

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Division of Humanities

Course Syllabus - 2026 Fall

Course Title:	Find Your Voice: From Classical to Broadway
Course Code:	HUMA 2000G
No. of Credits:	3 credits
Prerequisites:	No prior experience in music/singing is required
Course Instructor:	Dr. Oliver Lo (盧思彥博士), Visiting Scholar, HKUST (2026 Fall) DMA & MM (Eastman); AdvDip (HKAPA); HigherDip (HKPolyU)
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Office Hours:	TBC

Course Description

This course explores vocal cross-training between classical and musical theatre singing styles. Students will develop technical versatility by studying Italian bel canto principles and contemporary belting techniques, while building a foundation in posture, breath support, vocal tract shape, and vocal registration. The course culminates in a performance (in-class or public), demonstrating stylistic contrasts and healthy vocal production. No prior knowledge or experience of performing arts is required.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

In successfully completing this course, students should be able to

1. explain the concept of vocal cross-training and compare core features of classical and musical theatre singing.
2. demonstrate efficient posture, breath support, and vocal tract shape appropriate to both styles.
3. coordinate chest, mixed, and head voice and apply Italian bel canto principles and contemporary belting techniques appropriate to their voice type.
4. prepare and perform both classical and musical theatre pieces, showing stage presence, communication skills, and clear stylistic contrast while maintaining healthy, sustainable vocal production.

Tutorial:

In addition to the regular class meeting, each student will receive about 1 hour of individual coaching during the semester, split into three 20-minute sessions. These sessions will be scheduled directly between the instructor and the student.

Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing, and grades will not be assigned using a curve.

- Weekly preparation and participation: 20pts
- Technical skill assessments: 20pts
- Repertoire preparation (classical and musical theater pieces): 20pts
- Final performance (in-class or public): 20pts
- Short written reflection/YouTube Performance of a self-prepared piece: 20pts

Grading Rubric:

Criteria	20 pts	16 pts	12 pts	8 pts	0 pts
Weekly preparation and participation	a. Not more than one unexcused absence and no more than 3 tardinesses. b. Always prepare for the class (allow two occasions of not preparing for the lesson)	a. Two unexcused absences or more than 3 tardinesses. b. More than 2 occasions: Come to class without learning the assigned materials	a. Three unexcused absences or more than 5 tardinesses. b. More than 4 occasions: Come to class without learning the assigned materials	a. Four unexcused absences or more than 7 tardinesses b. More than 6 occasions: Come to class without learning the assigned materials	a. Five unexcused absences or more than 9 tardinesses. b. More than 8 occasions: Come to class without learning the assigned materials
Technical skill assessments	Showing constant improvement	Showing moderate improvement	Showing little improvement	Showing no improvement	NA
Repertoire preparation	Learn and memorize the assigned repertoire by deadline	Learn but not memorize the assigned repertoire by deadline	Learn the assigned repertoire with a few mistakes by the deadline.	Learn the assigned repertoire but with substantial mistakes by the deadline	Did not learn the assigned repertoire

Final performance	a) Techniques & musicality fully express the music in a personal way. b) Displays thorough understanding & communication of the text through effective diction & articulation.	a) Techniques & musicality somewhat express the music in a personal way. b) Displays a modicum of understanding & communication of the text through sufficient diction & articulation.	a) Techniques & musicality poorly express the music. b) Displays no understanding & communication of the text through poor diction & articulation.	NA	Did not show up.
Short written reflection/ YouTube Performance	a. Clearly reflects on the singing journey and gives specific connections to their major, other courses, or skills such as presentation, confidence, and practice discipline. b. Clear, complete performance video with good sound, steady framing, and a polished presentation.	a. Describes the singing journey and explains some connections to other courses or personal skills. b. Complete performance video with generally clear sound and video; minor technical or presentation issues.	a. Gives a general description of the singing journey with limited connections or examples. b. Performance is included, but sound, video, framing, or presentation quality is inconsistent.	a. Gives minimal reflection and unclear connections to learning or other skills. b. Video is incomplete or difficult to see/hear; significant technical or presentation issues.	a. Missing, off-topic, or incomplete reflection. b. Video is missing, unusable, or does not show the assigned performance.

Tardiness: Late for more than 5 minutes without notifying the instructor by text
NO extra assignments will be offered to improve your grade

Course Schedule:

Week	Topics	Briefly outline what this topic will cover
1	What is cross-training in singing?	Definition of vocal cross-training, common ground between classical and musical theatre singing, and why it is prominent.
2	Vocal techniques	Posture, breath support, and vocal tract shaping for healthy, efficient tone production.
3	Vocal mechanism I	Chest voice, mixed voice, and head voice: basic function, coordination, and registration.
4	Vocal mechanism II	Continued work on chest, mix, and head voice, with emphasis on smooth registration and range extension.
5	Classical singing techniques I	Italian bel canto principles for tenor, baritone, and bass voices.
6	Classical singing techniques II	Italian bel canto principles for soprano, mezzo-soprano, and alto voices.
7	Musical theatre techniques I	Contemporary belting techniques for soprano and mezzo-soprano/alto voices.
8	Musical theatre techniques II	Contemporary belting techniques for tenor, baritone, and bass voices.
9	Cross-training through repertoire I	Work on selected repertoire; each student prepares one song in a classical style and one in a musical theatre style.
10	Cross-training through repertoire II	Stage presence and communication skills
11	Cross-training through repertoire III	Refinement of technical and stylistic contrasts between the two styles in individual repertoires.
12	Cross-training through repertoire IV	Run-throughs and polishing of both selections in preparation for performance.
13	In-class or public performance	At the instructor's discretion, students present an in-class or public performance of their prepared repertoire.

Course AI Policy:

In this course, the use of generative AI tools is not allowed for any assessment tasks.

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to Academic Integrity | HKUST - Academic Registry for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.