of listening (assigned and unassigned) and to find repertoire on your own. However, student selections must be cleared by me. Further, please let me know of any public performing outside of Sam Houston.

Please keep in mind that I may want you to sing something because of what it will do technically, but it may not be your cup of tea. Just because you like a piece does not mean it is a good song choice if you cannot sing it because it is inappropriate for your voice type or you are not ready for the technical demands. There are more than four centuries worth of music from which we can choose, and I will make every effort to make sure we are selecting music that is both appropriate and that you like to sing.

My goal is to help you realize and actualize your goals, based on the requirements of this course. That said, my hope for you is to nurture a love of singing and the arts that will last a lifetime. Be sure you understand what is expected of you at each lesson. Clear goals from week to week will result in quality practice sessions. I will not teach you notes and rhythms, and I reserve the right to dismiss from their lesson any grossly unprepared student. Adjust your schedule and lifestyle accordingly. In lessons we will cover all aspects of vocal technique and performance, including: musicality, acting, stagecraft, performance practice, and basic music theory, as needed. My goal is for you to understand the physiological, psychological, musicological, practical, and musical bases of singing freely. We are collaborators in these goals and your full participation is appreciated, even (especially) when it falls outside your comfort zone.

❖ **Repertoire:**

Repertoire requirements are outlined in the Vocal Division Handbook and are listed below. You should begin or continue to acquire a library of vocal music. We will discuss specific collections that you need to own. Learn your repertoire in a timely fashion. Before we begin the study of a song, you should have prepared the mechanics of the song (notes, rhythms, translations, diction, character study).

In addition you are required to research the composer and poet/librettist of each piece. You will be expected to prepare a brief explanation and translation of your piece before performing it in studio class. I expect you to prepare your research and be able to recite your text from memory. Listening to several recordings of your repertoire is also very valuable in your preparation and study. Repertoire varies each semester according to teacher discretion and the pedagogical goals for each student. Typical repertoire for freshmen may include 18th and 19th-century Italian songs and arias, English and American songs from the 19th and 20th century, and perhaps including a German Lied from the standard repertoire if the student is vocally ready. Sophomores continue with Italian and English songs, definitely add German Lieder, and may learn some of the easier French mélodies or chansons. Since each student is different, more challenging arias are begun when the student is vocally ready.

Any outside solo performance music (i.e. choir solos, opera music, church solos) should be brought into your Vocal Lessons to work on with your teacher. You are a representative of our institution and as such your performance is a reflection of the School of Music, the Vocal Area, and your voice instructor. It is expected that you approach all performances with the same integrity as you do your jury music.

ALL VOICE STUDENTS:

Semester 1 & 2: VOIC 1201X for 2 credit hours

Minimum of 4 songs (suggested 10-12 minutes) memorized and prepared for the jury

- 1 song of the student's choice performed for the jury
- Voice Faculty will then request 1 (or more) songs
- Language Requirements at the discretion of the teacher

Semester 3: VOIC 1201X for 2 credit hours

Minimum of 5 songs (suggested 14 minutes) memorized and prepared for the jury

- 1 song of the student's choice performed for the jury
- Voice Faculty will then request 1 (or more) songs
- Language Requirements at the discretion of the teacher

Semester 4: VOIC 1201X for 2 credit hours (Proficiency Semester*)

Minimum of 6 songs (suggested 14 minutes) memorized and prepared for the jury

Four (4) languages must be represented (English, Italian, German, French) in diverse musical styles and periods. One song must be independently prepared (with instructor approval).

*No one is allowed to attempt the proficiency jury with deficient repertoire. It is strongly recommended that the student complete the entire diction series prior to taking the vocal proficiency. (Music Therapy students are exempt from the diction requirement.)

Semesters 5, 6, 7, & 8: VOIC 3201 for 2 credit hours

Minimum of 8 songs (suggested 18-25 minutes) memorized and prepared for the jury (Arias & opera roles can be substituted for more than one song at the discretion of the instructor.)

- 1 song of the student's choice performed for the jury
- Voice Faculty will then request 1 (or more) songs
- Language Requirements at the discretion of the teacher

❖ **Voice Notebook:** Each student is required to keep a voice notebook, which will be graded each week as a part of their preparation. The contents of the **Voice Notebook** are as follows:

1) Assigned Solo Repertoire

2) Translations & Background information. Poetry must be memorized and recited prior to working on the music in your lesson. Translations/IPA should be completed prior to the first lesson on a given piece. Research the necessary information. Everyone will have at least one piece that is in a foreign language. For every piece that is not in English, you will be required to make an English translation word-for-word. For information on specific books, please see the vocal handbook appendices. For every aria you sing, you will be expected to research the opera or oratorio from which it comes. Information that you will be required to find is: background on the story line/libretto; understanding of your character and what he/she experiences in the opera/oratorio; in what part of the work does your aria take place, etc.

3) Listening Assignment(s): Listening assignments are designed to help you build awareness of repertoire and singers. For each listening assignment you are required to find half of the repertoire you will need for the following semester. At the end of the semester your listening assignments will help to guide your repertoire assignments for the following semester. It is important to be aware of what the repertoire requirements are for the coming semester so your choices are appropriate. Please work for a balance of languages, time periods and composers.

4) Students are required to record each lesson. Please use your phone/computer if you are able. If not, arrangements may be made. Students are expected to listen to these recordings after their lesson as a part of a practice regimen and this should be reflected in their voice journal.

5) Practice Log: Students may keep a practice log detailing what they have learned in their lessons. A practice log is a mirror of your development. You may write about what we covered in your lesson; catalogue new insights, ask questions, or journal any vocal frustrations you may have. I am looking for critical thinking skills and your evolution as a singer in these journals.

❖ GRADING

- **Studio Grade:** The grade I record for each lesson reflects attendance, preparation, improvement, attitude, mastery, and memorization of repertoire. Your studio grade is based on the formula below:

Listening assignments (10%)
Midterm Exam (15%)
Studio/Voice Seminar Attendance & Performances (15%)
Song and/or Character Analysis (10%)
Work in lessons and weekly research (50%)
= Final STUDIO Grade*** 100%

- **Jury Grade:** Combined average of each professor's evaluation of your jury performance. For the Proficiency Jury, after the student has performed, the jury will then approve or disapprove the student's progression to upper-level vocal study. The semester grade will be assigned by the private teacher, taking into consideration work performed during the semester, as well as outcome of Sophomore Proficiency.
- **FINAL GRADE:** **Semesters 1–3 and 5–8:** Studio grade: 70% Jury grade: 30%
Semester 4 (Proficiency): Studio grade: 100% Proficiency: Pass/Fail

❖ MIDTERM Exam

The week of Oct. 16 (Fall semester) and March 5 (Spring semester), you will have a vocal midterm during your lesson which will require you to sing two (2) jury selections FROM MEMORY. If you have already sung two songs from memory in either a lesson, studio, or voice seminar, before the appointed week, the requirement will have been met and you will not need to use lesson time to complete this requirement.

This is a pass/fail exam and will be 15% of your final lesson grade. This will not be required the semester of a recital. If you perform from memory in studio, please remind me to make of note of the performance.

Song/Character Analyses

For **each** piece in your semester repertoire, you must complete either a song or character analysis (song analysis for art song and character analysis for aria). While this should happen when the song is assigned, these will be formally due the week before your jury. Keep in mind that in lessons and studio classes, you may be asked about this background material, and not having done the research will equate to not being prepared.

OTHER NECESSARY INFORMATION:

***Official University Attendance Policy, taken from the University Handbook, can be accessed through http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf/www/aps/documents/800401_001.pdf: Regular and punctual class attendance is expected of each student at Sam Houston State University. It is expected that each faculty member will keep a record of student attendance. Each faculty member will announce to his/her classes the policies for accepting late work or providing make-up examinations. Students are expected to show appropriate cause for missing or delaying major assignments or examinations. A student shall not be penalized for three or fewer hours of absences when examinations or other assigned class work have not been missed; however, a student may be penalized for more than three hours of absences at the discretion of the instructor. Each instructor is obligated to clarify his/her classroom policy regarding absences in writing to each student enrolled in class at the beginning of the semester or summer session.

Americans with Disabilities Act: According to University the student must initiate policy requests for accommodations. A student seeking accommodations should go to the Counseling Center and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in a timely manner. Every semester that the student desires accommodations, it is the student's responsibility to complete a Classroom Accommodation Request Form at the SSD office and follow the stated procedure in notifying faculty. Accommodations for disabled students are decided based upon documentation and need on a case-by-case basis by the Counseling Center.

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy: Section 51.911 (b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of religious holyday, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001: Provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor for religious holidays. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day (s) shall resent to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day (s). This request must be made in the first fifteen days of the semester or the first seven days of a summer session in which the absences (s) will occur. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examination are to be completed.

Academic Honesty: Your policy must, at minimum, be compatible with stated university policy set forth in (§§5.3-5.32) of the Faculty Handbook (see italicized section below). The Faculty handbook sets forth in great detail examples and definitions of dishonest behavior; the faculty members' discretion in determining when dishonesty occurs and rendering penalties; procedures for discipline; and suggested wording for the individual professor's policy.

Proper Classroom Demeanor/Rules of Conduct: According to university policy and §5 of the Student Handbook, students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that that is conducive to learning.

"Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Please turn off or mute your cellular phone and/or pager before class begins. Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking among each other at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a, minimally, a directive to leave class or being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

Song Analysis

1. Title of song
2. Date composed
3. Biographical and/or historical data of composer
4. Musical period of the composer and characteristics of the period.
5. Biographical and/or historical data of poet
6. Period of the poet and characteristics of the period if different from the composer.

Look at the poem:

7. Who is speaking? To whom?
8. Word for word translation
9. IPA transcription (if you have already completed diction)
10. Paraphrase the text in your own words.
11. What is the objective of the speaker in the poem? What is he/she trying to do/express?

Analysis of the music:

12. Form (ABA, through composed, strophic, da capo, etc.)
13. Range and tessitura
14. Harmony—dramatically affective chords and tone painting, dissonances, modulations, etc.
15. Where is the musical climax?

Essence of the song:

What does the song mean to you? How is it relevant to the 21st century? What emotion do you want to communicate? What emotion do you want to elicit from the audience (may or may not be the same as what you want to communicate)?

Recordings to which you have listened (singer/pianist).

Character Analysis

Translation:

Your text should be broken down line-by-line, and presented in the following manner:

Line 1: *First line or sentence of text in the original language*

Line 2: *IPA symbols*

Line 3: *Word-for-word literal translation of text*

Line 4: *“Sense” translation (form your word-for-word translation into coherent English sentences that make sense).*

Line 5: *A word or sentence that describes the character’s emotion or motivation at this moment*

Line 6: *Subtext—This may or may not be the same as what is actually being spoken.*

Biographical Data:

1. Composer’s dates, period (Romantic, Classical, etc), style characteristics of period, important events, works, and contemporaries.
2. Librettist’s dates, period (Romantic, Classical, etc), style characteristics of period, important events, works, and contemporaries (if different than the composer’s).

Character Development (Answer after reading through the entire libretto/score):

1. What is my name, age, and social standing? (i.e., “Susanna is a 21-year-old maid, and she serves the Countess Almaviva.”)
2. When does the action of the story take place (time of year, year)? How might that affect my character?
3. How do I relate to the other people in this scene? (i.e., “I am Susanna, and Figaro is my fiancé. We love each other very much, and we are currently scheming against the Count...etc.”)
4. What is my general objective in the opera? In this scene/aria? What has happened just before this scene/aria, and what will happen just after?
5. What are my main obstacles in gaining my objective in the opera? In the scene?
6. How intelligent is my character? How sensitive? How do I express myself? What are my beliefs/convictions?
7. Explain how the musical elements in this scene/aria reflect your emotional journey. Give specific examples. (i.e., “The flute passage in measure x represents Ilia’s heart as it flies to her lover... “ or “The shift to the minor key in the B section reflects the suddenly dark nature of the text as “so-and-so” laments the loss of her father...” etc.)
8. Considering the points in 1-5 above, how might this influence the way in which I move about the stage in general while portraying this character?
9. Recordings/Videos to which you listened and/or watched.