Alexander Technique for the Musician

Syllabus

MUS 4812

Fall 2018

MW: 11:00-11:50 a.m.

Room 219

Instructor: Susan Dorchin

 Room 251 (Arts & Letters)

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 561-297-1085

Required Text: *Body Learning* by Michael J. Gelb

 ISBN: 9781854109590

Course Description: Students learn to recognize and change habitual patterns of thought and

 movement that interfere with optimal performance in daily activities and

 in their performance discipline.

 The Alexander Technique provides a clear, systematic look into the

 underlying principles that govern human movement. As performing

 artists, students will learn to relinquish excessive tension causing fatigue

 in exchange for an energized, coordinated use of their instrument. This

 will result in a renewal of ease, support, and balance, resulting in a joyous

 sense of enlivened and heightened artistic expression. The Alexander

 Technique guides and sustains the overall organization of the

 coordination of the self (mind and body) to support the foundational

 technical skills required for singing, playing an instrument, and

 conducting.

Course Objective: To experience and understand the basic principles and practices of

 thought and movement which Alexander discovered and to proceed,

 step by step, through his process for recognizing and relinquishing

 excess tension in daily activities.

 To apply these principles and this process to the unique requirements

 for each art form (singing, playing an instrument, conducting).

 To develop self-care skills for dealing with stress and performance

 anxiety.

 To experience and observe individual coaching in the student’s

 specific art form via the Alexander Technique with one-on-one

 guidance from the instructor.

 To achieve optimal coordination, relieve tension and manage stress,

 relieve back and neck pain, improve posture, eliminate performance

 anxiety, prevent vocal strain in singers, improve tone quality in

 their instrument, enhance breathing capacity, and improve

 coordination in all movement oriented activities.

Length of Study: 15 weeks, 2 hours per week

Course Evaluation: Class participation 50%

 Journals: 25%

 Written exam on terminology: 10%

 Paper: 15%

 Students will be continuously involved in a process of self-evaluation

 based on attendance, class participation, self-observation journals, and

 responses to required reading.

 Class participation is mandatory. Students will be expected to

 participate in all classroom activities and share their observations and

 experiences.

 Journals: Students will keep a journal throughout the entire semester.

 This work depends upon observation so journal entries should include

 personal (self) observations, reflections on topics covered in class and

 your own experiences as you carry the work into your everyday

 activities and performance work. There should be a minimum of three

 journal entries per week although daily entries would be ideal. All

 journals are confidential but students who wish to share a journal entry

 during class discussions are welcome to do so. Journals will be

 collected every four weeks.

 Reading Assignments: Students must complete reading

 assignments as directed in their syllabus. Reading assignments will be discussed in class so they must be completed on time.

 Final Paper: What have you learned in this class concerning your

 performance work in relation to the Alexander Technique?

 Where do you want to go next in terms of your individual study?

 Length: 3 pages. Format: papers typed, double-spaced, 12 pt.

 font and one-inch margins. Formulate your ideas in a coherent and

 detailed fashion. Any work that does not meet these requirements will

 be returned for re-writing and a deduction will be made from your grade.

 Every student in the class will receive one private Alexander Technique

 lesson during the semester.

Course Grading
Scale: As per Florida Atlantic University policy final grades will be as follows:

 93-100 = A

 90-92 = A-

 87-89 = B+

 83-86 = B

 80-82 = B-

 77-79 = C+

 73-76 = C

 70-72 = C-

 67-69 = D+

 63-66 = D

* 1. D-
1. - 59 = F

Make-up/Late Work: All examinations must be taken on the assigned date and at the assigned

 time. Only in cases of extreme medical or family emergency will

 students be permitted to take make-up examinations at a later date.

 An automatic grade of “F” will be given to any student who fails to take

 the written examination, complete the journal, write responses to required

 reading, or participate in class. All course work must be completed.

Incomplete Policy: A grade of Incomplete will be assigned only in cases of extreme

 emergency or illness.

Absences: A failing grade of “F” will be given to any student who has three

 unexcused absences. A doctor’s note must be provided in case of

 illness. Every unexcused absence will result in a grade reduction. The

 course work is sequential so attendance at every class is required.

Dress: Workout clothes required. Wear comfortable, casual, non-binding

 clothes that allow for ease of movement. Clothes should be loose fitting –

 no skirts, tights, tight pants, fragile clothing, bare midriffs, no low cut

 tops, no belts or restrictive waistbands, and no hats. If shoes are worn

 they should allow movement – no flip flops, boots, clogs, high heels

 or backless styles. Students can wear non-slip gripper socks.

 Bring a gym mat, yoga mat or large beach towel to every class.

Classroom Etiquette: Respect the workspace. Before class everyone will prepare the space

 for work, removing unnecessary items and moving furniture out of the

 way. When class is over the space should be restored to order and made

 ready for the next class.

 Students are expected to refrain from the use of handheld Internet or

 texting devices during class and may only use computers to aid in note

 taking. Should a student be found in violation of this etiquette, they will

 be asked to leave class and take the absence.

 Cell phones should be turned off.

 Additionally, students are asked to sit on chairs in a proper manner and

 keep feet from resting on other furniture.

 Out of courtesy to other students and to the professor, students are

 asked to arrive in a timely manner.

Religious Holiday

Accommodations: [http://www.fau/regulations/chapter2/Reg%202.007%208%-12.pdf](http://www.fau/regulations/chapter2/Reg%202.007%208%25-12.pdf)

FAU Student Accessibility Services (SAS):

 <http://www.fau.edu/sas/Rights.php>

 In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act

 (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a

 Disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student

 Accessibility Services (SAS) – in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880);

 In Davie, LA 203 (954-236-1222); or, in Jupiter, SR 110 (561-799-8585) -

 and follow all SAS procedures.

Course Communication:

 All electronic communications must originate from a valid FAU e-mail \

 address.

Honor Code: Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the

 highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty, including cheating and

 plagiarism, is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards

 because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high

 quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over

 any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive to the University

 community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places

 high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh

 penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information,

 see University Regulation 4.001.

 <http://www.fau.edu/ctl/AcademicIntegity.php>

8/21: What is the Alexander Techni que

 Daily warm-up

 Read chapter 1 of *Body Learning*

8/23: Kinesthetic Awareness

8/28: Progression Towards Presence

8/30: Laban Three Dimensional Scale (Unified Field of Attention)

 Head/Neck/Spine Relationship

 Constructive rest

9/4: Labor Day

9/6: Weight Centers of the Body

 Mapping the Ribs

 Constructive Rest

9/11: Mapping the ribs, shoulders, and arms

 BRING INSTRUMENT TO CLASS

9/13: arm sequencing

 Animal poses

 BRING INSTRUMENT TO CLASS

9/18: Mapping the pelvis

 Centering

9/20: Mapping the legs

 Walking

9/25 Legs/Pelvis continued - Lunging

 Mapping the knee and ankle

9/27: Mapping the feet

 Read pages 35-24 of *Body Learning* (Use and functioning)

10/2: Observation and Awareness

 Exploring kinesthetic awareness through outdoor activities

 Recognition of Habit

10/4: Observation and Awareness

 Recognition of Habit

 Walking

10/9: Tensegrity

 Suspension and Support

 Read pages 35-41 of *Body Learning* (Use and Functioning)

10/11: Kinesthetic Experience

10/16: Primary Control

 Read pages 42-51 of *Body Learning* (Primary Control)

10/18: Primary Control

10/23: Sensory Appreciation

 Read pages 52-58 of *Body Learning* (Unreliable Sensory Appreciation)

10/25: The Art of Inhibition

 Read pages 59 – 67 of *Body Learning* (Inhibition)

10/30: The Art of Inhibition

 Exploring the pause between stimulus and response

11/1: Direction

 Exploring the art of walking

 Read pages 68 – 78 of *Body Learning* (Direction)

11/6: Means Whereby

 Doing and non-doing

 Recognizing Endgaining

 Read pages 79 – 86 of *Body Learning* (Ends and Means)

11/8: Direction

 Read pp. 139-142 of *Body Learning* (The Alexander work and organizational change)

11/13 The Art of Breathing

11/15*:* Application of A.T. principles to daily activities

11/20: Activity Day – bring instrument

11/23: Thanksgiving

11/27: Activity Day – bring instrument

11/29: Activity Day or Authentic Movement

12/11:

10:30 a.m. Final Exam – written exam

**Bibiliography**

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