CHORAL CONDUCTING I  
MUAP 3356 Syllabus  
Stephen F. Austin State University  
School of Music  
Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. Tod Fish  
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Office Hours: By Appointment  
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Cell: 936.234.0930 (emergency only)  
Class Meeting Times: Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 - 10:45 a.m. (Band Hall)

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- 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. Terms Quizzes
5. Faculty analysis and feedback through observation
6. 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

***VIDEOS ARE DUE by 11:59 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
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; benefitting 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!

ADDENDUM: Due to the extenuating circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, I will be flexible concerning attendance.

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

**Week 1 (August 25, 27)**

**Tuesday**

Syllabus

Introductions

Conducting expression exercises

Introduce Malko

Introduce the 4-pattern and upbeat preparatory gesture

**DUE THURSDAY, AUGUST 27**

YouTube Watch - Leonard Bernstein: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAgvo-FslIo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAgvo-FslIo)

QUESTIONS 2 - 6 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 11:59 PM!*

**Week 2 (September 1, 3)**

**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 3**

YouTube Watch - d’Alondra de la Parra: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfKBFH0g_Hc](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

Malko (chart)

Gestalt

Hand/Baton position

Basic patterns (2,3,4 review)

Video Quiz due Sunday at 11:59 PM: **Malko Exercise 2 and basic patterns 2, 3, 4**

**Week 3 (September 8, 10)**

**Tuesday (Lecture 4)**

Conducting lesson - Perform 2,3,4 patterns for class

Group 1 - Each student will receive a 5-6 minutes to sample conducting and take suggestions from the class

**You must record this session and write a reflection that is due Tuesday, 9/15**

Malko Exercise 3

**Thursday (Lecture 5)**

Conducting lesson - Group 2

**You must record this session and write a reflection that is due Tuesday, 9/15**

YouTube watch due over Sir Thomas Beachum

Video is due Sunday at 11:59 PM: **Malko Exercise 3 and Left Hand Cue Sheets 2 & 3**

**Week 4 (September 15, 17)**

**Tuesday (Lecture 6)**

Reflection of 2,3,4 patterns in front of class due

Introduce *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee*

Introduce cues and releases

**Thursday (Lecture 7)**

Each conductor gets to conduct the group on JJWAT for FOUR minutes (please record)

One page reflection of your conducting is due Tuesday, 9/22

Video Quiz Due Sunday at 11:59 PM - **Sing Joyful while conducting and Left Hand Cue Sheet 1**

**Week 5 (September 22, 24)**

**Tuesday (Lecture 8)**

**Turn in reflection**

**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*

Pass out Bach Chorale with fermata formula

**Work to reinforce fermatas with chorale**
**Week 6 (September 29, October 1)**

**Tuesday (Lecture 10)**
YouTube Watch: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHqtJH2f1Yk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHqtJH2f1Yk) ONLY FIRST 4 MINUTES - Gustavo Dudamel

**Conducting lesson 2** – Bach Chorale - demonstrating all three types of fermatas (Group 2)
Record and write a reflection Due on 10/6

**Thursday (Lecture 11)**
Turn in YouTube Watch for Dudamel
**Conducting lesson 2** - Bach Chorale - demonstrating all three types of fermatas (Group 1)
Record and write a reflection Due on 10/6

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

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**Week 7 (October 6, 8)**

**Tuesday (Lecture 12)**
Fermata Test - Each Conductor will direct the choir and clearly display the performance of the three types of fermata

**Thursday (Lecture 13)**
Mid-term on conducting terminology
NO SUNDAY ASSIGNMENT

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**Week 8 (October 13, 15)**

**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 Compound Meter**

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**Week 9 (October 20, 22)**

**Tuesday (Lecture 16)**
YouTube Watch: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DY0P3UKFXC8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DY0P3UKFXC8) Herbert von Karajan
Quick Review Compound Symmetrical/Asymmetrical Meters
Work Deo Gracias as a group
Articulation Exercise - Pass out sheet

**Thursday (Lecture 17)**
Turn in YouTube Watch
Class conducts Deo Gracias for a grade - record - reflection due Tuesday, 10/27
Articulation Exercise
Introduce Rutter
Sunday Video Due 11 PM: Articulation Exercise, Rutter (with recording)
Week 10 (October 27, 29)
Tuesday (Lecture 18)
YouTube Watch: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pMUD2FPgCk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pMUD2FPgCk) Allen Hightower in class for discussion
Group 1 - Conduct Rutter for the class - with comments - Record - Reflection due Tuesday, 11/3

Thursday (Lecture 19)
Group 2 - Conduct Rutter for the class - with comments - Record - Reflection due Tuesday, 11/3

VIDEO PERFORMANCE OF RUTTER DUE 11:59 PM - SUNDAY

Week 11 (November 3, 5)
Tuesday (Lecture 20)
Christ We Do All Adore Thee - Dubois
How can they help us teach/conduct the piece?
What is the purpose of score study?
Analyzing Your Score
Melody
Harmony
Rhythm
Examining Parts
Text
Texture
Turn in Analysis of these elements on Thursday

Thursday (Lecture 21)
Work Through Dubois
Pass out “Kitchen Sink”

Week 12 (November 10, 12)
Tuesday (Lecture 22)
Conduct Dubois
Group 1 - Record - Reflection due Tuesday, 11/17

Thursday
Conduct Dubois
Group 2 - Record - Reflection due Thursday, 11/17
Discuss materials for Final Exam

Week 13 (November 17, 19)
Tuesday (Lecture 23)
Review Dubois and materials for the final examinations

Thursday (Lecture 24)
DUBOIS PERFORMANCE FINAL EXAMINATION

Week 14 (November 23-27)
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

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