CHORAL CONDUCTING I
MUP 356 Syllabus
Stephen F. Austin State University
School of Music
Fall 2018

Instructor: Dr. Michael Murphy
Office: M126A
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 10:00-11:00 a.m., or by appointment
Office phone: 936.468.1181
Office email: murphymt2@sfasu.edu
Class Meeting Times: Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-10:45 a.m., M125

REQUIRED MATERIALS
- Conducting baton (weighted - order through Premier baton) please wait to purchase
- Metronome
- Full length mirror
- Colored pencils
- Video recording device

CATALOG DESCRIPTION
The choral conducting curriculum focuses on four major areas:
1. The development of basic competencies in choral conducting technique
2. The development of verbal and non-verbal communication in the rehearsal setting
3. The study of choral repertoire representative of various styles periods with emphasis on analysis and interpretation

COURSE OBJECTIVES
This course will guice the student in the exploration of pedagogical practices associated with choral conducting. Students will demonstrate:

1. A clear, efficient, and expressive conducting technique
2. A knowledge of representative choral works selected from the major style and periods and genres
3. An ability to interpret with stylistic understanding various forms and styles of choral compositions
4. An ability to independently study and prepare a score for rehearsal and performance
5. An ability to sequence learning and plan for rehearsal
6. An ability to express musical ideas through gesture; an ability to respond in rehearsal to the choir’s performance; and an ability to deliver clear, concise verbal directions
7. An ability to choose appropriate non-verbal cues to shape and develop choral sound
8. Observation and self-observation techniques
9. Error detection and prescriptive skills
10. A proficiency in conducting patterns and gestures (e.g. preparatory exercises, basic beat patterns, cueing and release gestures, fermatas, mixed meters, asymmetrical meters, gradual changes in tempo, dynamics, and articulation contrasts)

11. To broaden gesture vocabulary

12. Facility using each gesture with intent not habit

13. Become an active observer in your ensemble rehearsals (responding to conductors’ directives, thinking about conductors’ decisions, both gestural and musical, during rehearsal)

ASSESSMENT
Several types of assessment are used in this course:

1. Self-analysis and reflection form
2. Faculty analysis and feedback through observation
3. Demonstration of competency in textbook, projects, written assignments, and other assigned readings

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
Score study, listening, rehearsal planning, conducting competencies, preparation for class (readings), aural analysis and error detection competencies, self-evaluations of personal conducting video segments, teacher evaluation of demonstrated conducting and rehearsal skills.

Academic Work:
1. All work must be typed (12 font, Times New Roman, Double Spaced) with the exception of in-class assignments
2. To receive full credit, all assignments must be completed and submitted in class on the due date. Late work will be accepted no later than 5:00 p.m. on the next class meeting, and will carry a deduction of 10 points
3. Keep copies of all submitted and returned work
4. Attend class, have a fun and positive disposition

COURSE GRADING
Course grading is contingent upon 1) conducting/music competencies, 2) video self-reflections, 3) score studies 4) chapter questions, 4) mid-term, 5) final exam, 6) middle school choir clinic (September 15 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)

GRADING SCALE (before complaining about a grade, honestly ask yourself which grade you deserve based on the work you put in your weekly assignments, mid-term, and final semester grade)

90 – 100% = A
EXCELLENT = Considerable evidence of practice and preparation for class; demonstrated outstanding capacity to analyze and synthesize; outstanding grasp of conducting/music competencies; commitment to attendance is noteworthy

80 – 89% = B

GOOD = Evidence of practice and preparation for class; some evidence of critical capacity and analytical ability; to analyze and synthesize; reasonable understanding of conducting/music competencies; commitment to attendance. Evidence of familiarity with the literature.

70 – 79% = C

SATISFACTORY = Evidence of some understanding of conducting/music competencies, subject matter, practice, and preparation for class; benefiting from his/her university experience by attending class most of the time.

60 – 69% = D

MARGINAL = Evidence of minimally acceptable familiarity with conducting/music competencies and/or subject matter; minimum practice and preparation for class; minimum effort in attendance.

59% or lower = F

INADEQUATE = Insufficient evidence of understanding of conducting/music competencies and/or subject matter, no commitment to attendance, consistent practice, and preparation; weakness in critical and analytical skills.

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance
There are no excused versus unexcused absences for this course. Each student is permitted three (3) absences to be used at the student’s discretion and may be used for any reason. Tardies/early departures accumulate and become absences (3 tardies/early departures = 1 absence). An absence does not mitigate the student’s responsibility for course content, work due or work assigned on the day of an absence. In the event of a chronic illness or family emergencies that demand excessive absences or missing work, it is recommended that a student seek a withdrawal from the course. NO incompletes will be given!

Professional Behavior
This includes preparedness for class, on-time attendance, participation in all discussions and/or activities.
STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations.

Calendar

* Instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule as needed

Conductors, please mark your calendars to attend the All-Region Middle School Choir Clinic on Saturday, September 15 arrive at 8:00 a.m. and dismiss at 4:30 p.m. (Sing and observe with choir) Attendance required

Week 1 (August 28, 30)

Tuesday

Syllabus
Introductions/Fun Time!
  • Scotland’s Burning
  • Malko Conducting exercises

Thursday
Fundamentals
  • Malko Conducting exercises
  • Warming-up the body exercises
  • Posture
  • Hand position
  • Basic patterns (2, 3, 4)

Due: Read Chapter 1 “Inspiration” Conducting Technique pp. 3-6 and Chapter 2 “Other Studies” Conducting Technique pp. 7-12
Answer the following questions:
1. What musical and leadership qualities do you think make an effective conductor?
2. Why do you think it is important to develop a clear and efficient conducting technique?
3. What is the greatest indicator of success in this class: The information presented by the professor or the regular and consistent practice of the student? Why?
Week 2 (September 4, 6)

Tuesday

Fundamentals (continued)
- Warming-up the body
- Posture
- Hand position
- Basic patterns (2, 3, 4)
- Preparatory gestures

Due: Read Chapter 3 Conducting Technique – General pp. 9-12, Chapter 5 Odds and Ends pp. 15-16, and Chapter 6 Beat Patterns -Theory pp. 16-22, Chapter 7 Beat Patterns – Specific pp. 22-34
  Answer the following questions:
  1. Should one bend the knees when conducting? Why or why not?
  2. Should one conduct the beats or the rhythms? Why?
  3. Submit video demonstrating competencies in conducting 2, 3, 4 patterns. Set metronome to 80 to the beat and conduct patterns in the articulations of legato, marcato, and staccato.

Thursday

Introduce Conducting lesson 1
Gustav Holst – “I Vow to Thee, My Country”

Due: Read Chapter 10 Cues pp. 46-50 and Chapter 11 Off-Beat Cues, Accents, and Syncopations pp. 50-54
  Answer the following questions:
  1. What does the author mean when he says, “Cues should never be used to show a performer when to come in?”
  2. When should one cue?
  3. When should you not cue?

Week 3 (September 11, 13, 15)

Tuesday
Conducting lesson 1- Unison selection – Gustav Holst – “I Vow to Thee, My Country” (Group 1)
Thursday
Conducting lesson 1 - Unison selection – Gustav Holst – “I Vow to Thee, My Country” (Group 2)

Saturday
All-Region Middle School Choir Clinic 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. (Observe and sing with Choir)

Week 4 (September 18, 20)

Tuesday
Cues and releases

Due: Reflection on Conducting 1 – “I Vow to Thee, My Country”

Thursday
Fermatas

Due: Read Chapter 17 Fermatas pp. 85-90
   Answer the following questions:
   1. How many types of fermatas does the book outline? Provide a brief synopsis of each fermata.
      2. Is it permissible to have a new tempo after a fermata? Explain.

Introduce Conducting lesson 2 - Conduct chorale demonstrating all three types of fermatas
Conduct chorale “O Sacred Head Now Wounded” demonstrating all three types of fermatas

Week 5 (September 25, 27)

Tuesday
Conducting lesson 2 – Bach Chorale - demonstrating all three types of fermatas (Group 2)

Thursday
Conducting lesson 2 – Bach Chorale - demonstrating all three types of fermatas (Group 1)

Week 6 (October 2, 4)

Tuesday
Dynamics
Melded Gesture
Left Hand/Independence of Hands
Sustain and Release
Due: Reflection on Conducting fermatas

Thursday
Due: Read Chapter 8 The Left Hand pp. 37-38 and Chapter 9 Dynamics, Accents, Phrasing, Tempo, Character pp. 39-46
   Answer the following questions:
   1. What are the schools of thought regarding the use of the left hand?
   2. When the left hand is not in use, what should you do with it?
   3. How do you show marcato and staccato?

Week 7 (October 9, 11)

Tuesday
Score Study

Pass out musical terms

Thursday

Mid-term on musical terms

Week 8 (October 16, 18)

Tuesday
Introduce 5, 6, 7 meters
Compound meters 6/8, 9/8, 12/8
Introduce Conducting lesson 3 “Call to Worship” – Daniel Moe

Thursday
Conduct assignment 3 for grade (Group 1)

Week 9 (October 23, 25)

Tuesday
Conduct assignment 3 for grade (Group 2)

Tuesday
Make-up day
Due: Reflection on Conducting mixed meter
Week 10 (October 30, November 1)

Tuesday
Introduce conducting assignment 4 - TBA

Thursday
Conduct assignment 4 for grade (Group 1)

Week 11 (November 6, 8)

Tuesday
Conduct assignment 4 for grade (Group 2)

Thursday
Conduct assignment 4 for grade (Group 3)

Week 12 (November 13, 15)

Tuesday
Introduce conducting assignment 5 – TBA

Due: Reflection on conducting assignment 4

Thursday
Conduct assignment 5 for grade (Group 2)

Week 13 (November 20, 22)

Tuesday
No class – Thanksgiving holiday

Thursday
No class – Thanksgiving holiday

Week 14 (November 27, 29)

Tuesday
Conduct assignment 5 for grade (Group 3)

Thursday
Conduct assignment 5 for grade (Group 2)

Introduce final exam

Week 15 (December 4, 6)

Tuesday
Practice final exam

Due: Reflection on conducting assignment 5

Thursday
Practice final exam/Make-up day

Final exam -
Conduct final exam - Tuesday, December 11 8:00-10:00 a.m.
Deck the Halls (in 7/8) - James McKelvey