

**JUNIOR ACCENTS**  
**SYLLABUS**  
**NATALIE M. BAKER**  
**Associate Professor of Voice and Speech**  
**CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF DRAMA**  
**Fall 1999**

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\*NBAB is *Natalie Baker's Accent Book*

**Week of**

**Aug. 23**

Mon. University orientation: no classes

Wed. **The Five Accents for Study: Italian, French, German, Yiddish, Spanish**

Everyone speaks a dialect. Our study begins with the Idiolect (personal dialect), proceeds to the dialect (an abstraction) and finally the accent (distinctive pronunciation as a result of dealing with a different language).

The Actor's goal: mutual intelligibility through authenticity, consistency and linguistic variabilities, clarity, subtlety - all constituting the technique for accent acquisition.

Presenting the Actor's Checklist for Accent Acquisition

The **Italian Accent Introduction:** musical patterning audio and video tapes  
Summary of important phonetic changes and substitutions

*NBAB* Pages 1-21 **Italian Accent** practice words, grammar changes, sentence exercises, monologues, plays, film references

**Aug.30**

Mon. **Italian** singing, counting, improvisation

Practice Piece typical expressions

Wed grammar changes marking sound changes in monologues

**Sept. 6**

Mon. Labor Day no classes

Wed. **Italian** working the monologues improvisation

**Sept. 13**

Mon. practice presentation of monologues with feedback

Wed. taping **Italian Accent** monologues plus student's own

QUIZ **Italian Accent**

The **French Accent** musical patterning audio and video tapes  
Summary of important phonetic changes and substitutions

*NBAB* exercises, Pages 22-41 **French Accent** practice words, grammar changes, sentence monologues, plays, film references

page 2/Jr. Accents

**Sept. 20**

Mon. **French** singing, counting, improvisation

Practice Piece typical expressions

Wed **French** grammar changes marking sound changes in monologues

**Sept. 27**

Mon. **French** working the monologues improvisation  
practice presentation of monologues with feedback Wed.

**Oct. 4**

Mon. taping **French Accent** monologues plus student's own  
QUIZ **French Accent**

The **German Accent** musical patterning audio and video tapes  
Summary of important phonetic changes and substitutions

*NBAB* Pages 42-63 The Music, Summary of Important Changes and Substitutions,  
Practice Words, Grammar Changes, Sentence Exercises, Monologues, Plays, Film  
References

Wed. **German Accent** singing, counting, improvisation  
Practice Piece typical expressions

**Oct. 11**

Mon. Mid semester break no classes

Wed **German** grammar changes marking sound changes in monologues

**Oct. 18**

Mon. **German** working the monologues improvisation  
Wed. practice presentation of monologues with feedback

**Oct. 25**

Mon. taping **German Accent** monologues plus student's own  
QUIZ **German Accent**

The **Yiddish Accent** musical patterning audio and video tapes  
Summary of important phonetic changes and substitutions

*NBAB* Pages 63-79 The Music, Summary of Important Changes and Substitutions,  
Practice Words, Grammar Changes, Sentence Exercises, Monologues, Plays, Film  
References

Wed. **Yiddish** singing, counting, improvisation  
Practice Piece typical expressions

**Nov. 1**

Mon. **Yiddish** grammar changes marking sound changes in monologues

Wed. **Yiddish** working the monologues improvisation

page 3/Jr.Accents

**Nov. 8**

Mon. practice presentation of monologues with feedback  
Wed. taping **Yiddish Accent** monologues plus student's own  
QUIZ **Yiddish Accent**

The **Spanish Accent** musical patterning audio and video tapes  
Summary of important phonetic changes and substitutions

*NBAB* Pages 80-91 The Music, Summary of Important Changes and Substitutions,  
Practice Words, Grammar Changes, Sentence Exercises, Monologues, Plays, Film  
References

Wed. **Spanish** singing, counting, improvisation

Practice Piece typical expressions

**Nov. 15**

Mon. **Spanish** grammar changes marking sound changes in monologues  
Wed. **Spanish** working the monologues improvisation

**Nov. 22**

Mon. practice presentation of monologues with feedback  
Wed. Thanksgiving Holiday no classes

**Nov. 29**

Mon.. taping **Spanish Accent** monologues plus student's own  
QUIZ **Spanish Accent**

Wed. **Review for Final:** Presentation all accents monologues and Improvisation

**DATE OF TAPING FOR FINAL TBA**

**JUNIOR ACCENTS**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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**Course Description**

Junior accents is a one semester exploration of the Italian, French, Spanish, German and Yiddish accents of English. Students are presented with a systematic analysis of each, which includes the particular properties of tempo, pitch, intonational patterning and the phonetic substitutions for all major sound changes. The students will then be drilled in pronunciation and be required to duplicate sounds and eventually deliver monologues as well as improvise in the accents.

## **Goals**

Students will appreciate the necessity of a phonetic approach to the study of accents as well as a musical process. At all times, all effort is to be directed toward mutual intelligibility for actor and audience. Each accent must grow out of the characterization, hence the work is systematically applied to monologues by recognized playwrights. The sound must have authenticity, focus, clarity, subtlety and naturalness. The students will practice the consistency of fundamental sound changes while also investigating linguistic variables for authenticity. The process will be useful for acquiring any accent or dialect.

## **Procedure**

The technique of accents acquisition involves consistent work ethic and thoughtful practice habits, such as one needs to learn a foreign language. Students will consider geography, culture, musicality, vowel, diphthong and consonant changes, grammatical and word order differences. Classes will introduce musical notation and phonetics as well as songs, typical expressions in the mother tongue and monologues from plays, written in English. Natalie Baker's Web Site will contain audio examples of "real people" using the various accents. Audio and video tapes will be used in class. Students will be required to imitate sounds as well as to transcribe them phonetically.

Representative monologues will be presented and initially taped for critique. Students will also be required to improvise in the accent and to present monologues of their own choosing for final exam. Ultimately, students are taught a method for analyzing any script for a dialect play and particularizing the sounds for a specific character.

junior accents course description/2

## **Instructions to Students**

Bring to class every time:

- Workbook: *Natalie Baker's Accent Book*
- Notebook to organize and keep all materials pertaining to the five accents monologues, critiques
- pocket mirror
- #2 pencils sharpened

Purchase a 30 minute tape for recording your presentation of each accent. N. Baker will keep this until the end of the semester.

## **Attendance**

There are twenty-seven class meetings due to the following holidays:

August 23	Orientation meetings
September 6	Labor Day
October 11	Midterm Break
November 24	Thanksgiving Holiday

In order to meet our ambitious schedule, it is important for you to attend every class meeting. Unexcused absences will have an adverse effect on your grade as will more than two absences for any reason. Lateness will not be tolerated.

### **Grading**

A = superior  
B = very good  
C = mediocre  
D = poor quality

50% sounding of the accents--authentic, clear, subtle, as is evidenced in each individual taping of each accent , with improvement after feedback  
20% class participation, improvisation, quizzes  
30% final presentation ( all 5 accents with two monologues for each )