

The Art of Character Voice Acting

Course Syllabus

This class introduces students to the craft of character voice acting through practical exercises, script work, mock auditions, and guided exploration of the voiceover field. Students will learn how to create memorable character voices, analyze scripts, build strong reads, and make clear choices behind the mic.

Course Units

1. Signature Sounds: Identifying Character

What makes a character voice memorable, specific, and fun? Students will explore tools for finding strong vocal “silhouettes” and creating distinct character sounds. Through vocal play and guided exercises, students will experiment with range, resonance, dialect, rhythm, placement, and attitude. The class will also introduce the idea of a “character engine,” the central force that drives how a character thinks, feels, moves, and speaks.

2. Mapping an Emotional Path: Script Analysis

Strong character work begins with the script. Students will learn how to analyze sides, identify playable choices, and map a clear emotional path through a scene. This unit focuses on how to move from words on the page to a specific, active, and connected performance.

3. Playing Through the Frame of the Voice

Voice actors must communicate a full performance through their voice alone. Students will explore how to vocally play physical action, emotional choices, environment, timing, comedy and more. This unit helps students understand how to “frame” a character vocally, so the performance feels alive, specific, and fully embodied behind the mic.

4. Understanding the Character Voiceover Landscape

Students will be introduced to the range of character voice acting work today, including animation, video games, scripted podcasts, commercial work, and other audio-based performance. The class will explore where different kinds of character work live, what kinds of roles students may be drawn to, and how to begin understanding where their own voice may fit within the field.

5. Audition Technique

Students will get practical experience building reads from the ground up through mock auditions using real animation sides. This unit focuses on making strong choices quickly, understanding audition expectations, and developing the confidence to deliver clear, specific, and flexible character reads.

6. Narration and Commercial Work for the Character Voice Actor

Even for character actors, a foundation in narration and commercial voiceover can help students build strong habits behind the mic and better understand the broader voiceover field. Students will explore how clarity, pacing, tone, and connection support both character work and more practical voiceover reads.

7. Resource Library

Students will receive selected materials curated by Jake to support the work covered in class, including examples of actors working in the booth, listening samples from current shows and audio projects, and reference materials connected to the course units.

Students Will Explore

By the end of the class, students will have explored:

- Character voice creation
- Script analysis
- Emotional mapping
- Vocal range and texture
- The mechanics of character
- Physical action through the voice
- The building blocks of comedy
- Mock audition technique
- Animation, video games, scripted podcasts, narration, and commercial voiceover
- Curated examples and reference materials connected to class work