

Graduate Course Number: 6353

Course Title: Introduction to Singing Contemporary Commercial Music: Applications & Strategies

Days/Times of Class Meetings: Online Course with class access weekly every Tuesday.

Number of Credits for the course: 3

Instructor with phone number, email address, and office hours:

Michele Thomas - 773-852-8022

[mthomas@vandercook.edu](mailto:mthomas@vandercook.edu)

Office hours - Mondays 9:00p - 12:00p or by appointment

“This Syllabus is a general outline of the course and is subject to change upon notification to the students during a regular class session.”

Student Engagement Statement:

Each hour of credit implies viewing an online course collection of approximately 40 minutes of lesson video, lesson readings, video performance submissions and written assignments. All assignment submissions are due 1 week after class access is granted unless otherwise noted.

Course Description:

The field of vocal pedagogy faces a transformation as we move further into the 21st century. There has long been a demand for vocal training that addresses the needs of the contemporary singer and the music of our times. More and more, music educators are programming a wider variety of repertoire that includes popular music. The majority of professional vocalists are expected to be highly versatile in a variety of contemporary commercial music (CCM) styles in order to be marketable and gainfully employed. However, the majority of choir directors and vocal teachers in the U.S. have not been trained in how to teach, much less perform, popular styles of music. This has left a considerable void in the knowledge and methods necessary to effectively train singers in CCM styles. An awareness must be cultivated not only to genre and style, but in the implementation of vocal technique that is congruent with these same elements.

If you've felt insecure or apprehensive about the prospect of teaching more CCM/ popular music styles, or you're ready to expand the programming of CCM genres into your choir or voice studio, this course will lay the groundwork for new skills that are essential to teaching singers and music outside of the realm of traditional classical styles.

<u>Student Learning Outcomes</u>	<u>Outcomes Assessments</u>
<p>1. Knowledge in key differences in classical vocal training and functional vocal training for Contemporary Commercial music styles</p> <p>2. Knowledge in most definitive CCM genres, their histories, and influential performers</p> <p>3. Ability to identify and sing in vocal qualities associated with CCM singing styles as well performance practice of repertoire in those styles</p> <p>4. Comprehension of strategies for training individual singers, choirs and small ensembles with considerations to CCM musical styles</p> <p>5. Conversance with sound technology for training and performances as well as current voice science and established methodologies for CCM vocal training.</p>	<p>1. Listening assignment with discussion and written analysis of vocal qualities amongst various Contemporary Commercial Music genres and styles</p> <p>2. Written analysis of selected CCM genres and influential singers of those genres</p> <p>3. Weekly vocal exercise assignments and final performance demonstration through video/audio submissions. Evaluation gauged to students current experience singing CCM styles and technique.</p> <p>4. Evaluation of mock CCM lesson/rehearsal scenarios with students' approach and strategy for teaching.</p> <p>5. Evaluation of exam covering sound technology, vocal methodology and vocal science terminology.</p>

**Program-Level Outcomes Addressed:**

- a. Professionalism in Teaching - Candidates will participate in group and character-building activities by working alone and with others to explore personal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to personal and professional growth. Students will demonstrate the ability to: Research best educational practices; Discern new uses for information from a variety of course work; Reflectively discuss their teaching and ways to enhance it.
- b. Excellence in Music- Candidates will explore more deeply the culturally and historically important aspects of music, musicians, and composers throughout the world and across time. Students will demonstrate the ability to: Recognize style traits of various composers, genres, and periods; Identify major and transitional composers in a variety of styles, genres, and periods; Learn or review and apply new techniques to perform in a style appropriate to genre, style, period, and culture.
- c. Strength in Character- Candidates will develop new approaches to the praxis of teaching by learning about, experiencing, and using best practice techniques as borne out in proven traditional practices and those demonstrated as effective through current research. Students will demonstrate the ability to: Discuss a variety of educational approaches; Describe why particular educational approaches are chosen for use; Choose and apply new approaches to the teaching praxis.

Course Requirements and Assessment:

1. Assignment submissions will consist of essays, questionnaires and video performance demonstration submissions. 60% grade value.
2. Students should participate in each weekly online discussion. There will also be 4 Zoom meetings scheduled throughout the course. Graded participation is mandatory for 3 Zoom meetings in total. Attendance of the final (#4) Zoom is mandatory. 15% grade value.
3. The final lesson will consist of a written final exam and video performance submission. It will serve as the final exit assessment. 25% grade value.

Grading Breakdown:

Written assignments and weekly video submissions = 25%  
Zoom and discussion participation = 15%  
Final Exam & Video Submission = 60%

Instructional Materials:

Access to a Mac, PC or Chromebook, connected to the Internet. Audio interface, microphone, or USB microphone recommended.

Course Bibliography: N/A

Course Calendar or Schedule:

**2/13 WEEK ONE**

**What is Different about Singing Contemporary Commercial Music?**

- Lecture: What is Different about Singing Contemporary Commercial Music?
- Listening Assignment & Analysis
- Assignment Discussion

**2/21 WEEK TWO**

**CCM Genres and History Overview | Vocal Technique & Function in CCM Styles**

- Lecture: Registers, Quality and Style
- Reading: CCM Genre & History Overview | Pop/Mainstream, Folk Rock, Country & Bluegrass
- Podcast: Birth of American Music | The 1619 Project
- Vocal Exploration Assignment: Chest Register

**2/28 WEEK THREE - Zoom Class #1**

### **3/7 WEEK FOUR**

#### **Genres & History Con't | Vowel and Resonance Considerations**

- Lecture: Head Register, Resonance and Vowel Considerations
- Reading: R&B, Soul and Motown
- Vocal Exploration Assignment: Head Register
- Vocal Performance Assignment

### **3/14 WEEK FIVE**

#### **Genres & History Con't | CCM Singing for Individual Voice Training | Mixed Register, Belting and Chest Mix**

- Lecture: CCM Singing for Individual Voice Training: Applications & Strategies
- Reading: Disco, Hip Hop & Rap
- Vocal Exploration Assignment:
- Vocal Performance Assignment
- CCM Style Comparison & Analysis

### **3/21 WEEK SIX - Zoom Class #2**

### **3/28 WEEK SEVEN**

#### **Genres & History Con't | CCM Singing for Choir, Ensemble & Group Training | Understanding Breath Support**

- Lecture: Understanding Breath Support
- Reading: CCM Singing for Choral and Ensemble Training - Applications and Strategies
- Reading: Rock, Punk, Emo, Metal & Hard Rock
- Vocal Exploration Assignment
- Vocal Performance Assignment
- CCM Influential Artist Radio Playlists

### **4/4 WEEK EIGHT - Zoom Class #3**

### **4/11 WEEK NINE**

#### **Cultivating Authentic Style in CCM Singing: Working with Rhythm, Phrasing and Expression**

- Lecture: Cultivating Authentic Style in CCM Singing
- Video: "Do You Have The Soul Ingredients In Your Singing?"
- Reading: Jazz, Blues & Gospel
- Reading: A Brief History of Gospel Evolution

- Rhythmic Exploration Assignment
- Vocal Performance Assignment

#### **4/18 WEEK TEN**

##### **Where To Start: An Outline of How to Focus CCM Training | Teaching Approaches for K - 12 | The New Vocal Methods**

- Lecture: Where To Start: An Outline of How to Focus CCM Training - Teaching K - 12
- Reading: Twenty-First Century Vocal Pedagogy for CCM
- Reading: Musical Theater
- Vocal Exploration Assignment
- Vocal Performance Assignment

#### **4/25 WEEK ELEVEN - Zoom class #4: Listening Assignment & Analysis**

#### **5/2 WEEK TWELVE**

##### **Final Exam | ISCCM Resource Guide**

- Final Written Exam
- Final Vocal Performance
- Reading: ISCCM Resource Guide

**FINAL DAY OF THE COURSE IS MAY 5TH.**

**Final written exam and vocal performance submissions are due 12pm CT on May 8th**

#### **Attendance Policy:**

In addition to the Zoom and discussion attendance policy, any incomplete weekly assignments will result in the deduction of 10 points per each consecutive day that it is late. Any missing assignments as of the final day of the course, May 8th, will receive 0 points. Late submissions of final exams past the due date will result in a deduction of 20 points per each consecutive day that it is late.

### Candidate Conduct

***“An important part of VanderCook’s Conceptual Framework and Candidate Dispositions and Outcomes is the focus on professionalism and character. Specific descriptors include participation as well as attendance, flexibility in the face of changing circumstances and institutional needs, the commitment to continual personal development, self-reflection and growth, respect for the academic community and the individuals and resources of that community, and behavior, speech and dress that is appropriate and respectful in the educational environment. Failure to observe standards of professional behavior may result in referral to the Standards Committee and/or the appropriate dean. Consistent concerns in this area will have an impact on successful completion of the program.”***

### Cell Phone/Computer Policy:

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### Phone/Computer Policy:

Professional online conduct is expected when participating in discussions, chats and Zoom meetings. Please be considerate of others in regards to recorded material used in projects, assignments and examples during Zoom meetings.

### Health and Safety

VanderCook College of Music is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Basic information regarding the maintenance of health and safety within the contexts of practice, performance, teaching and listening is provided throughout the academic year. Health and safety information specific to this course will be addressed. It is the responsibility of each individual musician to take an active role in making informed decisions to help maintain their own health and safety.

### Academic Honesty

“Candidates are expected to maintain the highest standards of integrity in their academic work. Failure to do so will jeopardize a candidate’s success in the program. Examples of academic dishonesty include:

- Presenting another’s words, music, or concepts as your own by failing to acknowledge or properly cite the source.
- Communicating or receiving answers or information to/from another in a testing situation.
- Consulting notes or any other source of answers/information in a testing situation, unless the instructor authorizes such access.
- Making available or accessing tests or quizzes from current or previous classes unless explicitly authorized by the instructor.

- Bringing, by any means, answers or information into a testing situation except as explicitly authorized by the instructor.
- Collaborating or turning in jointly produced work on any test or assignment that is intended to reflect individual effort.”

### Plagiarism

“Plagiarism means taking someone else’s words, ideas, data or work and presenting them as your own. This could mean an exact duplication of someone else’s work without proper citation of the source, or it could mean you present it with only small changes and do not cite the source. Plagiarism can occur in art, music, literature, or technology – really in any area of intellectual work.

All work submitted should be properly credited to the original source of the information or idea whether the source is a book, Internet site, article, or any other medium. In written work, quotation marks or block indentations show direct quotations and the source must be cited. If information that is not common knowledge is paraphrased or summarized from a source, that source (including websites) must be cited. Failure to do so in academic assignments represents cheating and carries the appropriate penalties.

Copyright compliance is the goal of VanderCook College. Information to help with clarification of what constitutes fair use of copyrighted material, including photocopying, is on permanent reserve in the Ruppel Library.

No candidate should expect to receive a passing grade on any test or assignment that reflects dishonesty or academic irregularity. Cheating in any form may result in failure of the class and academic expulsion.”

### Disability Statement

“If a student has a disability which might interfere with that student’s ability to function in this course it is the responsibility of that student to notify the instructor at the beginning of the course.”