Midland College
SYLLABUS
Mus 1279, 1280, 2279, 2280
TBA
Private Vocal Instruction
Dr. Michael D. Jordan

Course Description: This is a course in vocal technique and literature. Students begin to develop professional-level vocal skills and apply them to various types of vocal literature. The course is designed as a series of courses for students who do intend to major in voice.

Text, References and Supplies: The texts are assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Goals and Objectives: Upon successful completion of this instruction, students will:

A. Improve Vocal Technique as outlined below:
   1. Breathing: Students study correct breathing techniques in order to develop abdominal and costal support of the vocal mechanism.
   2. Phonation: Students learn to coordinate the breath with the vocal mechanism, eliminating glottal and breathy phonation.
   3. Resonation: Students learn to develop an efficient vocal sound. A vocal tone which is focused, i.e. not "spread" over too many partials; but "tuned" or "centered" on each vowel, with particular attention to the cultivation of the "singer's formant."

B. Study important vocal literature as outlined below:
   1. Students will be required to perform a variety of literature from differing style periods in different languages order to expand their own performance abilities and horizons.
   2. Performance class will meet every other Friday at 12:00 PM, so that students may practice their own performance skills as well as listen to the performance of other students. PARTICIPATION IS REQUIRED.
   3. Students must MEMORIZE a minimum number of songs and arias in order to successfully complete course requirements. These literature requirements are listed below.
   4. It may surprise students to learn that the United States has always been a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual nation. Students, therefore, will be exposed to more than one language and culture in order to successfully complete the voice instruction regimen. Songs and arias in Italian, German and French are typically assigned as a part of the literature requirements for each semester.
Student Contributions and Class Policies:

A. Private lessons (one hour per week)
   1. Technical work will be assigned to each student by the instructor. This work will be designed to strengthen students' vocal weaknesses, and condition their vocal musculature.
   2. Literature will be assigned students based on their current vocal abilities. As students progress technically, more challenging literature will be assigned.

B. Practice
   1. Students should practice at least one hour per day. This practice should consist of assigned vocal exercises and preparation of literature.
   2. Students should learn literature on their own, without help from the instructor. This develops musical literacy skills. Students whose reading skills are limited should bring a blank cassette tape with them to lessons, so that literature can be recorded for practice. Recordings of assigned literature may also be available in the college bookstore.

C. Web-Enhancement: This is a web-enhanced class. Students will be encouraged to benefit from the materials posted on the course website. Here are the directions for accessing the course Blackboard site: The initial web address is www.blackboard.midland.edu. Once the site is reached, click on the log on symbol. You do not need to log in. On the log-in page, click on the preview symbol. You will be directed to a page that says "welcome, guest." Click on the Courses tab displayed in the upper left-hand corner of the page. On the right hand side of the courses page, you will see a series of links for the college's academic departments. Click on the "Fine Arts and Communications" link. Once the Fine Arts and Communications page is loaded, click on the folder named "Voice Instruction" You will notice that there are several links for courses. Your link is called Voice Instruction. Click on this link in order to access the web-enhanced site. You probably will not be able to access the other Music sites. Once you are logged on to the course site, the announcements will explain where to locate MP3 files and course information. Please contact me if you have questions or problems logging on.

Evaluation of Students: Course Requirements

A. Attendance
   1. Students who are absent without excuse more than three consecutive times, or who have more than six total unexcused absences are in danger of failing the course. Please speak with the instructor if you must be absent excessively.
   2. There are NO "excused" absences. A warning letter will be sent to students with excessive unexcused absences by the Dean of Students. Individuals who receive a warning letter should talk to the instructor immediately, or withdraw from the course. STUDENTS ARE INDIVIDUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR DROPPING A COURSE. Individuals who have excessive unexcused absences after the withdrawal deadline will receive a grade of "F" for the term if they have not withdrawn from the course themselves.
B. Juries and Recitals

1. The instructor will determine whether a student is ready to perform on a weekly recital.

2. Jury examinations are held on the last class day of the semester (Dec 5). In order to present a jury, the jury literature must be memorized by the withdrawal deadline date for the current semester (Nov 13). If the required literature is not memorized by this time, the student may be required to repeat the same course during the ensuing semester. This means that a grade of "F" will be automatically assigned. Talk to the instructor if you have a problem memorizing the songs. **YOU MUST PRESENT A SUCCESSFUL JURY EXAMINATION IN ORDER TO MOVE UP TO THE NEXT COURSE LEVEL.**

3. Each individual instructor is responsible for assigning final grades. Talk to your instructor in order to ascertain his/her expectations for the course. Generally, your grade will reflect how much the instructor feels you have improved vocally during the term. As long as you practice and learn the assigned literature, you should have no problems passing the course.

4. Since we have no remedial course numbers for voice instruction, and because you may have demonstrated vocal improvement and willingness to learn, you may receive a grade of "F" because you haven't fulfilled the literature requirements, and you will have to enroll in the same course number during the following semester. Students should repeat the same course number each semester until the literature requirements for that semester are fulfilled. A successful jury examination will serve as evidence that literature requirements are fulfilled.

**Evaluation techniques.**

A. Attendance: See above

B. Literature must be learned and performed effectively (to the satisfaction of the instructor-see E below).

C. Students must sing at least twice on a bi-weekly recital and present a jury examination before the voice faculty each term. The jury will consist of performing the assigned literature requirements before the voice faculty. Juries will be held on the last class day of each semester (usually Friday), so be ready! The voice faculty will determine whether students may progress to the next level of study based on their performance on the jury examination. It is entirely possible for a student to progress sufficiently over the term to earn a passing grade in the course and not be able to function at a level consistent with most reputable college and university requirements. The jury exam, therefore, will not affect the student's overall grade in the course. The exam will, however, demonstrate the student's readiness to move up to the next course level. If you are not ready for the next level of study, a grade of "F" will be assigned.

D. Students must show evidence of interest and improvement. Please come to lessons prepared to sing—**YOU MUST TAKE TIME TO WARM-UP VOCALLY BEFORE EACH LESSON!!!** Your grade will reflect the amount of time you have practiced during the term, so don't waste our time and yours. Take time to prepare and practice. You'll be very satisfied with the results!
E. **ALL VOICE MAJOR STUDENTS WILL RECEIVE A GRADE AT THE END OF EACH LESSON.** Your term grade will be the average of all the lesson grades given. **DO NOT COME UNPREPARED FOR A LESSON.** All literature must be further along the path to memorization each week! You don't want to have to keep repeating these courses!

**Course Schedule:**

A. Technical work (half the time of each lesson will be devoted to vocal technique).
   1. Breathing exercises are designed to develop abdominal and costal breathing habits, coordinating the breathing apparatus with the vocal mechanism.
   2. Scales and arpeggios are used to coordinate the vocal registers, insuring that the voice maintains a consistent timbre throughout its range.
   3. Vowel exercises insure sympathetic resonation within the vocal tract, maintaining clarity of diction while cultivating the voice's characteristic high resonance, the singer's formant.
   4. Literature often presents technical difficulties which students must practice in order to sing with ease and confidence.

B. Literature requirements: students who transfer from community colleges as vocal music majors often find themselves behind as far as their knowledge of vocal literature is concerned. These requirements are set forth to ensure that community college students are adequately prepared to transfer to a reputable four-year institution as vocal music majors.
   1. Literature from a variety of style periods will be assigned so that students will be exposed to a variety of differing musical styles. Students may work on "popular" literature in their lesson, but that literature will not count towards the fulfillment of these literature requirements.
   2. The **minimum** amount and type of vocal literature will be assigned as follows:
      a. Music 1279: Four English songs, or two English songs plus one Italian aria, or one English Song plus one German Art Song plus one Italian Aria. (Four English, or three in combination)
      b. Music 1280: Three English songs plus one Italian Aria, or two English songs plus one Art Song in another language plus an Italian Aria. (Four songs in combination)
      c. Music 2279: Three English songs plus two Art songs in any other language plus an aria in English or any other language. (Five total)
      d. Music 2280: Three English songs plus three Art Songs in another language plus two or three arias in any language. (Six or seven total)
   3. The required literature will be assigned by the instructor at the beginning of each term. This literature must be memorized by the withdrawal deadline date for the current semester. Students who are unable to memorize the literature by this date will have to drop the course, accept a failing grade, or repeat the same course number for voice instruction in the following semester (This will be done at the discretion of your instructor-if you don't meet the literature requirements, I will probably just assign you a grade of "F," even after the deadline, so that you'll have to enroll in the same course during the ensuing semester.)
Instructor Information:
Dr. Michael Jordan
Office: 139 AFA
Phone: 685-4647 (W)
E-mail: mjordan@midland.edu