

Southeast Missouri State University
Department of Music
Course Syllabus

Seminar: Topics in Performance Health

MU326
NEW

I. Catalog Description and Credit Hours of Course

A seminar devoted to research, discussion, and examination of physical, mental, and performance strategies for achieving and maintaining optimum health while pursuing a career in music. (1)

II. Prerequisite(s):

Sophomore or higher standing and current status of music major or minor; or by permission of the instructor.

III. Purposes or Objectives of the Course

A. To gain an understanding of the physical causes of pain and/or injury in performance, and to explore techniques that provide a more healthy approach to performing.

B. To explore the variety of mental techniques and approaches that allow for more focused, alert performances.

C. To improve practice habits so that undue stress can be avoided, and greater physical health and mental clarity can be achieved.

D. To gain awareness of issues pertaining to stage fright, and to become more fluent and comfortable in a performance setting.

E. To research the current literature on performance health issues, with special reference to each student's particular area of study.

F. To develop healthy strategies for the student's own mental and physical activities as a musician.

G. To gain awareness of healthy techniques that would be useful in a teaching situation.

IV. Expectations of Students

A. Students are expected to attend all classes and participate fully in class activities.

B. Students are expected to prepare in advance for all classes by staying current with reading and other assignments for each class.

C. Students are expected to keep a journal documenting the application of specific techniques to their practice and performance activities.

D. Students are expected to fulfill specific research activities related to performance health in their field. These will include such assignments as short reports summarizing the most recent articles on performance health, developing an annotated bibliography, and similar projects. Discussions and informal student presentations based on student research will be a regular part of this course.

- E. Students should be prepared to demonstrate and perform frequently in class, as this will be a practical, "hands-on" seminar.
- F. Exams: a final exam or project will be required.

V. Course Content or Outline:

Physical aspects of Healthy Performance:

7 weeks

- A. Existing techniques for optimum physical use: Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais Method, Tai Chi, Yoga, etc.
- B. Investigation of physical issues: repetitive motion injuries, physical tension, vocal issues. Techniques for improvement of physical tension specifically geared to musicians: Kato Havas Technique, etc.
- C. Prevention of and recovery from injuries or misuse (vocal and instrumental).
- D. Warm-up, rest periods, and cooling off routines for healthy practice. Creating a healthy environment for practice.
- E. Physical exercise as it relates to healthy performance.
- F. Diet and nutrition as it relates to healthy performance.
- G. Natural health remedies.
- H. Guest presentations/demonstrations on such topics as yoga, nutrition, chiropractic therapies, vocal health, etc.

Mental aspects of Healthy Performance:

5 weeks

- A. Sports and "peak" performance literature: The Inner Game of Tennis; mental awareness in performance, etc.
- B. Mental stress: causes and cures.
- C. Strategies for successful use of practice time.
- D. Use of mental imagery in practice.
- E. Meditation and other techniques for mental awareness and relaxation.
- F. Guest presentations/demonstrations on audition and performance preparation, on meditation and other techniques for stress relief, etc.

Performance Issues; Synthesis of Mental/Physical Techniques:

3 weeks

- A. Stage Fright: causes and remedies.
- B. Applications for teaching: ensembles; studio.
- C. Student Presentations.

NB: Guest lecturers will be an important component of this course. Lecturers will be drawn from Department of Music faculty, visiting artists, and other professionals with specific expertise in a variety of fields.

VI. Textbook and Other Required Materials

There is no specific textbook for this course. Required readings will be on reserve in the Music Resource Center and Kent Library, or will be available on-line.

VII. Basis for Student Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on the basis of:

Active Class Participation (@ 10 points/class)	150 points	33%
Student Journals	50 points	11%
Research Assignments (including final project)	125 points	28%
Student Presentations/In-Class performances	50 points	11%
Short Essays and other assignments	75 points	17%
Total:	450 points	100%

VIII. Instructor Information:

Dr. Sara Edgerton
Brandt Room 107
573-651-2140
sedgerton@semo.edu