

Course Outline & Studio Policy Document

Chiles Studio (2020-2021)

This year will be different due to the precautions we must take to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. It will affect how and when we work together in the studio as well as scheduling and the potential need to shift entirely to online lessons and coaching when necessary. We will respond to the public health situation as it evolves through the year and try to work productively when we can meet face to face and when we must work partially or even completely online should that become necessary.

Western has made preparations such as the dramatic increase in air exchange in the studio. We will always be masked when we are in the studio together. I encourage you all to buy several “singers’ masks”, which are not tight fitting and make singing MUCH easier. We will wash our hands a lot. We will leave the studio empty for 15 minutes between each lesson to let the air exchange. Therefore, lessons this year will begin at 20 minutes to the hour and end at 25 minutes past the hour and we will have 13 of these 45 minute lessons each term. Scheduling is going to be very challenging especially if we must move between online and live lessons and coachings AND we have to coordinate three complex schedules for these lessons. Additionally 3rd and 4th year Performance Majors will book a weekly, 22.5 minute tech lesson on Monday and Thursday mornings. We will have 13 of these each semester. This allows us to continue to book two tech lessons back to back in an hour and have the 15 required for the air to exchange. Ideally performance Repertoire lessons will be booked on Wednesdays.

We will be patient, flexible and kind to each other and to ourselves, especially as the year begins and we try to make this new normal work!

My telephone number here in London is: 519-615-8258. I generally require at least 24 hours notice to re-schedule a lesson. With COVID-19, we will need to be VERY sensitive of our symptoms. If you wake up in the morning and find that you are “under the weather” AT ALL, please call me at the studio at 8:30am or call the studio phone through the day at the bottom of an hour to let me know and to reschedule the lesson. The studio phone number is 661-2111 ex84323. The studio is located in MB313 on the third floor of the new Music Building. My e-mail address is tchiles@uwo.ca. It will be extremely important this year NOT to go out in public if you have symptoms of a cold or flu. We want to keep everyone safe and healthy!

We are most fortunate to have Marianna Chibotar and Christina Willatt for our studio’s Collaborative Pianists. Prof. Chibotar’s cell phone number is 519-777-0252 and her e-mail is mariannachibotar@gmail.com. Ms. Willatt’s number is 519-615-0465 and her e-mail is cwillatt@alumni.uwo.ca. Please consult with me and then book their services for the second half of your one-hour lesson (or, for performance majors, for the full hour of your repertoire lessons), at least a half-hour rehearsal/coaching through the week (more, ideally, for performance majors

and grad students) and for all your juries and recitals etc. Prof. Chibotar and Ms. Willatt are talented and experienced coaches, accompanists and répétiteurs. You will want to prepare your repertoire and diction with them and work with them as extensively as is financially feasible. Please note that the practice at Western is that you are responsible for all financial arrangements and commitments with pianists throughout the year.

Please monitor the Studio Bulletin Board (the door of MB313) for announcements. I will certainly email as well – please ensure I have your correct address. We have a Studio Facebook page again this year. This is a good forum for announcements and swapping lesson times and asking questions of your more experienced colleagues. Please feel free to make suggestions as to how we can use this tool most effectively.

There will be no live performances with audiences this year at the faculty. This means that we will not be able to have Class Recitals this year. I had wondered about an online project but I think it is best to wait and see as the year unfolds what our workload will be and what appetite we might have for additional “online” activities this year. Juries will proceed normally with the two jurors at the back of the hall. Credit Recitals will proceed normally with two jurors at the back of the hall but no other live audience, HOWEVER, I would encourage you to live stream your recital on a platform such as Facebook Live so that it really is a performance and so that your family and friends can share your art with you in that wonderful moment.

We will continue to have our Studio Masterclass on Friday afternoons in TC 100 from 2:30-4:30. Graduate students and other upper year students will perform from 2:30-3:30 and first and second year students will perform from 3:30-4:30. This procedure is to reduce the number of people in TC100 at any one time.

For each piece of repertoire that you bring to a lesson with me, I expect you to have completed (before we work on the piece) a translation which includes an attempt at an IPA (or phonetic) rendering of the text, a word-for-word decryption and then a “poetic translation” underneath the original text. Here is a one-line example:

dove ma:j kwestamor dove spinzemi il pjanto su:o

Dove mai quest’amor, dove spinsemi il pianto suo?

Where ever this-love where drove-me the weeping her?

To what has my love and her weeping driven me?

It is a valuable pedagogical tool to make a recording of each lesson. Please do a full debriefing of these recordings after each lesson. It may be very useful to make notes as you study these recordings. I have a static web cam set up, but smart phones make excellent and malleable digital recordings these days!

I recommend that everyone keep a Singing Journal. Use the journal to keep track of the vocalises that you use as you practise. Use it to jot down any observations or questions that may arise as you practise or even as you observe other singers or listen to recordings.

Please ensure that you are dressed appropriately for our lessons. You should be in clothing that allows free movement for stretching and bending but which is not so baggy that I can not monitor your breathing and alignment effectively. I may often be staring at your abdomen to monitor your Breath Management; please wear a top that will allow you to sing comfortably under this focused attention. Your footwear should also be sensibly chosen to facilitate healthy alignment and grounding.

Examination material (Jury Repertoire) must be solidly memorised by the middle of February. The sooner this material is learned and memorised the sooner we can work at polishing it and the more comfortable you will be during the exam period. Try to get into a rhythm of learning a piece, coaching it and then performing it in our Performance Class on a two-week cycle.

Students are expected to be “off book” for all repertoire sessions with me and, ideally, for repertoire sessions with Prof. Chibotar and Ms. Willatt. The music and words must be firmly in your mouth and in your mind to facilitate meaningful coaching at the university level. Repertoire that you perform for Masterclasses, Performance Classes and Class Recitals must, of course, be solidly memorised.

There will be no Recital Cards in the MPS this year. I cannot ask for recitals reviews this year either since there will be no live performances. I will however require six written reviews of an online performance or masterclass. These reviews can discuss vocal technique, artistry and repertoire and need not be more than 250 words.

Grading:

Please read very carefully the [Voice Jury/Recital Requirements document](#), the [Department of Performance Studies Handbook](#) as well as the [Recital Procedure Page](#). These documents outline what the Faculty of Music requires of you. These documents are found online through the hyperlinks above.

Your Undergraduate Applied Music grade will be calculated in the following manner:

Non-performance majors:

65% - Studio Work (lessons and the requirements outlined in this document.)

25% - Jury (3rd and 4th year Performance is 20% Jury and 70% Studio)

10% - Performance Class and Online Music Reviews

For 3rd and 4th year Performance Majors:

70% - Studio Work

20% - December Jury (Recitals are a separate course and marked separately)

10% - Performance Class and Online Music Reviews

Graduate Students:

80% - Studio Work

20% - Performance Class and Online Music Reviews

More grading details and information on Applied Studies are available [HERE](#).

Repertoire expectations will be lighter this year given the uncertainty we face as we work through the COVID-19 Pandemic. Here is a rough guide to help you plan out your year:

First Year Undergrad: 12 songs minimum, fully memorized and performed.

Second - Fourth Year Undergrad: 16 songs minimum, fully memorized and performed.

Third Year Performance Major: Short Recital, Dec. Oratorio Jury plus 5 other songs

Fourth Year Performance Major: Full Recital, Dec. Opera Jury plus 8 other songs

First year Graduate Students: Full Recital plus 12 songs and possibly involvement in Opera

Second Year Graduate Students: Full Recital, audition aria package and Opera involvement

Repertoire should be chosen from various periods and styles, and must include at least the four languages this faculty requires (English, German French and Italian). Singers in their first year of study with me must begin the year with Italian baroque repertoire.

It may occasionally be necessary for me to re-schedule our regular lesson times. I will contact you personally should this happen, and we will find a mutually acceptable time. Please ensure that I have your most up-to-date telephone number, e-mail and other contact information. Please check for e-mail from me and keep your UWO email inbox clear to receive email!

Please take careful and frequent note of the instructions and notices posted along with the schedule on the bulletin board beside our studio door (MB313) and on our studio FB page. Please feel free to knock on the studio door to ask a question, to get some advice or just to chat; I know that you will be respectful of your colleagues' lesson times.

University notices:

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 UCC room 76. Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in UC11 or to click on the big green "I Need Help Now" button on the Health and Wellness page above.

Recording of Online Activities: All of the remote learning sessions for this course will be recorded. The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers (name displayed on the screen). The recordings will be used for educational purposes related to this course, including evaluations. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals participating in the course for their private or group study purposes. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session recordings. Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor.

Contingency Plan: In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely 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 grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online at the discretion of the course instructor. **Online Etiquette:** Some components of this course may involve synchronous online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honour the following rules of etiquette:

- Use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet)
- “Arrive” to class on time
- Ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of discussions in the event that a class discussion deals with sensitive or personal material
- To minimize background noise, kindly mute your microphone for the entire class until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise
- Unless invited by your instructor, do not share your screen in the meeting
- Be prepared to turn your video camera off at the instructor’s request if the internet connection becomes unstable. The course instructor will act as moderator for the class and will deal with any questions from participants.

To participate please consider the following:

- If you wish to speak, select the blue “raise hand” function and wait for the instructor to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question.
- Kindly remember to unmute your microphone and turn on your video camera before speaking. • Self-identify when speaking.
- Kindly remember to select the “raise hand” function again to lower your hand, mute your mic and turn off your video camera after speaking (unless directed otherwise).

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.

General Philosophy and Advice...

- You will be your own best teacher throughout your life. I want to teach you how to teach yourself! You will, of course, always need professional “ears” to help you and guide you but you are the master of your vocal destiny.
- I generally spend the first half of the lesson working on purely technical aspects of your voice. This is where we will explore and develop your voice and where you will begin to learn how to teach yourself. In the second half of the lesson we will apply those technical concepts to the repertoire. You will want to have your accompanist with you for the second half of your lesson.
- Practise! Our art is all about muscular co-ordination and development. Singers may not be able, physically, to practice on their instrument for 6 hours a day as a pianist or violinist might but we can “practise” through various important preparatory activities, such as: study of the text and translation, listening to recordings, reading secondary material, repertoire search, keyboard practice... (*NB*: The ability to play the piano is an invaluable asset as you search for repertoire and as you learn your music!)
- Use the library well. Listen to recordings to seek out repertoire, to learn a sense of idiomatic style and performance practice. It is our intellect and preparation that transforms what we do from craft into art.
- Preparing repertoire at the university level should be challenging! You will need a personal translation (literal, poetic and IPA). You need to memorize the poem, then the music. You need to coach your repertoire then you need to perform it, put it away and then finally bring it out again for presentation — thus, the advantage of choosing and learning your repertoire very early in the year.
- Repertoire — I could just assign repertoire to each student, but the search for and the choosing of repertoire is an incredibly important part of what you need to learn here. So, I would like you to bring repertoire choices to me. I am happy to offer advice but that is all. You have many excellent resources to aid you in your quest: anthologies and collections, books in the library that outline repertoire for various voice types at various stages of vocal development, reference librarians, vocal coaches, recordings of recitals by singers whom you respect, recitals by colleagues...

“Contrary to what you might believe, merely doing your job every day doesn’t qualify as real practice. Going to meetings isn’t practicing your people skills, and replying to email isn’t practicing your typing. You have to set aside some time and do focused practice in order to get better at something.”

– Steve Yegge



The Singers' *Kata*

1. Talk to other singers. Listen to performances and recordings. This is more important than any book or training course.
2. Sing! The best kind of learning is learning by doing.
3. Take singing lessons from a challenging teacher.
4. Seek out and work on projects with good singers and players. Find out what it means to be the best.
5. Work on pieces that have been recorded by great singers. Learn how they accomplished what they did. Learn how to perform so other people can understand and follow your artistic ideas.
6. Sing in different styles and languages. Pick genres that have aesthetics and conventions that are unlike what you are used to.
7. Understand how your body affects what you do. Know how long it takes your voice to warm up; how long you need to recover from a hard day or week of singing; how long you can sing day after day without extra rest; and how long it takes to recover from illness.

GUIDELINES FOR JURORS MARKING UNDERGRADUATE VOICE
RECITALS AND JURY EXAMINATIONS

- **90-100%** Marks at the A+ level reflect performances that demonstrate highly advanced, technically solid, artistic, expressive singing with a consistent and thorough understanding of the text and music and superb performance skills. These marks should be rare and are indicated when the performance ceases to be heard as an exam. Reserve this for outstanding performances.

- **85-88%** (NB avoid 89%) reflects a performance of considerable polish, with secure technique and intonation, expressive singing, thoughtful understanding of the text and music and excellent performing skills.

- **80-84%** represents a performance which is well prepared, delivered with confidence and generally successful technique. Performances at this level should demonstrate a good understanding of the text and music with some evidence of flair and imagination.

- **73-78%** (NB avoid 79%) Marks in this range represent a good, well prepared performance delivered with a certain degree of assurance and some understanding of the text and music. Technique in this range may be successful but not yet consistent.

- **65-72%** Marks in this range are used for performances that fulfill the requirements but which do not demonstrate successful technical development. Understanding of text and musical ideas may be immature at this level and only limited performance skills may be demonstrated.

- Marks below **64%** are used for performances that show limited awareness of voice study and performance skills. Performances in this range may be full of mistakes and not solidly prepared. The connection to text and understanding of musical elements are rudimentary.