

The Dimon Institute
Breathing and the Voice
COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Dr. Theodore Dimon, Ed.D

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Teaching Assistants: James French and Tara Fenamore, M.A.

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Class dates: Monday 1/11 - Wednesday, 4/21

Class schedule: Monday - Thursday, 12:00-1:00PM ET

Excepted Thursdays: 1/27, 2/25, 3/25, 4/22

Course Description

The human voice is a marvel of engineering and design. This course explores the remarkably subtle and intricate design of the human voice and how it serves as an instrument of expression. Traditional methods for training and “freeing” the voice for singing, acting, and public speaking tend to focus on vocal exercises, but few people fully appreciate the functional design of the voice and its basic systems. In this course we will break down some of the key vocal systems, making sense of how they work and demystifying what can seem, to non-vocalists, to be a daunting and complex topic.

Students will be guided through both theoretical content and experimental self-study to explore how the voice works. The course content will be presented across four modules to support comprehensive study of the voice and its underlying systems: 1. Breathing; 2.. The throat, larynx, and vocal tract, 3. The Whispered ‘Ah’, and 4. Vocalizing.

Course topics will include: the anatomy and mechanics of breathing; the design and function of the larynx; the muscles of the throat; and the relation of the voice to posture and overall coordination. We will also look at practical issues of vocal training and performance, including the role of listening in coordinating the voice; vocalizing and the role of the "ear"; the role of facial muscles and practical techniques for activating these muscles; opening the throat; and the role of inhibition in speaking and vocalizing. The course will pay special attention to the "whispered 'ah'" as a central element in learning to use the voice in a coordinated way.

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Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the names of organs and musculoskeletal structures associated with respiration and phonation
2. Explain the mechanics of breathing in anatomical terms
3. Discuss the relationships between musculoskeletal coordination, breathing, and vocal production
4. Explain the purpose of the Whispered ‘Ah’
5. Describe the three elements of the Whispered ‘Ah’
6. Explain the principles of *inhibition* and *means-whereby* in the context of vocalization
7. Confidently practice the Whispered ‘Ah’ procedure
8. Explain what the vocal registers are and how they are developed through practical procedures

Learning & Teaching Activities

1. Online Lectures

Dr. Theodore Dimon will present content through a series of 43 live online lectures with experimental content, 60 minutes in duration. There will be 3 brief Q & A sessions dispersed throughout the lecture hour. Lectures will be recorded and made available to all students for review. Consistent attendance at the live lectures is highly recommended and required for the receipt of an official certificate of completion. **Course recordings will be accessible to students in their member portals until August 1, 2021.**

2.. Topical Course Readings

Course topics will include basic musculoskeletal anatomy, functional anatomy, description of muscle systems, and general readings on particular functions. The reading will include the following works:

1. *Your Body, Your Voice* by Ted Dimon
2. *Breathing and the Voice: A practical guide to the whispered “ah”* by Ted Dimon
3. *Anatomy of the Voice* by Ted Dimon
4. *Neurodynamics* by Ted Dimon

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Course Readings

In compliance with Copyright Law, students must purchase the following books:

1. [Your Body, Your Voice by Ted Dimon](#)
2. [Anatomy of the Voice by Ted Dimon](#)
3. [Neurodynamics by Ted Dimon](#)
4. Breathing and the Voice: A practical guide to the whispered “ah” by Ted Dimon*

For your convenience, we have included direct links to Amazon Marketplace where you can purchase new or used copies of the first three listed works.

If you would prefer not to order through Amazon Marketplace, Ted Dimon’s books can also be purchased directly through [Penguin Random House](#).

**Breathing and the Voice: A practical guide to the whispered “Ah”* by Ted Dimon is available for purchase on the Dimon Institute website as a Kindle ebook.

Course Schedule:

<p>PART ONE: Breathing</p>
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Week 1 Dates	Topics	Reading
Monday, 1/11	Introduction: The voice and how it works	
Tuesday, 1/12	Experiential Lab	
Wednesday, 1/13	Breathing & the nostrils <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mouth breathing versus nostril breathing• Nostril breathing & the oral seal• Breathing and non-doing	<i>Your Body, Your Voice</i> Chapter 2, pp. 11-24
Thursday, 1/14	Experiential Lab	

Week 2 Dates	Topic	Reading
Monday, 1/18 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	NO CLASS	
Tuesday, 1/19	Breathing & interfering with breathing	<i>Your body, Your Voice</i> Chapter 9, pp. 97-104
Wednesday, 1/20	Experiential Lab	
Thursday, 1/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shortening in stature & how we interfere with breathing	

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Week 3 Dates	Topic	Reading
Monday, 1/25	Breathing & vocal habits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocalizing & how we interfere with breathing 	<i>Breathing and the Voice</i> Chapter 2, pp. 19-26
Tuesday, 1/26	Experiential Lab	
Wednesday, 1/27	Continued...	
Thursday, 1/28	NO CLASS	NO CLASS

DIMON INSTITUTE BREAK 2/1-2/4
NO CLASS

PART TWO:

Controlled Exhalation, The Larynx, & The Whispered 'Ah'

Week 4 Dates	Topic	Reading
Monday, 2/8	Controlled Exhalation	<i>Breathing and the Voice</i> Chapter 2, pp. 19-26
Tuesday, 2/9	The Larynx	
Wednesday, 2/10	Experiential Lab	<i>Breathing and the Voice</i> Chapter 3, p. 27-36
Thursday, 2/11	Review & Larynx Revisited	

Week 5 Dates	Topic	Reading
Monday, 2/15	Singing With An Open Throat	<i>Your Body, Your voice</i> Chapter 7, pp. 75-90
Tuesday, 2/16	Experiential Lab	
Wednesday, 2/17	Vowels & Vocal Production	
Thursday, 2/18	Coordinating The Body: The Foundation Of The Whispered 'Ah'	

Week 6	Topic	Reading
Monday, 2/22	The whispered 'ah' and what it's for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of the whispered 'ah': 1. The face 2. The throat 3. The controlled exhalation 	<i>Neurodynamics</i> Chapter 7: The Means- Whereby Principle in Practice, pp. 215-246

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Week 6	Topic	Reading
Tuesday, 2/23	Experiential Lab	<i>Breathing & The Voice</i> Chapter 4, p. 37-45
Wednesday, 2/24	Review	Supplementary Reading: Part 2, Directing & Exercises https:// www.alexandertechniquepri nciples.com/chapter02- introduction
Thursday, 2/25	NO CLASS	Developmental Movement With James & Tara (Optional)

DIMON INSTITUTE BREAK 3/1 - 3/4
NO CLASS

PART THREE:

Coordinated Vocalizing & The Larynx

Week 7 Dates	Topic	Reading
Monday, 3/8	The whispered “ah” and facial directions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The role of the facial muscles in vocalizing	<i>Breathing and the Voice</i> , Chapter 3, pp. 27-36
Tuesday, 3/9	Experiential Lab	
Wednesday, 3/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Placing the Voice	
Thursday, 3/11	Experiential Lab	

Week 8 Dates	Topic	Reading
Monday, 3/15	The whispered “ah” and inhibition in speech <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whispering as the foundation for vocalizing	<i>Breathing and the Voice</i> , Chapter 4, pp. 37-45
Tuesday 3/16	Experiential Lab	
Wednesday, 3/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inhibition, reciting, & the whispered ‘ah’	
Thursday, 3/18	Experiential Lab	

Week 9 Dates	Topic	Reading
Monday, 3/22	The Larynx & How It Works <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anatomy of the Larynx 	<i>Anatomy of the Voice</i> Chapter 2, pp. 25-45
Tuesday, 3/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The functions of the larynx 	
Wednesday, 3/24	Review	
Thursday, 3/25	NO CLASS	Developmental Movement With James & Tara (Optional)

DIMON INSTITUTE BREAK 3/29 - 4/1

NO CLASS

PART FOUR:

Singing

Week 10 Dates	Topic	Reading
Monday, 4/5	Vocal registers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the vocal registers?	<i>Your Body, Your Voice</i> Chapter 4, pp. 35-40
Tuesday, 4/6	Experiential Lab	
Wednesday, 4/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing the vocal registers	<i>Your Body, Your Voice</i> Chapter 6, pp. 57-72
Thursday, 4/8	Experiential Lab	

Week 11 Dates	Topic	Reading
Monday, 4/12	The whispered ‘ah’ & vocalizing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vocalizing and the means-whereby	<i>Your Body, Your Voice</i> Chapter 5, pp. 43-54
Tuesday, 4/13	Experiential Lab	
Wednesday, 4/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The elements of performance	
Thursday, 4/15	Experiential Lab	

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Week 12 Dates	Topic	Reading
Monday, 4/19	Listening <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forms of vocal interference	
Tuesday, 4/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observing singing habits	
Wednesday, 4/21	Review & Concluding Remarks	
Thursday, 4/22	NO CLASS	Developmental Movement With James & Tara (Optional)