

THDN 235—The Expressive Voice
SPRING 2026—TR 9:25 AM-10:40 AM
Room: TC 163
Professor: Kristen Moriarty she/her/hers
Email: kristen.moriarty@trincoll.edu

"Your voice belongs to you, it is your responsibility and right to use it fully."

— Patsy Rodenburg

"The natural voice is transparent, it reveals, not describes, inner impulses of emotion and thought, directly and spontaneously. The person is heard, not the person's voice. To free the voice is to free the person, and each person is indivisibly mind and body."

— Kristin Linklater

COURSE SYLLABUS (subject to change)

OFFICE HOURS: TC 163, Thursdays, 10:45 AM-11:45 AM, or by appointment

I encourage you to meet with me any time you have a question or concern. I am available during office hours, by appointment, and by email.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Sicaog, Tunxis, Poquonook, and Wangunk peoples who have stewarded this land throughout the generations. I thank them for their strength and resilience in protecting this land and aspire to uphold my responsibility to working on their land according to their example.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines vocal production for performance, public speaking, and general communication. Students will explore the connection between body, breath, voice, imagination, language, and presence in a laboratory setting. The class draws upon recognized vocal training methods to encourage expressive voices that communicate meaning, intention, and feeling while pursuing efficiency and versatility in each individual's voice.

CONCEPT & COURSE ACTIVITIES

Through the study and practice of skills required to develop your unique, natural, expressive voice, as well as improved speech on and off the stage, you will work to develop an awareness of your self—your voice, your body, your imagination, your intellect— and will have the most unique resource available to you as an actor/presenter — your expressive voice. As we work together to grow your awareness of self, develop your presence as an actor/speaker, and expand your access to your instrument (voice/body), we will do so through the particular lens of voice and speech, and speaking text.

The class as a whole will participate/perform in Last Night, an informal end-of-semester showing on Wednesday, April 29, at 5:30 p.m., in the TC Performance Lab.

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OVERVIEW/GOALS

Our work together in this semester will focus on:

- Physical and breath awareness, including becoming aware of physical and vocal habits that stand in the way of a free, open, and supported production of your unique, expressive voice
- Developing new habits that support your freedom and accessibility as an actor/speaker
- Understanding various structures and devices in text and being able to identify and use them effectively while speaking
- Specificity of language
- Integrating voice work with speech and text work
- Developing/deepening your professional ethic and rigor

Our voicework this semester will address, progressively:

1. Physical presence and readiness
2. Opening of the breathing subsystems
3. Supported sound, freeing your vibrations and being “on your voice”
4. Release of unnecessary tension in the ‘channel’ of the throat, jaw, tongue, and soft palate
5. Resonance and range
6. Articulation

METHODS

- Daily Classroom Practice: Ongoing practice and growing aptitude of individual components of voice work and speech work
- Personal Practice: Individual practice outside of class (on non-class days), chronicled in a journal that serves as a written record of your experiences, your challenges, and your progress
- Reading: reading supplied passages outside of class that help support our class practice
- Text: Integrating the voice and speech work with various dramatic texts
- Warm-Ups: Throughout the course of the semester, we will work to build a repeatable warm-up that you can utilize as a performer/presenter

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REQUIRED TEXTS

I will be posting reading passages on Moodle from several different sources. You are not required to purchase a book for this course.

COURSE MATERIALS

Yoga mat (if you want one for floor work), clothes you have free range of movement in—layers are good for changing body temperature based on how we're working (no jeans or pants with button/zipper fly, belts, skirts/dresses, or oversized clothing), grippy socks if you don't want to work in bare feet, water bottle, a journal to jot notes from class and log notes on your work outside of class—bring to class every time we meet, pen or pencil, and a printed hard copy of any text you're working on in class.

COMMUNITY GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

I teach this class under the assumption that we are all here to learn. Being an expert or perfect in this class is not expected, not realistic, and frankly, not interesting! My goal is to create an environment in which you feel confident brushing up against your comfort level in order to deepen your knowledge of self and expand your creativity and craft of acting/public speaking.

- * Strive every day to bring your best work and demeanor. Participate with all you have every day (acknowledging that this might be different each day) in the studio work and in class discussions.
- * Keep electronic devices on silent and off your body (this means not in your pocket), and away from our working space, except when utilizing them for classwork.
- * Leave food and drink (besides water in a closed container) outside the studio, and no chewing gum in class.
- * For the sake of our classroom community, stay in the room while someone is working. Use the restroom before class; if you need a body break, let me know.
- * Bring in well-prepared work. This means previously researched, imagined, and organized, and texts that are memorized.
- * Foster a group atmosphere of support, attentiveness, and enthusiasm.
- * Bring curiosity, imagination, play, and your full self to the process.
- * I invite and encourage you to push beyond your comfort zone and embrace the inherent and wonderful discomfort of this personal work, but you are the author of your own experience. You are the expert on yourself and know your limits. Please communicate them to me.

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PARTICIPATION AND PROFESSIONALISM

Acting, and learning, are collaborative and participatory by nature. If you had to miss work for any job, you would need to let your boss know as soon as possible. Similarly, if you know that you are going to miss class, you must contact me before class begins, just as you would your boss. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed in class and make up the work. However, please also recognize that, as this is a laboratory class, much of the work we do happens through teacher-led exercises and can't always be made up, and therefore on time attendance is essential. If you are truly ill, and know that you must miss class, please notify me as soon as you know that you're not going to be there. We may be able to set up a virtual classroom so that you can observe the work remotely and not miss out entirely.

Practice professionalism by making a point of being here and ready to work at the start time; absences and tardiness affect the quality of your work and our class community.

A NOTE ABOUT ASSESSMENT

First and foremost, this is a participation-based class driven by individual curiosity and collective inquiry. Your active investment of energy and commitment to working with depth, both physically and intellectually, are essential to your success. Apply yourself. Try new things. Respect one another. Ask questions.

GRADING

Final grades for the course will be determined according to the following overall breakdown: Each graded assignment will be worth a certain number of points. Your final grade will be cumulative of all graded work for the semester with the highest possible outcome totaling 100 points. Your final points will translate to the following rubric: A+ = 97-100; A = 93-96; A- = 90-92; B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82; C+ = 77-79; C = 73-76; C- = 70-72; D+ = 67-69; D = 65-66; F = below 65.

50% Class Participation and Professionalism (Total of 50 points)

For each class period, you can earn 2 points for being present, on-time, and participating fully and professionally. Tardiness results in losing .5 points that day. Based on the following:

Enthusiasm: Attendance (including required THDN events, see end of syllabus), attentiveness, generous and open participation in class discussions and exercises, on-time completion of out-of-class assignments, risk-taking, support of fellow classmates.

Pro-activity: How you assume responsibility for growth in your acting/speaking; how you demonstrate a personal commitment to your work in/outside this class.

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Reading: It is assumed that the student will do the assigned reading. If it becomes apparent that you have not thoughtfully completed the assigned reading on time, it will negatively impact this part of your grade.

Full participation is required to complete the expectations of this class. In order to participate, you must be in class. Be on time, ready to work, and stay for the entirety of class.

30% Process and Performance (Total of 30 points)

Process, 15 points: Putting forth a genuine effort in the approaches to vocal practice we are studying in this class and making progress on your own learning curve; meeting memorization deadlines, consistency in your efforts to develop and grow in your weekly work including any monologues/texts we're working on in class and on your own outside of class.

Last Night Performance, 5 points: full participation in our class sharing on Last Night, demonstrating progress made during the course.

Final performance, 10 points: performance of the two pieces you worked on this semester in front of the class during our final exam.

20% Written Assignments (Total of 20 points)

My Voice, 4 points: A short-form written assignment answering several questions about your voice.

Semester-long Journal, 12 points: Consistency of practice and thoughtfulness notated in your journal—this is not a summary of each class, rather it is a personal response to the work and your journey throughout the semester

Response paper to *Stupid Fking Bird*, 4 points:** A paper response to a provided prompt following your attendance at the Trinity College production of *Stupid F**king Bird*.

Incomplete Work: All course work and assignments must be completed on time, unless prior arrangements have been made. Please note that assignments turned in late may incur a reduction of 10% of the total points for that assignment.

Allowances for incomplete work due to extenuating or unforeseen circumstances will only be made at the discretion of the instructor.

*If you anticipate trouble meeting a deadline, contact me. I can be flexible about late work if I know in advance. The challenge of late work, for you and me, is that a build-up at the end of the semester is hard to manage and creates additional stress. I much prefer to make shorter extensions available on an as-needed basis.

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For information on College Grading Policies visit <https://bulletin.trincoll.edu/policies/grades>

COLLEGE POLICIES

The instructor respects and upholds all College policies pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance to the physically handicapped, visually and/or hearing-impaired student; plagiarism; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination. All students are advised to become familiar with the respective College regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to the attention of the instructor.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: As a practice-based class, the vast majority of the class work is done in the studio. As a result, you are expected to attend all classes. However, if you are sick or contagious, for everyone's well-being, please stay home. If you are feeling unable to work physically and you are not contagious, you should attend class to observe actively, or to participate in a productive, albeit modified fashion. Regardless, please keep me well informed of any injuries, illnesses, or other issues that affect your ability to participate fully in class activities. I am understanding and flexible, where appropriate, however, given the nature of this course, students should not assume missed classes or missed work may be made up. Prompt and timely communication is key. Absences for religious observance and official College activities are permitted, though you should communicate these to me, well in advance. It is your responsibility to check in on what you will miss/have missed and make it up to the extent possible.

Readiness: We will start class promptly at 9:25 AM. Your engagement will likely look and feel different than in other courses. The work we do in this class asks us to expand beyond our day-to-day use of our bodies and voices. Thus, whenever possible, it is good practice to arrive at least 5 minutes prior to class beginning, in order to focus and prepare yourself for the day's session. If your schedule does not allow for this, use your journey to class to prepare your body-mind for the work ahead.

Communication: Please know that I am available as a resource to you as you progress through this course. I will communicate with you regularly via Moodle and via email, thus I expect you to check both of these regularly. You may reach me at kristen.moriarty@trincoll.edu. I typically check my inbox a couple of times each day, and will make every effort to reply to you promptly, usually within 24 hours on weekdays. Please know, if you write to me over the weekend I may not reply until Monday.

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Academic Integrity: All work submitted for this course must be your own, and must be written expressly for this course, and must be properly documented. **The use of ChatGPT or other AI programs to compose assignments is not permitted for this course.** The instructor may use SafeAssign or AI-identifying tools to evaluate the originality of assignments. For more information, please refer to Part IV of The Student Code, Appendix A: “Academic Integrity in Undergraduate Education and Research,” which defines academic misconduct as follows:

“Academic misconduct is dishonest or unethical academic behavior that includes, but is not limited to, misrepresenting mastery in an academic area (e.g., cheating), intentionally or knowingly failing to properly credit information, research or ideas to their rightful originators or representing such information, research or ideas as your own (e.g., plagiarism).” If you plagiarize, you will receive a zero on the assignment.

Because all of your written assignments for this course are based on personal experience, this type of reflection is not something you can effectively outsource to AI. If writing is a barrier to sharing your reflections, schedule a brief meeting with me so that I can support your learning needs and assignment completion.

KEY RESOURCES

College can be a stressful time, and external pressures or events can increase that stress. If you need to talk to someone, my door is open. These places are here to help you. No one does it alone.

Student Wellness: It is not uncommon for students to sometimes experience challenges adapting to collegiate life, including but not limited to academic, domestic, environmental, and/or social challenges, let alone the impact of the ongoing pandemic. Please know the Counseling Center is a resource for you. They offer programs on many topics such as: career exploration, learning styles, sexual assault prevention, relationship problems, anxiety, depression, stress management, substance abuse, diversity, suicide prevention, grief and loss, and eating disorders.

Writing Center: At the Trinity College Writing Center, specially trained peer tutors (called Writing Associates) are available to help you improve your writing—no matter your skill level. Writers are welcome at all stages of the writing process, from the moment you receive an assignment, to when you’ve produced a draft, to the moment you’re polishing up your final version. The Writing Center is located at 115 Vernon Street room 109. Visit The Writing Center web page for further information and procedures. Students can walk-in during our hours of

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operation or reserve appointments in advance online by registering at
<https://trincoll.mywconline.com/>.

Statement on Inclusion and Accommodations: Trinity College is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who may need some accommodation(s) in order to fully participate in this class are urged to contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center, as soon as possible, to explore what arrangements need to be made to assure access. If you have approval for academic accommodations, please notify me by the end of week two of classes, even if you do not think you'll need them in the course. It's better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. For those students with accommodations approved after the start of the semester, a minimum of 10 days' notice is required.

I acknowledge that the need for academic accommodations sometimes falls outside of formal diagnoses. Please meet with me to discuss your needs so I can support you in this course. For all accommodations, please be sure to meet with me privately to discuss implementation. Visit Student Accessibility Resources at <https://www.trincoll.edu/sarc/>. To reach the office, email SARC@trincoll.edu or call 860-297-4025.

THE EXPRESSIVE VOICE COURSE OUTLINE (subject to changes)

Unit 1: Introductions, Games, Ensemble, Community Agreements

January 20, January 22, January 27, January 29

Writing Assignments: My Voice reflection; Semester-long practice of journaling begins

Reading Assignment: Patsy Rodenburg, The Right To Speak

Unit 2: Physical Awareness and Presence

February 3, February 5, February 10

Writing Assignment: Self-written speech, Journaling out-of-class cont.

Reading Assignment: Kristin Linklater, Freeing the Natural Voice

Unit 3: Breath Awareness and Touch of Sound

February 12, February 17, February 24, February 26

Writing Assignment: Journaling cont.

Text Assignment: continue working on self-written speeches

Reading Assignment: Cicely Berry, The Actor and the Text

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Unit 4: Freeing and Multiplying Vibrations

March 3, March 5, March 10, March 12

Writing Assignments: Journaling cont., Response paper for *Stupid F**king Bird* (due March 10)

Text Assignments: Famous rhetorical speeches

Unit 5: Channel Work—Jaw, Tongue, Soft Palate

March 24, March 26, March 31, April 2

Writing Assignment: Journaling cont.

Text Assignment: rhetorical speeches continue

Unit 6: Resonating Ladder

April 7, April 9, April 14, April 16

Writing Assignments: Journaling cont.

Text Assignment: rhetorical speeches continue

Unit 7: Articulation

April 21, April 23, April 28

Writing Assignments: Journaling cont., including final Reflection Entry (journal due April 28)

Text Assignments: rhetorical speeches continue, rehearse for Last Night

Important Dates

Thursday, February 19—Friday, February 20: Trinity Days—no classes

Saturday, March 14—Sunday, March 22: Spring Break—no classes

Tuesday, April 28: Final class. Journal is due and will be returned to you at our final.

Wednesday, April 29, 5:30 PM: Last Night. A celebratory end-of-semester showing of THDN classwork. Performance Lab, Trinity Commons

Wednesday, May 6, 9 AM: The Expressive Voice Final, journals handed back.

May 4-8: Finals Week. Here is the [finals week schedule](#).

Performance Attendance

Students enrolled in THDN 235 are encouraged to attend all Theatre and Dance events in the Spring 2026 Semester (Subject to change). Attendance at several performances is required for the course. You may earn extra credit by attending an approved performance that is not required (on campus or off) but should check with me first.

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REQUIRED ATTENDANCE

1. ***Stupid F**king Bird* by Aaron Posner Directed by Godfrey Simmons**
March 5-7, 7:30pm AAC Goodwin Theater
2. **Last Night. – informal, celebratory end-of-semester sharing of THDN classwork**
Wednesday, April 29, 5:30pm TC Performance Lab, ***WE WILL BE PERFORMING***

OPTIONAL PERFORMANCES

extra credit: attending one of these performances and writing about your experience of the performance makes up for one class absence

1. **Citizen James** by Kyle Bass, produced by HartBeat Ensemble, AAC Garmany Hall.
Feb 12-14 (7:30pm), Feb 13 (2:00pm), Feb 19-20 (7:30pm), Feb 21 (2:00pm)
2. **Tell Me Where It Comes From, By Emily Coates**
Thursday, February 26 (7:30 PM), Avery Theater (Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art)
3. **Spring THDN Senior Theses** these performances are happening in various locations.
Check the Austin Arts page on the Trinity website for more information
 - a. Mar 26 (7:30pm) — Kenna Harrison
 - b. Mar 27 (7:30pm) — Sydney Young
 - c. Mar 27 (9:00pm) — Adrien Braun
 - d. Mar 31 (7:30pm) — Steven Shen
 - e. April 7 - 8 (7:30pm) — Lily Mellitz
4. Theater + Dance Alumni Weekend, various locations, April 16-18
 - a. **Ways to Move: Black Insurgent Grammars, Jonathan Gonzalez**
Thursday, April 16 (Common Hour)
 - b. **Ancestral Echoes: Looking Back, Moving Forward**
Thursday, April 16-18 (7:30pm) AAC Goodwin Theater
 - c. **Student Theater Showcase**
Saturday, April 18 (12:00pm), location TBA

Intellectual Acknowledgement I acknowledge and thank Professor Peter Kyle for some of the language utilized in this syllabus.