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

Instructor: Dr. Tod Fish
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Class Meeting Times: Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 - 10:45 a.m. (Band Hall)

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- McElheran, Brock. Conducting Technique: For Beginners and Professionals (revised edition)
- Conducting baton (weighted - order through Premier baton) please wait to purchase
- Metronome (a phone app is fine)
- 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 guide 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. Video Skill Tests
3. YouTube Watch Analyses
4. Faculty analysis and feedback through observation
5. Demonstration of competency in textbook, projects, written assignments, and other assigned readings

* The workload for this course is strenuous, and all assignments are in the syllabus. Read it often. The purpose of this class is to teach the techniques and analytical skills applicable to the conducting craft. Perfecting your technique requires perfect practice; therefore, many assessments will ensure steady growth and progress. There will be no busy work. Each assignment will pragmatically improve the skills of a young conductor. Students only get two semesters to study conducting. Make them count!

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
Score study, listening, rehearsal planning, conducting competencies, preparation for class (reading), 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) weekly written assignments, 4) mid-term, 5) final exam, 6) middle school choir clinic (September 19 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)

***VIDEOS ARE DUE AT 11 PM ON SUNDAY NIGHT POINTS WILL BE TAKEN OFF FOR BEING LATE***

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

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)
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

Poor = 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 two (2) 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 incomplete grades 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 accommodations and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations.

TIME REQUIREMENTS
MUP 356 (3 credits) is a requirement for undergraduate vocal/choral area music majors and minors. As with any academic class, the young academicians must spend sufficient time in preparation outside of class to acquire the skills necessary to build their conducting technique. The students will need to spend time on a weekly basis to build coordination and fluidity that will be used in their future as professional conductors. While this cannot be easily separated from the time necessary to be proficient in this class, the students are expected to spend a minimum of six hours a week to be prepared for the Tuesday/Thursday class meetings.
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 14 arrive at 8:00 a.m. and dismiss at 4:30 p.m. (Sing and observe with choir) Attendance required

**Week 1 (August 27, 29)**

**Tuesday**
Syllabus
Introductions
Conducting expression exercises
Introduce Malko
Introduce the preparatory beat (upbeat only)

**DUE THURSDAY, AUGUST 29**

YouTube Watch - Leonard Bernstein: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAgvo-FslJo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAgvo-FslJo)
QUESTIONS 2 - 5 PERTAIN TO EVERY YOUTUBE WATCH ASSIGNMENT

1. Only listen to the first 5 minutes!
2. Start with the sound off. Describe the character or what you SEE!
3. Turn the sound on now. Does the music SOUND the way the conductor LOOKS?
4. Explain how the gesture conveys the musical thought.
5. Discuss the clarity or the lack thereof in the conducting gesture
6. Does the clarity or lack of clarity in the pattern matter to the overall effect?

**Thursday (Lecture 1)**

Turn in Bernstein YouTube watch answers

Fundamentals
- Malko (Exercise 1)
- Posture (gestalt)
- Hand position
- Basic patterns (2,3,4)
- Preparatory gestures
- Practice these for the next class

**SUNDAY ASSIGNMENT: Malko performance (Exercise 1) - Up and down only**

Items assessed: Wrist fluidity, proper usage of space throughout the exercise, smoothness of gesture. *Due Sunday by 11:00 PM!*

**Week 2 (September 3, 5)**

**Tuesday (Lecture 2)**

Fundamentals (continued)
- Malko (introduce mixtures of directions)
- Reinforce Posture (gestalt)
- Hand position
- Introduce Baton
- Basic patterns reinforced (2,3,4)
- **Introduce left hand cues - Left Hand Cue Sheets 1,2 & 3**
- Preparatory gestures
DUE THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5
YouTube Watch - d’Alondra de la Parra: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfKBfH0g_Hc
MUTE THE SOUND
SAME QUESTIONS PERTAIN

Thursday (Lecture 3)
Turn in Maestra de la Parra YouTube watch questions
Fundamentals (reinforce baton)
Malko (chart)
Gestalt
Hand/Baton position
Basic patterns (2,3,4 review)
Video Quiz due Sunday at 11 PM: Malko Exercise 2 and basic patterns 2, 3, 4

Week 3 (September 10, 12, 15)
Tuesday (Lecture 4)
Conducting lesson - Perform 2,3,4 patterns for class
Group 1 - Each student will receive 6 minutes to sample conducting and take suggestions from the class
Malko Exercise 3
YouTube Watch Analysis: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYnqU4AJvtA&t=691s
You will watch 6:35 - 11:27 - Sir Thomas Beachum - watch, listen, and learn

Thursday (Lecture 5)
Conducting lesson - Group 2
YouTube watch due over Sir Thomas Beachum
Video is due Sunday at 11 PM: Malko Exercise 3 and Left Hand Cue Sheets 2 & 3
ALL-REGION CHOIR CLINIC SATURDAY
All-Region Middle School Choir Clinic 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. (Observe and sing with Choir)

Week 4 (September 17, 19)
Tuesday (Lecture 6)
Malko Exercise 4
Introduce Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
Introduce cues and releases
YouTube Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HV4OvHqD1Yw Masters Conducting Student at USC
Analysis questions pertains

Thursday (Lecture 7)
Reinforce Malko Exercise 4
Each conductor gets a five-minute chance to conduct the group on JJWAT
Video Quiz Due Sunday at 11 PM - Sing Joyful while conducting, Malko Exercise 4, and Left Hand Cue Sheet 1

Week 5 (September 24, 26)
Tuesday (Lecture 8)
JJWAT TEST - Conduct the choir
You will be graded on your clarity of pattern, steadiness of tempo, ability to lead the ensemble with your pattern
Introduce Fermatas: Lift, Caesura, and Carryover *Fermata Sheet*
YouTube Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NV4YfN09Tae Undergraduate student at Ithaca College
Thursday (Lecture 9)
Turn in YouTube Watch: Ithaca College Undergrad
Pass out Bach Chorale with fermata formula

Work to reinforce fermatas with chorale

**Week 6 (October 1, 3)**

**Tuesday (Lecture 10)**
YouTube Watch: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHqtJH2fTYY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHqtJH2fTYY) ONLY FIRST 4 MINUTES - Gustavo Dudamel

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

**Thursday (Lecture 11)**

Turn in YouTube Watch

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

SUNDAY VIDEO DUE at 11 PM: Speak the text to the Bach Chorale and demonstrate the different fermatas

**Week 7 (October 8, 10)**

**Tuesday (Lecture 12)**

Fermata Test - Each Conductor will direct the choir and clearly display the performance of the three types of fermata

NO YOUTUBE WATCH ASSIGNMENT

**Thursday (Lecture 13)**

Mid-term on conducting terminology

NO SUNDAY ASSIGNMENT

**Week 8 (October 15, 17)**

**Tuesday (Lecture 14)**

YouTube Watch: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLKS3hCZ32E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLKS3hCZ32E) Andres Kaljuste

Mixed Meter (2, 3, 4 patterns)

Simple Asymmetrical Rhythm Introduction (5/4 & 7/4)

Compound Symmetrical (3/8, 6/8, 9/8, 12/8) and Asymmetrical Meters (5/8 & 7/8)

**Thursday (Lecture 15)**

Turn in YouTube Watch

Review Mixed, Symmetrical, Asymmetrical, Simple, and Compound Meters

Pass out and work Deo Gracias - Leininger

Video Due 11 PM: Mixed and Asymmetrical Simple Meter, Mixed Meter Exercise 1, Symmetrical/Asymmetrical Meter

**Week 9 (October 22, 24)**

**Tuesday (Lecture 16)**

YouTube Watch: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MY0P3UKFXC8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MY0P3UKFXC8) Herbert von Karajan

Quick Review Compound Symmetrical/Asymmetrical Meters

Each Person in the class gets five minutes to conduct Deo Gracias

Articulation Exercise - Pass out sheet
Thursday (Lecture 17)
Turn in YouTube Watch
Class conducts Deo Gracias for a grade (you must record this as you will have a self-evaluation due at the time of class on Tuesday, 10/29)
Articulation Exercise
Introduce Rutter
Sunday Video Due 11 PM: Articulation Exercise, Rutter (with recording)

Week 10 (October 29, 31)
Tuesday (Lecture 18)
YouTube Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pMUJ2FPcCK Allen Hightower in class for discussion
Deo Gracias - We will practice it as a group and then each student will get the chance to conduct
Everyone is responsible for making a video of this conducting sample

Thursday (Lecture 19)
TBD

DUE TUESDAY, Nov. 10!!! Self-Evaluation Assignment: Please discuss the progress made between the videos on Tuesday and Thursday. Things to discuss: Clarity of pattern, fluidity between mixed meters, steadiness of tempo, eye contact with ensemble, clarity of cues (do not be too hard on yourselves, please!)

Week 11 (November 5, 7)
Tuesday (Lecture 20)
NO YOUTUBE WATCH
I VOW TO THEE, MY COUNTRY
How can they help us teach/conduct the piece?
What is the purpose of score study?
Analyzing Your Score - Gordon Lamb
Melody
Harmony
Rhythm
Examining Parts
Text
Texture
Turn in Analysis of these elements on Thursday

Thursday (Lecture 21)
Conduct I VOW TO THEE, MY COUNTRY
GROUP 1
Sunday Video Due 11 PM: Conducting and singing IVTTMC - Sing lyrically and musically

Week 12 (November 12, 14)
Tuesday (Lecture 22)
Conduct I VOW TO THEE, MY COUNTRY
Group 2

Thursday
Conducting Skills Test: Conduct Class on IVTTMC (Holst)
Introduce materials for Final Exam
Week 13 (November 19, 21)
YouTube Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTM7E4-DN0o Christian Thielemann
Conduct assignment 4 for grade (Group 1)

Thursday
Turn in YouTube Watch
Introduce final exam (Kitchen Sink)

Week 14 (November 27, 29)
THANKSGIVING BREAK!!!

Week 15 (December 3, 5)

Tuesday
YouTube Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cad8vC85oJs Christopher Rountree
Practice final exam materials -

Thursday
Practice final exam materials
VIDEO ASSIGNMENT DUE 11:00: You will perform five exercises that have been worked on over the course of the semester.
You will know at the end of class this day

Final exam -
Conduct final exam - Tuesday, December 10 8:00-10:00 a.m.
PERFORMANCE EXAM - CONDUCTING CLASS
“KITCHEN SINK”
O SACRED HEAD WITH EACH STUDENT HAVING DIFFERENT FERMATA REQUIREMENTS
MIXED METER EXERCISE