

**Music 9504/9841: ACTING FOR SINGERS**  
**Autumn/Winter: 2024/2025**

**Instructor:** Robert McQueen

**Location:** Room 227

**Class Time:** Thursday, 10:00 to 11:30

**Course prerequisites:** None

**Course Description**

This class offers a practical approach to the development of acting skills used by singers in theatrical genres. Students will gain an understanding of a variety of acting techniques and their use in sung storytelling.

There will not be any formal exams during this course, however there will be frequent assignments of exercises that will require preparation and/or rehearsal time between classes.

**Learning Objectives:**

- \* To acquire and practice the skills necessary for the actor/singer to translate their ideas and energy into truthful and convincing dramatic interpretation and performance.

- \* To develop an actor/singer's toolkit for practical use in preparing for and rehearsing a role.

- \* To develop an understanding and practice of the skills needed to maintain and strengthen one's interpretation of a role over the course of performance.

- \* To build a solid acting vocabulary particular to the actor/singer's rehearsal and performance process.

- \* To strengthen the actor/singer's ability to reach an audience with their performance.

- \* To gain confidence in one's ability to communicate a fully embodied performance.

- \* To become aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses in the fields of dramatic preparation, rehearsal, interpretation and performance and to investigate how these can be built upon or reduced.

- \* To enter into the preparation and performance of a role with a curious and inquiring mind.

- \* To enhance one's spirit of investigation.

- \* To strengthen the practice of collaboration with your fellow singers and creative team members during rehearsal.

- \* To uncover and realise one's own creative power as an artist.

- \* To heighten one's sense of dedication to artistic practice.

### **Course Content:**

Acting For Singers is designed to introduce, practice and develop a practical understanding of dramatic preparation and performance. The ultimate goal of the practice of this class is for the actor/singer to gain the skills necessary to engage in the preparation, rehearsal, interpretation and performance of a role. The process of study in this course will aim to give the singing artist the tools they need toward becoming a fully embodied performer.

The classes for will be structured with equal parts instruction, dialogue, and participation.

The classes will be highly participatory and will involve acting exercises, monologue text work, scene text work, and will use material drawn from both within and outside the participants repertoire of roles.

There will be frequent assignments of exercises that will require preparation and/or rehearsal time between classes.

### **Course Timeline:**

To Be Determined: the specifics of the course timeline is dependent on the prior acting training and experience of the students attending the class.

### **Course Format:**

Each day will begin with a physical warm-up followed by various exercises, drawn from a variety of sources.

Each session will complete with discussion and dialogue to allow for questions, reflection, and summary of the day's work.

Reference material will be handed out, as necessary.

### **Attendance:**

Attendance and punctuality are mandatory.

Students are required to attend all classes.

Acceptable exceptions will be illness or personal crisis.

Students will be expected to participate in all exercises unless prior permission has been given.

Accommodations will be made and respected as per prior discussion.

### **Dress:**

Students should be prepared for physical movement in all classes and should dress accordingly.

### **Recommended Reading Material:**

Hagen, Uta with Haskel Frankel. **Respect For Acting**, MacMillan Press, 1973

Constantine, Martin. **The Opera Singer's Acting Toolkit**, Methuen Drama 2020

### **Evaluation:**

#### **In-Class Work: 50% of final grade**

Students will be evaluated on their participation in class, their enthusiasm and demonstrations, their inquiry and comprehension of the material, their artistic growth during the course, their attendance, punctuality and the improvement in their abilities.

Students will be expected to apply the tools acquired during the course: intention, action, immediacy, relationship, text analysis, research, collaboration.

Students will be expected to undertake rehearsal, and research outside of the classroom hours for presentations and discussions.

#### **Artistry/Creativity: 35% of final grade:**

Students will be evaluated on their artistic growth over the semester. The expectation of the students is that they will be able to demonstrate the use of the exercises and practices in class. The students will be expected to demonstrate the use of the acting toolkit they build in class.

#### **Professional Behaviour: 15% of final grade:**

Students will be evaluated on their ability to work within the protocols and courtesies of the profession.

Additionally, they will be evaluated on their ability to work collaboratively, and with professional regard for their colleagues.

#### **Grading Scale:**

A = 80 to 100%, B = 70 to 79%, C = 60 to 69%, F = 0 to 59%

A grade of INC (incomplete) may be used in exceptional circumstances if a student is unable on medical or compassionate grounds to complete the course requirements within the normal time.

### **Senate Mandated Graduate Course Outline notes:**

i) **Academic Offences:** Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the

following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

ii) **Gender-Based and Sexual Violence:** Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](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](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

iii) **Enrollment Restrictions:** Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in Music.

iv) **Health and Wellness:** Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health Support at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

v) **Accessible Education Western:** Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

vi) **Written Work and the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):** The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools/software/apps is not permitted in the written work for this course. 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. 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 (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

vii) **Accommodation on Medical or Compassionate Grounds:** Western recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, at times, be impaired by medical illness or exceptional circumstances. Instructors will use good judgment and ensure fair treatment in determining how or if work missed in such cases will be accommodated. Whether medical documentation is required for work worth less than 10% of the final grade is at the

discretion of the instructor (but, if required, this must be indicated on the course outline). If work missed because of medical or non-medical reasons is worth more than 10% of the final grade, documentation is required. Any documentation, when required, is processed through the Office of the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies) and should be sent directly to this office, not to the instructor.

viii) **Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Western accommodates students with disabilities, subject to not compromising the academic integrity of the course or program. Students seeking accommodation must contact Accessible Education (aew@uwo.ca), which provides recommendations based on disability documentation and other considerations. Reasonable academic accommodation is a cooperative process between the University, the student, and the instructor. All participants in the process must fulfil their respective obligations as set out in this Policy and the associated Procedures:  
[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation\\_disabilities.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf)

ix) **Religious Accommodation:** When scheduling of course requirements conflicts with religious holidays that require absence from the University or that prohibit or require certain activities on the part of the student, the student will not be penalized for absence because of religious reasons. If a suitable arrangement involving a graduate course cannot be worked out between the student and instructor involved, they should consult the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies). Further information can be found here:  
[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_religious.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf)

x) **Scholastic Offences:** The University has a Scholastic Discipline policy that regulates procedures in the event that a graduate student is suspected of a scholastic offence, most commonly plagiarism or cheating, but also violations of research ethics. It is important to note that while the course instructor will likely investigate the offence, possibly meeting with the student to clarify the issue, it is the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies) who, in consultation with the instructor, assesses penalties for scholastic offences in graduate courses. The Scholastic Discipline policy for graduate students may be found at:  
[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)  
The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has developed a mandatory Academic Integrity Module that is designed to help students understand and abide by principles of academic integrity. Further information about this module can be found at:  
[https://grad.uwo.ca/life\\_community/study/index.html](https://grad.uwo.ca/life_community/study/index.html)  
New doctoral students in Music are required to complete the TCPS 2: CORE-2022 (Course on Research Ethics) in their first term. Instructors are encouraged to complete CORE-2022 as well. It is free to access, and the modules can be completed over multiple sessions.

xi) **Grading Guidelines for Graduate Courses:** A=80-100%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, F=00-59%

xii) All course material will be posted to **OWL Brightspace:** <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>. If students need assistance with OWL Brightspace, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the [Western Technology Services](#)

[Helpdesk](#) online or by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800 for technical support. Current versions of all popular browsers (e.g., Safari, Chrome, Edge, Firefox) are supported with OWL Brightspace; what is most important is that you update your browser frequently to ensure it is current. All JavaScript and cookies should be enabled.