

New York University
Steinhardt School
Department of Music and Performing Arts Professions

Private Voice Lessons

MPAVP-UE 1111-017 (13222) (Undergraduate)
MPAVP-GE 2111-017 (6919) (Graduate)
MPAVP-UE 1512 (2 credits)
MPAVP-UE 1514 (4 credits)
MPAVP-UE 1410 (variable credit: departmental majors)
MPAVP-GE 2410 (variable credit: graduate non-majors)

Credit Values

Credits = 7 hours of instruction

3 and 4 Credits = 14 hours of instruction

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“Singing is a way of escaping. It’s another world. I’m no longer on earth.”
-Edith Piaf

Communication

Clear communication is very important between student and teacher. If you find something confusing, vague or different, please ask for clarification in your lesson.

Core Course Competencies (learning outcomes)

When you have successfully completed this course, you will be able to:

- Gain a better understanding of how your voice functions.
- Establish and maintain a healthy vocal technique.
- Use dramatic circumstances to foster musicality and expressivity in songs.

Semester Requirements

1. WATER BOTTLE AND STRAW: Bring this to each lesson.
2. RECORDING DEVICE: Bring a small recording device to every lesson and record your session. Cell phones work very well. It is my goal to improve your “mindfulness” of how you sing verses how you *think* you sound. You will use this recording to practice and improve during the week.
3. DEVICE: Students must bring an iPad/computer to every lesson containing:
 - a. All assigned sheet music (PDF emailed to me)
 - b. Tool Chart (on website)
 - c. Reflection Sheets (on website)
4. TOOL CHART: You will be asked to notate the specific tools you do in each

- lesson. This will take place during class. You will use the excel template I have created for you and mark the name, mechanics, and the sensations. Please be prepared to talk about them during class.
5. REFLECTION SHEETS: Are to be documented in each lesson and should be your guide for practicing the following week. This will take place during class. I have created a template for you to fill in while in your session.
 6. REPERTOIRE:
 - a. Songs will be assigned based on the technical needs of the individual. When assigned (we will choose songs together), please learn the song within the time allotted.
 - b. For any song a copy of the music (PDF) must be emailed to me prior to your lesson.
 - c. You will be responsible to find the YouTube recording online to use in class. Have that ready to use for your lesson.
 7. READY TO SING: Students must arrive to all lessons on time, well rested, energized, and ready to work. Considering the amount of singing that will happen during your lesson, do not warm up before your class. This is my responsibility. Also, do not rehearse your music the day of your lesson. **Voice Majors Only:** Do not rehearse with your accompanist the day of your class. Plan ahead.

Attendance/Make Up Lessons:

1. Students are expected to attend all sessions *without risking a drop in the final course grade.*
 - Two credit students are allotted **one** UN-excused.
 - Three/four credit **two** classes UN-excused
 2. **Not showing up for class is considered UN-excused. Each UN-excused will reduce your grade by one point from your starting grade of 100.**
 - ALL 24-hour notices **advance notice** are **Excused**.
 - Less than 24-hour notice are **UN-Excused**.
 3. There are **NO MAKE-UP** lessons for any missed class. If you cannot attend your lesson, you have two options (see “Lesson Swapping” below).
 4. If you are running late let me know (via text) ASAP.
 5. **Emergencies do, however, happen.** If there are *extenuating* circumstances (for example, a prolonged illness or there was a death in the family), please contact me the **moment** you feel you are not well, or an emergency takes place and begin your swap or ask for an **Excused** absence.
 6. Expected religious observation absences must be given at the beginning of the semester and a swap will need to be initiated by you.
 7. **Virtual Lessons:** No virtual lessons are permitted. All lessons are in person.
- *Steinhardt Policy: The final grade **MUST** be lowered for any *UN-excused* absences.

Lesson Swapping

1. Swapping with another student is the **only** way to not miss your lesson. I will leave this up to you to make the swap. I ask all of you in my studio to be flexible and graciously swap with those that ask. You have access to everyone I teach by using the (private only for those registered) [contact sheet](#). You will find that

- texting individually might get a quicker response. I have been doing this system for over ten years and swapping has proven to be very successful.
2. **Swapping is your responsibility.** This is the same concept as if you could not make it to your current employment you would need to make every effort to get someone to cover your shift to keep your job intact.
 3. Only swap with highlighted students that are the **same color** as you (pink with pink, yellow with yellow, etc.). **Voice Majors Only:** Let your accompanist remain at your regular lesson time if you swap times. Inform your accompanist of this arrangement that they do not need to swap with you.
 4. Once the swap has been made, this is your new lesson time for that week. Mark your calendar accordingly. There are NO make-up lessons for missed swapped lessons.

Sickness: If your voice is hoarse from overuse and is not 100%, we will execute bubble therapy and make great use of your lesson time as well as help you recover. If you are sick, stay home. Take an excused absence or find a swap.

Practicing

- I expect you to practice outside of class. **The lasting changes will take place in your own practice time.** Our class is mainly designed for me to guide you. Making the concepts permanent will happen with repetition of the new technique on your own. The more you put into it, the more you get out of it. There are no shortcuts in singing.
- You should warm up before you sing your songs for an individual practice/recital/ performance with our studio [vocalises/warm-ups](#) that I teach you in class. The best results will come if you sing along with your recording from your last lesson. This can then be followed by 15-30 minutes of practicing/memorizing repertoire that I have assigned.
- Keep in mind that singing is a physical activity that requires patience and diligence. You cannot “cram” for a lesson/recital/ performance as you could for a history exam. This does not work. The voice needs mindful repetitive practice.

Preparation of Assigned Songs

1. If your song is in a foreign language, translate it first (Google Translate).
2. Memorize the text as a monologue before you learn the music.
3. Speak the text in rhythm.
4. Sing the melody on a lip trill, raspberry or /u/ vowel.
5. Add the words to your song when you have successfully completed #1-4.
6. Always integrate the technical concepts, by using tools frequently and mindfully.

General Health and Vocal Maintenance

Since we cannot leave our instruments in a case or practice room, taking good care of your body and voice are essential for healthy and consistent singing. Sleep, exercise, a healthy diet and a positive mental outlook have a direct effect on how well you sing and grow as a performer. Stay hydrated – drink lots of water and avoid caffeine. Never sing

to the point of hoarseness. Hoarseness can be the result of:

- Misuse and/or dysfunction of the singing/speaking voice
- Seasonal or chronic illness/allergies
- Acid reflux

*If hoarseness persists, it's advisable to see a laryngologist. I have recommendations.

Grading

- 50% - Attendance/Swapping
- 30% - Preparation/Technical Work/Tool Memorization
- 20% - Conduct/Attitude

Grading Scale

A 94-100% A- 90-93%

B+ 87-89% B 84-86%

C+ 77-79% C 74-76%

D+ 67-69% D 64-66%

Academic Integrity: All students are responsible for understanding and complying with the NYU Steinhardt [Statement on Academic Integrity](#).

Students with Disabilities

Students with physical or learning disabilities are recommended to register at the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities](#).

Special Accommodations: Any student attending NYU who needs an accommodation due to a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is Deaf or Hard of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities located at 240 Greene Street, phone: 212.998.4980, or website address: www.nyu.edu/csd.

Send an email to me including this document stating: "I have read and understand that I am responsible for the information in the syllabus."

YOUR GRADE WILL BE BASED ON TWO MAIN COMPONENTS:

1. *Attending your class, giving me a 24-hour notice or finding a swap.*
2. *Learning the TOOLS given to you to help you unlock your voice, by committing these to memory and being able to use/recall them in class.*

BONUS: *I can tell if you [practice](#). It brings me such joy when I give you suggestions and the following week you applied what I asked. Repeating myself is really tiring for both of us. Try your best and we both will be thrilled! There is NOTHING to turn into me at the end of the term. Just 1 & 2 above.*

THE NEXT SECTION IS FOR VOICE MAJORS ONLY

Repertoire Selection Policy

Based on year and program, each student is expected to learn a set amount of repertoire each semester. The total songs required each term are listed below:

Freshmen: 6

Sophomores/Juniors/Seniors: 8

Graduates: 9

Choosing Music/Dropbox Folder

You will need to locate all your music and convert your music to PDFs. I do not provide music. You can find them online for free (potentially) typically by typing the title of the piece followed by “PDF” or for a nominal fee through various sites like [Sheet Music Plus](#), [Music Notes](#), [Scribd](#), or the like.

1. During your first semester at NYU, I will pick all your first four songs, unless you have some you would like to suggest that you are interested in learning. **At NYU, you will be responsible for choosing music for lessons/class with my approval.**
 - Please create a [Dropbox](#) account to access the NYU file I have for you. This is where you will place your (1) PDFs of music, vocal tracks, (2) Monologues & IPA/Translations, (3) Recital Reference List and PDFs, (4) Reflection Sheets & Tool Chart, and a running list of all the songs on your (5) Repertoire Sheet you will learn at NYU.
2. During your time at NYU, I would like you to become familiar with repertoire that would suit your voice. Spend time researching your music by attending other recitals, listen to music online/in person, and watch concerts/musicals/operas of singers you admire to get ideas and comprise a running list. Create a Word Document to add this to your **Recital Reference List Folder** (in your [Dropbox](#)).
3. When choosing repertoire, lean towards those pieces that feel amazing in your throat over those that are dramatically/vocally “impressive.” While at NYU, view your singing as a progressive process rather than a result-driven objective and we will select music that is well suited to your skills. Keep in mind that a seemingly simple or boring song selected by me most likely has a technical objective on my part.
4. Remember to follow the guidelines on your **Repertoire Sheet** (in your [Dropbox](#)). Musical theatre students will need to learn/memorize at least 2 art songs each semester. During your journey at NYU, we will fill our Repertoire Sheets in chronological order starting with pre-1939 & 1940-1960 during your Freshman/Sophomore year and ending your Junior/Senior year with 1960-1975 & 1975-present.
 - Students are expected to keep a cumulative Repertoire List throughout their NYU career. This list will be comprised of all the music you learned and have almost memorized as well as fully memorized music in specific genres and languages that fulfill your repertoire requirements. The excel spreadsheet to fill in will be in your Dropbox. **This must be filled in full and turned by graduation.**
 - Your individual repertoire sheet will **need to be updated/maintained by you.**

You will be required to fully update your copy of this list at the end of each semester. Transfer students will need to include their repertoire from previous studios/university. As you learn and memorize your pieces during your time at NYU, please add them to the sheet, using the format provided, and highlight the songs fully memorized in light grey.

5. With repertoire selecting, although I want you to initially research and select songs, I will make the final decision on all selections. **Have alternate songs in mind in case we need to swap out some pieces.**
6. I suggest you choose and learn your songs for the upcoming term during your winter and summer break. Place your **PDFs Folder** (in your [Dropbox](#)) and send me an email indicating that your music is ready for me to review and approve. Once approved, you do not need to let me know via email each time you place a new song in your Dropbox folder.
7. Songs that contain more “assets” will be chosen over those that contain a high number of “liabilities” for accelerated technical growth. Please review the [assets/liabilities](#) PDF on the website and ask questions for clarification.
8. All music **MUST** be learned within the given semester - no exceptions. Add all your songs for the term to this [link](#) when you choose your pieces.

***Please Note: If you get VERY stuck choosing music, I will help you. This should be a fun experience. Please ask for guidance if you need it.**

Accompanists

1. It is required that you provide an accompanist for the last thirty minutes of your lesson. Steinhardt will cover the cost of your pianist during lessons.
2. You have the option for additional weekly coaching sessions. Please plan on this financial commitment for your academic career. Lessons are not times to learn your notes or work with the accompaniment for the first time. Pianist generally charge \$20-\$25 for 30 minutes.
3. Please choose an accompanist from the [accompanist list](#), ask them if they will play for you. Register them and email them your first 2 songs in PDF format. Prepare these pieces for your first lesson.
4. Email me your accompanists' email so I can have a record of who is playing for you. **Send your accompanist the link to your [Dropbox Folder](#)** so they will have access to your PDFs for the term. This is how they should retrieve your songs.
5. Out of respect to your pianist, give him/her a separate music notebook/binder or PDFs of your music via Dropbox. Attempting to read small notes and words over someone's shoulder while singing is neither beneficial to your posture nor to your pianist's ear.
6. When selecting an accompanist, be sure that you choose someone who can meet regularly (and practice your music in advance). Repertoire work is extremely brief during a lesson (only 30 minutes). Addressing ensemble issues is a waste of valuable lesson time if not taken care of in advance. Your skills as a performer are highly influenced by the musicians with whom you work. If I find that your accompanist is not providing the necessary skills to support and foster your development, I will help you find a new pianist.

7. It is always your responsibility to notify your accompanist of any lesson changes (rescheduling date/location/etc.), regardless of if the change comes from me. Do not assume I have emailed or texted your pianist (I will not), since this is **your** responsibility.

Practicing Techniques

1. When dealing with physical coordination, the phrase “practice makes perfect” should be modified to “practice makes permanent.” Therefore, I expect you to practice every day to ensure optimal vocal progress (although it’s good for the voice/brain/soul to take a day off once a week). One should begin with 25-30 minutes of the vocalises ([warm-ups](#)) utilized in the lesson, followed by 30 minutes of practicing/memorizing repertoire. Use your recording to guide you.
2. Please remember to warm up prior to any class in which you are expected to perform - including choir or stage rehearsals. Again, I would prefer that you not warm-up vocally for your lesson.
3. Since we cannot leave our instruments in a case or practice room, please pace yourself if you have a lot of additional singing during the day. I am a huge proponent of “marking” during rehearsals when scenes/songs are repeated more than once. Typically, it is best to mark before you experience vocal fatigue. Please ask if you need me to explain how to mark effectively.
4. Keep in mind that singing is a physical activity that requires patience and diligence. High level of co-ordination can become a nearly impossible task if expecting your voice and body to easily adjust to new coordination skills with enduring effects without putting the time.
5. Please note that a lot of song preparation does not require singing.
6. Use your recording to guide you in your weekly practices. Please read the [guideline for practicing](#) for efficient practicing concepts.

Learning Music

1. Hastily learning music often leads to ingrained errors that are often difficult to unlearn. Mindful practice is what separates professionals from amateurs. Therefore, be precise when learning new literature. This even includes songs where singers have typically taken a degree of musical and rhythmic freedom. Learn what is on the page first.
2. Feel free to find a recording of the piece, but do not use this as a learning or memorization tool. Rely on what Sondheim/Verdi wrote vs. what Patinkin/Pavarotti sang on their recordings. Discovering multiple versions of a song can be helpful in learning stylistic interpretations between singers as well as understanding the continuation of historical performance practices (i.e. How does one sing Handel vs. Puccini or Rodgers vs. JRB?).
3. Research the composer and the poet/librettist. Understand the current mental/emotional state of the character. What are my character’s circumstances? Why is my character saying these words? Be prepared to discuss this information during the lesson.
4. If the song is in a foreign language, type out the text, translation, and IPA (see sample [here](#)). Nothing is more impressive than hearing a singer effectively

communicate in a language it is not his/her own. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) will be utilized in the lesson. Here is basic guide [sample](#).

Preparation of Songs

You are encouraged (if not expected) to bring in songs for another class, audition, performance, etc. However, we will first work on songs chosen for the term. Any additional music can be worked on after this point. It would be best to choose music that fits your criteria for classes and lessons simultaneously. This ensures that you are prepared for your lesson, other classes, and your **Repertoire Sheet** is filled when you graduate.

Here are two important guidelines:

1. When I ask you to **prepare** a song(s) for the following lesson, I expect notes, rhythms, entrances, and languages to be accurate as to the printed page. If I sense that you are searching for notes, rhythms, etc. (which is easy to spot), I deduce that you have not done your homework for my class and your grade will be lowered for the day. When singing a “prepared” song in your lesson, I expect you to use your music. Since I will give you specific technical tasks during the song, it will give you a literal place to write notes to remind yourself. The tasks are then integrated into your voice as you memorize the song.
2. When I ask you to **memorize** a song(s), you must perform your song without music. I cannot emphasize enough that being memorized **is not the final goal**, but one of the first steps towards mastery/artistry of the piece.
3. IPA/Translations must be prepared and typed prior to singing foreign language songs and placed in your Dropbox. Please be ready to discuss the word-by-word translation (from memory) to show mastery of this assignment. You may also be asked to speak the translated text as a monologue as well. Here is another example here of [Caro Mio Ben](#). Place this on your [Dropbox](#) folder marked IPA.

*When practicing your songs, mindfully apply the technique ([guideline for practicing](#)).

Class Songs

1. Please advise me via email of all the courses in which you are expected to sing (i.e. Song Repertoire, Analysis, Opera Workshop, etc.). As soon as the information is made available to you, please begin the search for your music. Send me the syllabus via email and put in the subject line the name of the class.
2. **I must hear all songs before you sing them in class-this is NOT AN OPTION.**

Performing Music

1. All music chosen to perform in public performances or auditions must be worked in a lesson prior to performance. This includes participation as a “guest artist” (often character studies) in classmate recitals.
2. Selecting repertoire for recitals, showcases, classes and auditions will be at my discretion. You (and others) may give input, but my main goal for you is healthy and sustainable singing.

Juries

1. Each spring you will perform a jury. This is your chance to shine in front of the

- faculty. This is a fun day and should not feel daunting whatsoever.
2. By week 7 in the Spring semester, we will select your “best songs” from the full year (Fall & Spring) and work solely on your jury pieces from Weeks 8-14. Please plan for this by memorizing all your Spring songs by Week 7.
 3. **AGAIN, I highly recommend that during winter break you pick your songs and learn them in advance to get a jump on jury music.** When music is selected, place your PDFs in your folder and send me and email when you are ready for me to review/approve them.
 4. For juries, you will each sing a select number of songs from memory:
 - Freshmen and music education students - 4 songs
 - First year transfer students - 5 songs
 - All other vocal performance students - 6 songs

Recitals: Your Final Project

To graduate you will need to perform a full recital.

1. **The music for your recital will be selected by you and the content will need to be approved by me and Professor Heldman. You will be choosing all your music.** That will be your **one big project** that is required of this course and degree.
2. This is an opportunity to gain a profound knowledge of music that is available to you. Comprise a list by going to the library and look over scores/songbooks, listen to YouTube videos, check out other recitals and get ideas. Starting during your first year at NYU, make a running list of all the songs/composers you like to help you build your **Recital Reference List**.
3. Another great way to narrow a search is to go to Google (for example) and research certain key words:
 - French Arts Song Composers
 - Famous/Popular French Art Songs
 - French Art Songs Recital
 - French Art Song Cycles
4. If you have a hard time choosing from a long list of great songs, lightly sing through them and see what feels the best in your throat.
5. Please start early and have this solved no later than the semester prior by creating your recital with music that you feel connected to, and that meets the NYU requirements. I highly recommend that you research options that would like to sing during the summer or winter break, prior to your recital year. Preparation is key.
5. The semester of your recital, please fill out the form [Recital Preparation](#) and place it in your recital folder in your Dropbox. We will need this by your first lesson for the term you are doing your recital.
6. Please read the recital packet ([Musical Theatre](#) & [Classical](#)) on the website and know what is expected of you. I will help you prepare your songs, but you will need to do everything else needed to complete your recital requirements (turn in paperwork to office, translations, room reservations, programs, etc.).
7. Place your recital PDFs in your appropriate folder for me to review and please let me see your recital paperwork before submitting to Professor Heldman.
8. **NOTE:** The most fun recitals to perform are the ones that are prepared adequately in advance, so your true artistry and applied technique comes through, rather than

being “somewhat memorized” and hoping for the best.

New Students

Prior to your first lesson, please create a Dropbox account and become familiar with your folder. Any questions about this will be explained in your first lesson.

- Before your first lesson:
 - Please choose an accompanist, register them, and send me their email.
 - Select 2 songs that you did for your audition/diagnostics and make sure your accompanist has these PDFs before your lesson and tell them to go to this [link](#) to access your future music.
 - Upload your PDFs to your [Dropbox folder](#) so I can have access.
- In your first lesson, I will briefly explain your Dropbox Folder if you have specific questions. When you receive your link, become familiar with items below explained in the section above **Choosing Music/Dropbox Folder**.
 - PDFs Folder
 - Monologues & IPA/Translations
 - Recital Reference List & PDFs
 - Reflection Sheets & Tool Chart
 - Repertoire Sheet
- In Lesson 1:
 - Reply to the email thread containing the syllabus: ***“I have read and understand that I am responsible for the information in the syllabus.”***
 - Have your Reflection Sheet and Tool chart accessible and ready to type on the documents. This will need to be downloaded and can be found on: www.voceclassica.com
- For Lessons 2 and 3, I will pick your first four songs for you, and you will be responsible for the others required for the subsequent lessons. Have these prepared in advance and add all the songs for the term to this [link](#).
- By lesson 5 onward, all songs should have been brought into lessons and worked on together at this point and now we will review them again doing 2-3 pieces a week to develop the technique and add the artistry.

All the links in this syllabus can be found on: www.voceclassica.com