NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT

SYLLABUS
COURSE TITLE: Voice and Diction
CODE: COM 1320
3 class hours, 3 credits
Prerequisite: Students who have ESOL 1330 may not obtain degree credit for COM 1320.

Instructor's Name
Contact Information
Office# and Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Investigation of speech patterns and dialects as they relate to ethnicity, regionalism, and immigration in
the U.S. The relative social value of Standard and non-Standard American English dialects are
considered. The course introduces students to the physiological mechanism of speech production and
the corresponding phonetic notation. Students work on vocal production (volume, rate, pitch, phrasing) and
are provided with the tools to analyze, and then target, the sounds of Standard American English.

RECOMMENDED/TYPICAL TEXTS (These differ from course to course: please check your
professor’s requirements before purchasing)

Title: Listen Speak
Author: Alterbaum & Buck
Edition: 3
Publisher: Kendall Hunt

Title: Speaking Clearly
Authors: Hahner, Salish, and Solokoff
Edition: 6
Publisher: Waveland Press

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to

• Identify, pronounce, and articulate the purposes of the International Phonetic Alphabet as a
  system of auditory discrimination and sound production with concrete physical targets, and with
  one-to-one correspondence between symbols and sounds, each symbol representing a three-
  valued specification of a physical target in the vocal tract.
• Identify the functions of the organs of speech production in relation to sound and voice
  production, including the manner and placement of articulators.
• Identify sounds and the position of articulators for words and be able to discriminate between
  voiced and voiceless qualities.
• Discriminate among speech sounds and identify initial, medial and final positions within the word
• Differentiate and recognize effective and ineffective speech patterns that effect listener
  comprehension, comfort and interest, and articulate the deficiencies critically.
• Determine how, and understand the purposes of, phrasing, linking, and blending.
• Determine how stress patterns utilizing pitch, volume, and vowel duration are used in context.
• Produce in the voice appropriate changes in phrasing, linking, blending, pitch, volume, and
duration.
• Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources (various dialects of American English) and points of view.
• Discuss the relative social standing of various social/regional American dialects, and catalog the views of various regional and social dialect groups about the speech patterns of other groups.
• Discuss the relevance or otherwise of having a ‘Standard,’ and potential contexts in which it may have value.
• Evaluate the saliency of a classic ‘Standard’/‘non-Standard’ divide as a way to categorize the various pronunciation patterns in the diverse linguistic environment of USA today.
• Discuss why people might or might not choose to adapt their speech, addressing concepts such as solidarity signaling.
• Interpret reading materials orally to convey appropriate meaning.
• Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions (peer critiques and/or self-evaluation).
• Write evaluations of speaker recordings and, in addition, provide classmates with personal background information as per the speaker profile handout, relying on their ability to use IPA as descriptive shorthand and discuss their findings as they relate to basic readings on register and the significance of social dialects.
• Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of the discipline (in this case the study of Speech production and mechanisms thereof).
• Use appropriate technologies (Speech lab equipment, library reserve media) to conduct research and to communicate.

ASSESSMENT METHODS
The objectives of each lesson are supported by specific and organized instructional activities. The International Phonetic Alphabet offers access to ear training, discrimination of sounds and accelerates progress in sound production. Pedagogical techniques employing contrastive methods help students to distinguish variations in pitch, duration, and stress, and sharpen listening skills. Basic phonological concepts such as voiced and voiceless quality of sounds, phonemic and syllabic segmentation, final consonant production and vowel duration are linked to oral reading and discussed and applied throughout the term.

The use of phrasing, linking/blending and stressing techniques are also discussed and applied in all exercises involving oral reading practice, modeling, and feedback. Homework assignments offer additional exercises to help students retain auditory images, to develop fluency and phonological control, and to reinforce in class work. Feedback and evaluation of performances are geared to building student confidence in using spoken English effectively. Students are trained to maximize intelligibility, to increase listener comfort level, to take responsibility for listener comprehension and listener interest in the message.

SCOPE OF ASSIGNMENTS
1. Quizzes during the semester to reinforce various concepts and fundamentals pertaining to both the Vocal Mechanism and Speech Proficiency.
2. Oral Readings to support work on Voice and Diction. Each reading/performance will target specific fundamentals.
3. Final Reading will consist of two components: an oral component and written component.
4. Homework assignments will be given to reinforce work discussed in class.
5. Journal consisting of fifty words, before the end of the semester.
6. Recorded reading assignments are used to determine your specific speaking problems and needs.
7. Class participation: Homework, time management, attendance, in-class discussions, activities, and speaking exercises.
**TYPES OF READINGS** (Instructors may require more than these or other types)
The first reading may consist of poetry, for instance, Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*. However, some students may choose to read dramatic monologues, such as *Spoon River Anthology*, by Edgar Lee Masters, or a monologue from a movie, e.g., *Good Will Hunting*. The second reading will be a vocabulary building and pronunciation reinforcement activity. The final reading is a TV newscast. Newscast teams of four or more will be assembled with two commentators anchoring the newscast. The other commentators will perform different roles, for instance some may read entertainment copy, business copy, sports copy and weather copy. Some students may also decide to include a commercial in the program.

**EXAMPLES OF DESCRIPTION OF QUIZZES**
Quiz 1: Consists of questions on the speech mechanism, voiced and voiceless sounds, etc.
Quiz 2: Students will transcribe their names into phonetics (using IPA Symbols).
Quiz 3: Transcription: students need to identify the number of sounds in each word. Students will also transcribe selected words into IPA (and possibly also dictionary) symbols.
Quiz 4: Syllable stressing and word stressing quiz.
Quiz 5: -d/-ed suffix, “th” (dental) sounds, -s/-es suffix.
Quiz 6: Front and Back vowel contrasts.

**TYPICAL METHOD OF GRADING** (Consult individual instructor’s course outline)

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<td>Vocabulary reading</td>
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**HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**
It is the conviction of the Humanities department that a student who is not in a class for any reason is not receiving the benefit of the education being provided. Missed class time includes not just absences but also latenesses, early departures, and time outside the classroom taken by students during class meeting periods. Missed time impacts any portion of the final grade overtly allocated to participation and/or any grades awarded for activities that relate to presence in class.

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**
NYCCT defines academic dishonesty as plagiarizing or cheating during the course of one’s academic work. The academic integrity statement listed in the student handbook is listed below.

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York
City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion.

**DISABILITY/MEDICAL ACCOMMODATIONS STATEMENT**

City Tech is committed to supporting the educational goals of enrolled students with disabilities in the areas of enrollment, academic advisement, tutoring, assistive technologies and testing accommodations. If you have or think you may have a disability, you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments as provided under applicable federal, state and city laws. You may also request services for temporary conditions or medical issues under certain circumstances. If you have questions about your eligibility or would like to seek accommodation services or academic adjustments, please contact the Center for Student Accessibility at 300 Jay Street room L-237, 718 260 5143, or http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/accessibility/ N.B., Students who miss a scheduled presentation or exam due to illness or medically-related emergencies will be referred to the Center for Student Accessibility. The CSA will review any documentation requested and give the student a letter to share with the relevant instructor if accommodations need to be made.

**Typical 15-Week Course Calendar (Readings here based on Listen Speak text; schedule will vary with instructor)**

- **Week 1** Overview Course Requirements and Course Objectives. Discuss the significance and Relevance of Clear and Correct Articulation and Pronunciation and the importance of effective Vocal Variety. Prepare students for first assignment. After watching *American Tongues* (PBS documentary 1986), students discuss in class the position of Standard American English as a dialect among social/regional American dialects, the relevance of speech as an identity marker, the concept of solidarity signaling, and the potential appropriateness of Standard American for professional contexts. They then must objectively evaluate two speakers shown in the documentary, assessing the speakers’ effective/ineffective employment of Vocal Variety (Phrasing/Blending, Stressing, Pitch, Rate/Pausing, etc.). Also, students must evaluate speakers’ articulation (correct production of individual sounds that make up a word) and pronunciation (the correct utterance of a word). Inform students to complete a speaker profile at back of the syllabus.

- **Week 2** Students present evaluations of the two speakers and, in addition, provide class with personal background information as per the speaker profile handout. Reading Assignment: pp. 3-7 and 10-11.

- **Week 3** Discuss the importance of the Basic Phonological Concepts: Pronounce the sound, not the letter; recognize if the sound is voiced or voiceless; divide a word into its component sounds (phonemic segmentation); recognize and produce the final consonant; recognize and produce consonant clusters/blends. Discuss the role of the larynx (Voice Box) and its relation to the phonatory system. Homework: exercise B and D, pp. 13-14. Read pp. 61-62 (consonants) and pp. 307-310 (vowels) for next week. Students record Diagnostic Passage.


- **Week 5** Review and discuss the significance of Syllabic Segmentation and Syllable Stressing. Homework: exercise A, C on pp. 33-34. Read chapter 3 on Word Stressing, focus on pp. 37-41 and pp. 43-48. Quiz 2: speech mechanism (speech organs), voiced and voiceless sounds, etc.
Week 6 Review and discuss Phrasing/Linking/Blending techniques. Stressing techniques: duration, volume, and pitch for both syllable and word stressing. Prepare students for first reading of poetry or dramatic monologues, such as Shakespearian Sonnets or dramatic monologues. Handouts will be provided to reinforce vocal variety techniques. Homework: read and score passage on pp. 53-54. Quiz 3: transcription of selected words from English into both dictionary and IPA symbols; identify number of sounds in each word.

Week 7 Rehearsals of poems/monologues. During rehearsals, target specific problems such as articulatory problems and vocal variety problems. Students are assigned specific tasks to correct the problems. Evaluation sheets will be provided. Quiz 4: syllable and word stressing quiz.

Week 8 Rehearsal (if necessary) – presentations.

Week 9 Presentations – read pp. 87-89 and pp. 130-138 for next week.

Week 10 Evaluations of presentations – work on -d/-ed suffix and -s/-es suffix. Handouts provided to further reinforce this work. Read pp. 311-312 and 347-348 and read pp. 188-196 for next week.

Week 11 Work on “th” sounds and work on front and back vowel contrasts (see pp. 344-345 and pp. 383-384 for review of vowels). Quiz 5: -d/-ed suffix and -s/-es suffix.

Week 12 Prepare students for vocabulary building and pronunciation reading. Handouts will be provided to assist students. Quiz 6: Front and back vowel contrasts. Students receive newspaper copies of stories and organize panels.

Week 13 Students record vocabulary building and pronunciation reading. Rehearsals for TV newscast.

Week 14 Rehearsal (if necessary) and recording of newscast

Week 15 Recording of newscast and final meeting to instruct students on what they need to do for the future.

Bibliography:


