

Advanced Stage Voice and Speech – Dialects: Spring 2013
MW 3:00pm – 4:50pm SSP 201

Instructor – Thomas L. Cunningham
Office Hours –By appointment

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Required Texts and Materials

- Dialects by Paul Meier; to save you money Susan has special ordered this book directly from the author. Your cost will be \$63.00. Please have cash or check (made payable to VCU Theatre) no later than **Wednesday, January 23rd**.
- Full texts of the most of the plays that your monologues are taken from are available in the Kenneth Campbell Library.
- *Optional Resources:*
 - o More Stage Dialects - Book and Tapes by Jerry Blunt
 - o The Dialect Handbook by Ginny Kopf (available at VCU bookstore)
 - o Accents: A Manual for Actors by Robert Blumenthal
 - o Dialects for the Stage by Evangeline Machlin
 - o Web site: International Dialects of English Archive (IDEA)
Google or go to the VASTA website <www.vasta.org>
 - o An interesting test: www.blogthings.com/amenglishdialecttest
 - o A *fantastic* dialect resource: accent.gmu.edu

Course Description

During this semester will we study no fewer than six dialects: RP, Cockney, Irish, New York, French, and a Real Life Character. Time permitting we will explore any number of other dialects and accents including Russian, German, Jamaican, Japanese, South African, Indian, Boston, etc. We will dedicate approximately two weeks to each dialect, and then apply them to short monologues. For as many dialects as possible I will provide you with packets that contain a variety of monologues, but I encourage you to supply your own! Any monologue that has the personality or “flavor” of the dialect we are studying makes a great choice, as does a dusty old monologue in need of new life.

Remember: this course builds on the work you did during your first and second years here at VCU as well as your work last semester. Bring those hard-earned lessons on breath, articulation, and personal ism with you so that, here in dialects, you can continue to refine the use of your apparatus (particularly your mouth and tongue)! Our focus in class will be the mastery of the *skill* of dialect production. However, it is up to you to *integrate* that skill with your acting and performance work.

Course Objectives

During this semester you will:

- Select key sentences for each dialect
- Speak only in the dialect we are working on during class!
- Perform an individual monologues for each dialect
- Transcribe each monologue into IPA with notation
- Record each monologue into a digital media file—you will record the monologue after it is first presented, and again for your midterm/final.

- Engage in cultural activities and research to broaden your understanding of the dialects' contexts!
- Conduct a Real Life Character study to be presented in the final weeks of class—you will want to get started early!
- Gain greater versatility and control of your entire vocal apparatus, using dialect as a vehicle for expanding your range

Remember that we are here to learn, but also to play! Our study of dialect is an excellent opportunity to spend a few hours a week playing with our voices, making new and exciting sounds as we explore and expand our vocal range and repertoire. The harder you work the more fun we can have!

Grading Scale

Monologues and IPA transcriptions will be graded based on the number of errors that occur. They will be graded on the following scale:

0-2 errors = A

3-4 errors = B

5-6 errors = C

7-8 errors = D

> 8 errors = F

Your final grade will consist of your individual monologues, your transcriptions, your midterm, your real life character study, your digital recordings, and your final exam. These grades will be averaged and placed on the VCU grading scale:

A 100-90%

B 89-80%

C 79-70%

D 69-60%

F 59% and Below

Written Work

IPA transcriptions should consist of a type-written copy of your monologue double or triple spaced with your phonetic transcription hand-written above the printed text. *You are only required to transcribe words/phrases that contain sound changes relevant to the dialect.* Though many monologues will be provided in packet form, you must retype any monologue you are transcribing to make room for legible and complete transcription. If you are versed in the phonetic keyboard you may also type your IPA. Be neat and legible. I encourage you to make up symbols or short-hands that empower your understanding and aid in memorization—but please provide a key for any nonstandard marks!

Digital Recordings

As part of your graded work, you will submit a digital copy of each monologue you perform. This will serve as both a record of your progress, a study aid for midterm and final performances, and a resource for you to refer to in the future when you may have need of the dialect. After your graded performance of each monologue, you are required to record yourself performing the monologue and post it to the web. You can keep these files link-only (meaning only those you supply with a link will be able to see them). After uploading your video, share it

to our classroom page or email me directly. You can treat these recordings more like video blogs than performance pieces if you like. I encourage all manner of creative exploration in this remediation! Take advantage of the multimedia aspect and format of this recording however you see fit. Guest stars and/or collaboration are permitted, so long as the complete text of your monologue and an accurate, useable dialect sample is provided for the archive! At the semester's conclusion you will be required to submit a video of your final performance. *You must submit a digital copy of your monologue in order to receive a grade for that dialect.* Laptops, webcams, and YouTube tutorials are all resources available to you via the VCU Library (or through enterprising friends!).

Elocution with Thomas

In keeping with departmental policy, you must wear black movement clothing during class times. Likewise you must remove all jewelry prior to the start of class. This includes earrings, bracelets, watches, and any piercing worn above the neck (this most certainly includes any *in* or *about* the mouth)! Dressing appropriately is a sign that you are ready to work and have come prepared to participate.

In addition to appropriate dress, an appropriate attitude and comportment are necessary in maintaining a free and open environment in which to explore our voices. You must show respect and support for the efforts of your fellow classmates. You needn't like them or even agree with them! But you must approach one another with the same grace and professionalism as you approach the *work itself*. So take turns speaking! Share the floor with others! Offer constructive feedback! Expand on one another's ideas, and always—*always*—put the work first while in the classroom.

This semester we will attempt to gain a greater understanding of the fundamental sounds and shapes of our language. The only way to enter into this understanding is with a clear and direct *use* of language. Verbal garbage such as “um,” “like,” “you know,” or “kind of” only inhibits your communication. This aurally offensive particulate matter is not welcome.

There may be times when I will need to place my hand on your body to help with breath or tension awareness, or to aid in alignment. Please see me privately and let me know straight away if you have any special issue or discomfort with this; I will endeavor to always ask your direct permission before offering adjustment or assistance.

The Sacred Space

In order to promote an atmosphere of learning and openness we will be designating our classroom space as our “sacred space.” If you arrive early to the space, please use the time for silent reflection, meditation, or to warm-up physically and vocally for the day's work. You may speak, but please speak only of the work we will do here in Voice and Speech *and speak only in the appropriate dialect*. Please stow your belongings out of the way, and have any materials you will need for the day's work on-hand. I encourage you to bring a spill-proof container of water with you into the space. All other food or drink should remain outside of our holy-of-holies. Please finish eating or snacking prior to entering the space. All this does not mean we won't be having a riotously good time! On the contrary, it ensures we will remain focused on the work and be better able to experience the freedom and joy that it will bring!

Someone Poisoned the Waterhole

New departmental policy dictates that a Student Deputy be tasked with the care and clean-up of our space immediately following class. The Deputy's duties include replacing chairs/desks at the room's perimeter, sweeping the floor, and depositing all trash in the proper receptacle. On the first day of class one of you will be tasked with the mantle of Student Deputy, however I remind you that it is all of our duties to keep the classroom a clean and safe environment! Help your Deputy out, and tidy up your own mess!

Attendance

In keeping with the university attendance policy you are allowed a total of two (2) unexplained absences. Each additional absence will result in the loss of a **full letter grade**. Two tardies (arriving after attendance has been taken) qualify as one (1) absence. If you arrive at class more than 20 minutes late you are absent. If you leave class early without being excused you are absent. As with all of your studio courses, your work in this class is tied directly to your attendance and punctuality! To put it simply: the most important part is showing up. A gentle reminder: *you* are responsible for all missed work due to absence.

Please notify me via e-mail (tlcunningham@vcu.edu) the moment you are aware of an upcoming absence: I worry about you!

A Note on Classroom Observations

Over the course of the semester several graduate students may be joining us in the classroom to conduct teaching observations. Please welcome them to our space, and have no fear: they are here critiquing my work, not yours!

VCU Emergency Directives

1. Sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts (www.VCU.edu/alert/notify). Keep your information up-to-date.
2. Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.
3. In case of emergency, listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities.
4. Know where to go for additional emergency information (www.VCU.edu/alert).
5. Know the emergency phone number for the VC Police (828-1234). Program this number into your cell phone. Report suspicious activities and objects.

VCU Statement on Safety

What to know and do to be prepared for emergencies at VCU:

- sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts (www.VCU.edu/alert/notify). Keep your information up-to-date.
- Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.
- Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities.
- Know where to go for additional emergency information (www.vcu.edu/alert).
- Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234). Report suspicious activities and objects.

VCU Honor System

Virginia Commonwealth University recognizes that honesty, truth, and integrity are values central to its mission as an institution of higher education. The Honor System is built on the idea that a person's honor is his/her most cherished attribute. A foundation of honor is essential to a community devoted to learning. Within this community, respect and harmony must coexist. The Honor System is the policy of VCU that defines the highest standards of conduct in academic affairs.

The Honor System states that faculty members are responsible for:

- Understanding the procedures whereby faculty handles suspected instances of academic dishonesty. Faculty are to report any infraction of the VCU Honor System according to the procedures outlined in our policy.
- Developing an instructional environment that reflects a commitment to maintaining and enforcing academic integrity. Faculty should discuss the VCU Honor System at the onset of each course and mention it in course syllabi.
- Handling every suspected or admitted instance of violation of the provisions of this policy in accordance with procedures set forth in the policy.

The Honor System in its entirety can be reviewed on the Web at http://www.provost.vcu.edu/pdfs/Honor_system_policy.pdf or it can be found in the 2010-11 VCU Insider at <http://www.students.vcu.edu/insider.html>.

The Honor System must be upheld and enforced by each member of the Virginia Commonwealth University community. The fundamental attributes of our community are honor and integrity. We are privileged to operate with this Honor System.

Statement on Americans with Disabilities Act

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 require Virginia Commonwealth University to provide an 'academic adjustment' and/or a 'reasonable accommodation' to any qualified individual with a physical or mental disability who self-identifies as having such. Students should contact the Disability Support Services office on the Monroe Park Campus (828-2253) or on the MCV Campus (828-9782) for appropriate academic adjustments or accommodations.

VCU Guidelines for Student Conduct

VCU faculty play a critical role in helping to build an environment that is conducive to the academic success of our students. As you know, VCU has policies and procedures designed to create an environment conducive to academic excellence. One of these policies and procedures can be found in a document entitled "Guidelines for Faculty Members Regarding Student Conduct in the Instructional Settings." This document is available on the VCU Web at <http://www.provost.VCU.edu/pdfs/FacultyGuideToStudentConductInInstructionalSettings.pdf>

Understanding these guidelines will help you to encourage classroom behavior that does not detract from the quality of each student's educational experience. Please read the document and think about your role in promoting a University culture based on mutual respect and civility.

As a reminder, both faculty and students should turn off cell phones and pagers while in the classroom.

Important Dates

Important dates for the Spring 2013 semester are available at:
http://academiccalendars.vcu.edu/ac_fullViewAll.asp?term=Spring+2013

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	What are we doing?	What did I read?	What is due?
14-Jan	First day of class Review syllabus		
16-Jan	Dialects discussion		*Check or cash for textbook *Record/post your natural speaking voice. *Respond to your own natural speaking voice. 2 - 3 pages.
21-Jan	NO CLASS		
23-Jan	IPA Bonanza	Review your IPA notes/handouts	*Check or cash for textbook *IPA Exam at the end of class
28-Jan	RP Introduction to Paul Meier method	Paul Meier: RP Recommended Viewing: <i>Black Adder</i>	
30-Jan			*RP Key Sentence
04-Feb			*RP Monologues Presented *RP IPA Due
06-Feb	Cockney Konami Focus: Placement	Paul Meier: Cockney Recommended Viewing: <i>Snatch</i>	*RP Recording
11-Feb			*Cockney Proper Ways *Cockney Key Sentence

13-Feb			*Cockney Monologues Presented *Cockney IPA Due
18-Feb	Irish Konami Focus: Shape	Paul Meier: Irish (<i>not</i> Northern Irish, just Irish) Recommended Viewing: <i>In Bruges</i>	*Cockney Recording
20-Feb			*Irish Key Sentence
25-Feb			*RP, Cockney, Irish monologues: in a row
27-Feb	PUB DAY Irish Monologues		*Irish Monologues Presented *Irish IPA Due *Cultural Artifacts and Merrymaking!
04-Mar – 10-Mar	<i>SPRING BREAK '99!</i>		*Irish Recording
11-Mar	Midterm: Mini-OMNIlogues	Review Chapters covered	*RP, Cockney, Irish monologues: in a row
13-Mar	New York Konami Focus: Directionality	Paul Meier: New York Recommended Viewing: <i>Goodfellas</i>	
18-Mar			*NY Key Sentence
20-Mar			
25-Mar	PIZZACATESSEN DAY New York Monologues		*NY Monologues Presented *NY IPA Due *World's Most Famous Pizza Contest and Open Mic Night
27-Mar	French Konami Focus: Resonance	Paul Meier: French Recommended Viewing: <i>Pink Panther</i>	*NY Recording
01-Apr			*FR Key Sentence
03-Apr			

08-Apr	French Monologues		*FR Monologues Presented *FR IPA Due
10-Apr	<i>TBA</i>		*FR Recording
15-Apr	<i>TBA</i>		
17-Apr	<i>TBA</i>		
22-Apr	Real Life Characters Pt. 1		*RL Studies Due *RL Transcriptions Due
24-Apr	Real Life Characters Pt. 2		*All Recordings and Re-Tests Due (Yourself, RP, Cockney, Irish, NY, French, Any Others!) *Record/Respond to your own natural speaking voice 1—2pg
29-Apr	<i>Last day of class!</i> FINAL: OMNIlogues!		*RL Recording *Self Recording #2 *Final Performance
TBA	DEPARTMENTAL FINAL		*Two monologues presented