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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