



# AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

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# CONTINUING EDUCATION

## COURSE SYLLABUS

1. **Name of Course:** Training the Speaking Voice
2. **Number of Clock Hours:** 18
3. **Course Description:** This class is intended for anyone desiring to increase the power and impact of their speaking voice. Training in healthy vocal production is an essential part of speaking intentionally in any situation, from the stage or screen to the classroom or boardroom. In this course, you'll learn a variety of techniques for preparing and utilizing your natural voice to speak confidently in a variety of environments. The first few classes will focus on active exercises designed to healthily engage the various aspects of vocal production, while the final sessions will practically apply what you've learned to scenes, speeches, interpersonal communication, and presentations.
4. **Course Objectives:** Increased confidence in the use of the speaking voice; increased vocal power and impact; increased knowledge of vocal health; knowledge and application of vocal warm-ups and warm-downs; practical application of speaking voice technique to scenes, speeches, interpersonal communication, and presentations.
5. **Rationale: State the reason for offering the course:** Many humans rely on the voice as a primary means of working, socializing, and communicating in other situations. In particular, professional voice users such as actors, executives, teachers, clergy, speakers, and others benefit greatly from the practical application of techniques designed to empower the voice.
6. **Required Materials:** A water bottle.
7. **Course Outline:**

### **Week 1: Getting Acquainted with the Voice**

- Myths Surrounding the Voice

- The Four Systems of the Voice
- Vocal Challenges
- Vocal Health & Hygiene
- Introduction to The Alexander Technique

In-Class Activity: Introductory Cold Reading: Each student will select a short piece of text to read aloud (the instructor will provide options from which to choose). Following each “cold read,” the instructor will provide constructive observations regarding the student’s use of the voice.

Homework: Read Kelly McEvenue’s article “The Alexander Technique and the Actor” (provided digitally).

## **Week 2: Balance, Alignment, Breath, and Resonance**

- Inhibition, Direction, and the Primary Control
- Constructive Rest
- Approaching Breathwork: Various Exercises for Efficient Onset, Power, and Endurance
- Vocal Placement, Registration, and SOVTs

In-Class Activities: Balance + Breath: Various exercises focused on balance, alignment, breath, and resonance will be introduced, with in-class practice and instructor feedback provided.

Homework: Identify a breathing methodology or technique not already covered in class. Be prepared to introduce it to the class next week, including an exercise or practice that demonstrates it practically.

## **Week 3: Articulation, Oral Posture, and Introductory Phonetics**

- Oral Posture and Point of Articulation Technique
- Introduction to the International Phonetic Alphabet
- Vocal Production as Applied to Dialect Work
- Connecting Breath and Articulation

In-Class Activity: Tongue Twisters: A round-robin exploration of tongue twisters and their applications to articulation work in both performance and presentational contexts.

Homework: Prepare either A) a one-minute piece of dramatic text (a monologue, etc.), or B) a one-minute presentation where you teach the class how to complete a task of your choosing.

## **Week 4: Scripted & Spontaneous Speech**

- Identify the Unique Characteristics of Scripted & Spontaneous Speech
- Marking Text in Scripted Contexts
- Approaching Anxiety and Stage Fright
- Techniques for Speaking “Off the Cuff”

In-Class Activity: Improvisatory Vocalization: We’ll play the game Fishbowl as a means of introducing the various aspects of physicality and phonation that contribute to effective improvisatory speaking.

Homework: Preparation of Final Projects (instructions provided in class)

## **Week 5: Vocal Contexts**

- Techniques for Presentational Voicework (Instructional, Persuasive)
- Techniques for Voicework in Performance (Acting)
- Techniques for Interpersonal Communication

In-Class Activity: Analyzing the Voice: We’ll learn various parameters used to analyze the voice from a practical standpoint, and we’ll watch samples of presentations and acting moments in various contexts to practice our own vocal analyses.

Homework: Preparation of Final Projects

## **Week 6: Final Projects**

Actors will share their performance pieces and Speakers will share their presentations. The instructor and fellow classmates will provide supportive feedback, taking into account all aspects of the voice that have been studied throughout the course.