

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**MUSIC 9596**  
**LYRIC DICTION FOR PERFORMERS OF VOCAL MUSIC:**  
**ITALIAN and GERMAN DICTION**

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**ENROLMENT RESTRICTIONS:**

Enrolment in this course is restricted to graduate students in Music, as well as any student who has obtained special permission from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

**TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS:**

Adams, David. *A Handbook of Diction for Singers: Italian, German, French, 3rd edition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. ISBN: 978-0-19-7639511 (print) ISBN: 978-0-19-76395135 (ebook)  
Price: @\$45 paperback (Amazon.ca) or @\$24 e-book (various platforms)  
Italian and German dictionaries (digital or hardcopy) that indicates open and closed vowels pronunciation and pronunciation for written Z for Italian

**SUGGESTED MATERIALS:**

- Tablets, laptops, or binder for notes, handouts, and assignments
- Scores of music for class performance (digital or hardcopies)
- Digital video/audio recorder for assignments and practice

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. Gaining a proficient basic working knowledge of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as it relates to the Italian and German languages
2. Learning general rules of pronunciation and syllabification for Italian and German
3. Transcribing Italian and German words and texts into IPA using the strategies found in the Adams' text. Completing word-for-word translations into English is also expected for singing assignments
4. Incorporating the rules of pronunciation into spoken and musical contexts
5. Developing critical listening skills regarding authenticity and flexibility of pronunciation
6. Developing performance strategies and skills through song/aria research

**PROCEDURES:**

1. Attending class periods in-person (or on-line if necessary), prepared for assignments, quizzes, and scheduled events
2. Completing readings and homework assignments for the assigned class periods
3. For both Italian and German, singers will perform from memory **two selections (art songs and/or arias) and one aria with recitative** for each language
4. MMus students will complete a **listening assignment and present it in-class**.

**ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS:** Class session will be held face-to-face in accordance with health and safety protocols. Attendance to each class period is expected. The professor should be informed of absences (medical or non-medical) prior to the class period. To be excused, absences must be cleared by appropriate documentation. Tardiness to class sessions is strongly discouraged. Please plan accordingly.

**ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION FOR STUDENT ABSENCE & MISSING WORK:** University policy on academic considerations requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. In the event of a student absence or missing work, students are responsible for reading and following the Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness

at the following link which includes further details regarding various requirements and procedures for the supporting documentation:

[https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration\\_Sep24.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf)

Any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline and the relevant university policy.

The Graduate Program in Music recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by illness or injury. To ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's course grade shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the office of the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies), not to the course instructor.

**ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION FOR STUDENT ABSENCE & MISSING WORK:**  
**ASSESSMENT WITH A FORMAL DOCUMENTATION DESIGNATION STATEMENT**  
**AND/OR ASSESSMENT WITH BUILT-IN FLEXIBILITY:** Days which you are assigned to sing will count as formal assessments. You will be responsible for getting appropriate documentation to be excused from performing that day and to reschedule these assessments. Written work due for these days will still need to be handed in by the due date and time.

**STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC OFFENSES:** 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 website:  
[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) Note especially that plagiarism is a major scholastic offence. Students are expected to write all assignments in their own words. If you take an idea from another author, you must acknowledge this by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing.

**STATEMENT ON 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 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).

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES:** 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.

**ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION WESTERN (AEW):** 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.

**RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION:** Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Advisor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance.

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_religious.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf)

**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 Brightspace 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.

**EVALUATION POLICY EXEMPTION:** This course has received an exemption from the requirement in the Senate Policy on Evaluation of Undergraduate Academic Performance that stipulates “At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a 1000- or 2000-level course without academic penalty, students will receive assessment of work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade.”

**EXAMINATIONS & ATTENDANCE:** Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN EXAMS:** Electronic devices of any type **WILL NOT** be permitted during quizzes, the Midterm Test and/or Final Exam in this course (unless required for accessibility reasons based on an approved accommodation request from Accessible Education).

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASSROOMS:** Electronic devices of any sort are allowed for instructional purposes only. The in-class use of electronic devices (other than for instructor-approved in-class use) is expressly prohibited. Students found guilty of disrupting the class with electronic devices may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

**PLAGARISM 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/>).

**USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI):** The use of generative artificial intelligence for IPA transcription, reading assignments, or in-class presentations is prohibited. Students may use AI to assist with PowerPoint/Keynote/Slides presentation layouts, but not for the content being presented.

**IMPLICIT CONSENT TO REMOTE PROCTORING:** When required, tests and examinations in this course may be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide personal information (including some biometric data) and the session will be recorded. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western’s Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

**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.

**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.

#### **GRADING AND GRADING SCALE for M9596:**

Your final grade will be based on the following percentages:

Attendance/participation:	20%
Assignments/quizzes:	20%
Song #1, Song #2, and Recit (I/G):	30%
Finals ((I/G-written):	25%
Spoken Finals ((I/G-oral):	5%

#### **GRADUATE SCALE:**

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

#### **GRADING STANDARDS:**

1. You will be graded on accuracy of transcription of Italian and German into IPA based on the Adams’ text, the accuracy of pronunciation of IPA symbols, and the accuracy of spoken sung representations of Italian and German. This includes participation, willingness, and attitude during class sessions.
2. Assignments are given generally at the end of the class period, either from the syllabus or verbally. They will also be posted on OWL. If you are absent from a class period, you are responsible for getting your assignments from the professor through e-mail, OWL, or individual appointment.
3. **Assignments must be completed/submitted/received by the designated time to receive full credit.** Appropriate partial credit will be given for assignments that are incomplete or late. Students who are absent for reasons stated above should contact the professor to make arrangements for assignments at the earliest reasonable opportunity. **(M9596y students see below for Listening Assignment instructions and expectations)**
4. **Songs, arias, and recitatives for class presentation must be memorized.** An IPA transcription, the actual written song text, and a word-for-word translation in English of the text must be completed as part of this assignment. Performing additional background research will also add to your comprehension of the piece and potentially add to your performance
5. If you are unable to sing and complete a singing assignment due to medical reasons, you must contact the professor as soon as possible and prior to the singing assignment due date. If you can phonate healthily, you will complete a recitation of your text and complete your written portion of your assignment. If time permits, a performance of the piece will be done at the next class period. Failure to make appropriate arrangements with the professor will result in a failing grade for the assignment
6. **Oral examinations** will be administered during the final class period of the term. The exam will take no more than five minutes and be comprised of reading a text in either Italian or German. You will be given appropriate time during the oral exam to analyze the text for accurate pronunciation.
7. **Final examinations for Italian and German will be held during the normal examination times in the Fall and Winter terms respectively.**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** The Scholastic Offense Policy in regard to plagiarism states, “Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by

proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence. The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.” This directly implies that all IPA work be done without the use of other aids beyond the assigned textbook.

#### **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

##### **Assignment Key:**

Reading for next class (from Adams)= [pg.xx]

+ Song and Listening Assignment Explanations

#### **FALL TERM SCHEDULE—ITALIAN**

##### **September**

9- Italian first day-Syllabus, Intro to IPA, Vowels, Syllabification, Stress [Preface materials-31]

16-Vowels Revisited, Consonants, Articulation, Phrasal Doubling [31-68]

23-Diphthongs, Triphthongs, Underlay, Stressed *E* and *O*: does it really matter [68-105]

30- NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

##### **October**

7- Expressive use of Diction; In-class exercises [105-129]

14- MMus Listening Assignments Song #1; Questions; In-class exercises

21- **Singing Assignment #1**

28- **Singing Assignment #1**

##### **November**

4- FALL READING WEEK

11- **Singing Assignment #1**

18- **Singing Assignment #2**

25- **Singing Assignment #2**

##### **December**

2- **Singing Assignment #2**

9- **Singing Assignment #3/Italian Written Final/Oral Exam**

#### **WINTER TERM SCHEDULE—GERMAN**

##### **January**

6- German First day--Syllabus, Intro to IPA, Vowels, WGO vs. WNGO, Stem and Stress [9-31; 131-149]

13- Consonants, Word Structure [150-186]

20- Suffixes, Endings, Glottal vs. Not Glottal; In-class exercises [186-218]

27- Reviewing All Things German; In-class exercises

##### **February**

3- MMus Listening Assignments Song #2; Questions; In-class exercises

10- **Singing Assignment #1**

17- READING WEEK

24- **Singing Assignment #1**

##### **March**

3- **Singing Assignment #1**

10- **Singing Assignment #2**

17- **Singing Assignment #2**

24- **Singing Assignment #2**

31- German Review

##### **April**

7- **Recitative/German Written Final/Oral Exam**

#### **IMPORTANT CONTACTS:**

Jingquan Xie [jxie353@uwo.ca](mailto:jxie353@uwo.ca) (collaborator)

### **MMus Listening Assignment Instructions:**

You will complete two listening assignments in groups on two different songs or arias. After selecting pieces for the assignment, your group will make sure the library has a recording of it being performed by a native Italian and a non-native singer. Your group will transcribe the text according to the rules of transcription discussed in class. After transcribing, you should listen to the recordings, indicating the discrepancies between what you transcribed and what was sung. The class presentation will be the combined efforts of your transcription, and comparative listenings of each of the recordings.

**Ex.**

	Ombra mai fu
Transcription:	[ˈom.bra ma:i fu]
Singer 1	[u bre I v ]
Singer 2	[ mai: ]

You need not transcribe the entirety of each recording's diction, only the deviation from the rules discussed in the Adams text and in class.

### **Song/Recit. Assignment Instructions:**

For each assignment, prepare your text in the following manner:

IPA	[ˈkwe:.sto a.'mo:r ver.'gon.na mi:a]
Original text	Questo amor, vergonia mia
Translation	This Love .....

Your assignment will be graded on the following: IPA transcription, translation of the text, spoken accuracy according to the written IPA, and sung accuracy according to the written IPA. Please provide at least 1.5 line spacing between lines of the three lined grouping (IPA, Original Text, and Translation).

### **Selected Bibliography**

Adams, David. *A Handbook of Diction for Singers: Italian, German, French, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022.

*Handbook of the International Phonetic Association: A guide to the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Montgomery, Cheri. *German Lyric Diction Workbook, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.* Nashville, TN: S. T. M. Publishers, 2014.

Montgomery, Cheri. *Italian Lyric Diction Workbook, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.* Nashville, TN: S. T. M. Publishers, 2013.