

**MUSC 3606 Principles of Diction**  
**Dr. Dawn Neely**  
**dneely@westga.edu, 678-839-6265 (Office)**  
**office hours: by appointment**  
**Credit hours: 1.0 credit for all majors.**  
**Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30pm–1:45pm**

**Course Purpose:**

All singers must study diction. To be an effective opera singer, one must have command of at least three languages besides English, the concert singer even more. The choral director must also have language skills in order to be able to explore a wide variety of literature. The purpose of this course is to provide the aspiring singer or choral director with effective knowledge and tools to obtain a basic proficiency in lyric diction.

**Course Description:**

This course focuses on the study of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and its application to Italian and English. Students will learn the basics of singer's diction for each of these languages and demonstrate their knowledge through written examination, speaking, and singing.

**Learning Outcomes (NASM Standard 1.a addressed):**

Upon successful completion of this course the student will:

1. Comprehend the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and its application including an understanding of the phonology of diction, i.e. the subtle changes in the articulators necessary to effect precise pronunciation and artistic communication.
2. Be skilled in the basics of proper singing pronunciation of Italian, German, and French.

**Textbooks, Materials, Other:**

**Textbook: Diction for Singers 2<sup>nd</sup> edition** by Joan Wall

**Online:** Students will supplement in-class work with online listening labs. Listening and repetition are crucial to good Diction. These assignments will be given throughout the semester.

**Material:** Students are also expected to bring assigned music to class and provide copies of music with IPA and translations for other students and professor.

**Other:** Students will sing 2 songs in each language (Italian, German, and French) for class. The first song will be assigned and accompanied by students in Dr. Gingerich's Collaborative Class. The second song will be chosen from the student's Fall 2016 or Spring 2017 repertoire and accompanied by a hired pianist: TBD.

**In Class Materials:** Notebook and writing implements

**Course Format and Procedures:**

**Class activities:**

1. The instructor will explain and model the sounds and the students will emulate
2. The instructor will explain the rules of pronunciation of the language being studied and students will write and speak exercises to demonstrate understanding.
3. Students will perform literature, and the diction for the assigned song will be coached by the instructor (two songs in each language studied).

**Homework:**

1. Homework will be assigned on a weekly basis. Homework will generally be due on the next class period after it is assigned.

**Tests and Quizzes:**

1. Written tests will consist of problems requiring transcription of IPA into language and vice-versa. Tests will be graded by percentage of correct answers.
2. Quizzes may be administered on a periodic basis. Quizzes will be graded by percentage of correct answers.
3. There will be 2 songs sung in class per language. See **In class songs**

**Attendance Policy:**

Attendance at all class meetings is mandatory. Work missed due to an unexcused absence cannot be made up. Classes missed due to illness, family emergency, etc. will be excused at the instructor's discretion. Requests for excuse should occur before the class meeting whenever possible. Requests for excuse for illness must be accompanied by some official documentation stating the extent of the illness. Appointments such as medical, dental, etc. must not be made during class meeting times. In accordance with University policy, students observing religious holidays will not be disadvantaged when advanced arrangements are made with their instructors to make up course work missed. This course adheres to the University Policy on Class Attendance found in the Student Policy Handbook.

**Lateness** will not be tolerated. It is disrespectful to both the professor and other students. Lateness of 10 minutes or more will be counted as an unexcused absence. Accumulated lateness will be added: 5 minutes late for 1 class plus 5 minutes late for another = 1 unexcused absence.

**Grading:**

### 1. Grading Scale:

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = 59% or less

### **Grading will be assessed as follows:**

1. Students will demonstrate understanding of concepts 10% introduced in class by completing homework and through in-class oral exercises.
  2. Students will demonstrate further comprehension 20% through periodic quizzes.
  3. Students will demonstrate accumulated retention of knowledge 50% through three exams.
  4. Students will demonstrate comprehension of concepts by performing 2 songs in each language with correct pronunciation and written IPA for each song. 20%
- Written exams may be comprised of objective and subjective items, such as IPA transcriptions, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, true-false, and short answer/essay. Students found cheating on a quiz, exam, or homework will receive a grade of zero. Academic dishonesty is not tolerated.

### **In Class Songs:**

All students will perform two songs each in class in Italian, German, and French. The first song will be assigned and accompanied by students in Dr. Gingerich's Collaborative Class. The second song will be chosen from the student's Fall 2016 or Spring 2017 repertoire and accompanied by a hired pianist: TBD. The hired accompanist will be a shared class expense much like the purchase of a book. Your second song must be approved by Dr. Neely by the second week of class:  
**January 19<sup>th</sup>.**

A. Songs do not have to be memorized but the notes, melodies, and rhythms must be learned on your practice time. This is part of your homework. I will not teach them to you in class. You will receive practice music files to help you learn your pieces and need to schedule at least one rehearsal with Dr. Gingerich's students on your own time.

B. Please be aware that copying your classmates IPA will not help you when you get up to read and sing it. It will also not help you learn the IPA rules for your tests. Do your own work!

**Final Exam:** The final exam will be Thursday, May 4 11am to 1pm.  
This final is your third test so it will cover French diction.

### **Other Policies:**

[http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common\\_Language\\_for\\_Course\\_Syllabi.pdf](http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf)