

## Amy Lee

I'll admit that I went into the "Discovery of Sound and the Human Voice" lecture a little annoyed. However, I ended up really enjoying the discussion and thinking more deeply about how critical speech is in everyday life. Compared to the previous lectures that I attended at Assumption this year, I'd have to say that the Discovery of Sound lecture was my favorite because it pertained more to my major, my hobbies, and my interests.

During the lecture, I began to realize how much of what the experts discussed could connect to my life personally. I learned that ear tubes impact the tympanic membrane, which I didn't know, even though my brother and my cousin had ear tubes growing up. The professor that focused on how speech and sound impact singing voices mentioned how singers aim to use the respiratory system, specifically the diaphragm, without any push as to not damage it. Funnily enough, my best friend (who is a very talented singer) had just mentioned how her voice felt "pushy" as we practiced our auditions for the school musical. The discussions about Broca's and Wernicke's areas connected to the sensation and perception units from my high school and college psychology classes.

Additionally, I really enjoyed hearing about the cognitive impact of sound. I am currently taking Biology: Matter and Mysteries of the Brain and a lot of what the presenter explained related to the subject matter from that course. I learned that hair cells in the ear transfer ions, which then convert into neurotransmitters, to send signals to the brain. This information emphasized to me how different sounds can trigger different emotions. The speakers then reinforced this message by giving a demonstration of how speaking poetry vs. singing poetry can impact the brain differently. I really think the speakers exemplified how to look at the same idea across disciplines (what a great example of *universitas!*) while appealing to a wide range of student interests.

Another important takeaway from this lecture was how society underappreciates speech. The presenters kept commenting how amazing it is that we can speak to each other and understand each other. Growing up with a brother with Down Syndrome, I always found it frustrating that other people didn't have a difficult time understanding their siblings. I felt like they took this basic ability, which to me seems like a luxury, for granted. In the lecture, I think the experts did a great job of highlighting how much a person's voice and speech contribute to their personality, identification, and how others perceive them. I wish more people realized that the inhibition of speech also inhibits communication, social interaction, and learning.

Overall, I think the lecture engaged Assumption students by being more interactive and appealing to more groups of students (who differ across major, career aspirations, and extracurricular interests) than previous presentations.

## **Brayden Ingram**

The foundations lecture on Discover the Sound in the Human Voice was quite interesting. I never knew the science behind how the human vocal cords, ear drums, and mind work together to allow speech to be possible. There is a lot going on in split seconds that one's body automatically does without thinking. There is a high level of abstraction in how speech works. The speakers were able to fill an hour lecture on something that happens within hundredths of a second, showing how complex the interaction is. I find it fascinating that humans are born able to do these things without being taught, showing how complex the human is. It also made me think of how perfect everything works out for us to be able to know speech. This reminded of last semester in and Thomas Aquinas' 5 Ways, specifically by order. The design that we are all born with that allows us to understand speech works so perfectly that the odds that this could happen by chance seem very low. An intelligent being must have designed humans for them to be able to interpret speech, essentially since it is different compared to all other animals.

I thought it was also interesting to learn the differences in the speech versus singing aspects of our voices. I never thought about how much it differed, as once again, it's something that happens naturally with not much thought behind it. The comparison of the reading of the poem and the singing of the poem, along with singing and speaking solstice in the poem, was a great way to highlight the similarities and comparisons of the two. I also found it helpful that they included ways to help protect our voices as it is such a valuable tool to humans. I've never considered how the way I communicate and how often I talk could contribute to the damage to my voice. It was good to hear techniques that could help preserve our voices and keep them healthy.

Overall, I much preferred this lecture to the previous semesters lecture. The topic felt more relevant and was easier to follow. It applies to everyone in the room, as everyone utilizes speech every day. I enjoyed this lecture and would like something more along these lines for the future foundations lectures.