

**Humboldt State University  
Department of Music**

**Syllabus**

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Office hours:  
Mon/Wed 2:00-3:00  
and by appointment

**Music 334 – Fundamentals of Conducting  
Fall 2017  
TR 11:00 – 12:20 / Room 109**

*“Technique is communication: the two words are synonymous in conductors.”  
~Leonard Bernstein*

**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the art and skill of conducting. Focus will be on the development and refinement of psychomotor skills, as well as non-verbal communication, body alignment, baton technique, conducting terminology, score reading, aural skills development, rehearsal planning, and leadership.

**Course Objectives**

- Develop basic conducting techniques utilizing a variety of meters, tempi and styles, including:
  - Constant tempo as well as *accelerando* and *ritardando*.
  - Simple and compound meters with appropriate patterns
  - *Staccato*, *legato*, *marcato*
  - Dynamic changes
  - Attacks, releases (*cutoffs*), preparations, *fermatas*, changing meters, and subdivided beats
  - Proper use of baton
- Demonstrate knowledge of proper physical alignment
- Demonstrate knowledge of conducting terminology
- Acquire a repertoire of basic physical gestures of the right and left hands
- Develop non-verbal methods of communication.
- Increase basic musical skills and terminology, including aural skills, error detection and score study.
- Explore and develop leadership skills, confidence and awareness on the podium.
- Develop effective self-evaluation skills.

## **Required Materials**

- Phillips, Kenneth H., *Basic Techniques of Conducting*
- Baton
- Metronome

## **Expectations**

Students are expected to attend class regularly and on time, practice daily, participate fully in class activities, complete assigned homework and exams successfully, and possess an open mind and a constant willingness to learn.

## **Attendance**

The presence and class participation of each individual is essential for individual and collective progress. Attendance at all class meetings is mandatory. Three absences may accrue without consequence. For each unexcused absence thereafter, your final grade will be lowered one third of a grade (i.e. B to B-). Extenuating circumstances such as serious illness, death in the family, etc. are considered on a case-by-case basis. Missing more than seven classes for any reason will result in a failing grade. Punctuality and professional behavior are essential to your success as a student, future teacher and future conductor. For every two classes you are late, it will equal one absence.

## **Course Projects**

- Individual Conducting Self-Evaluation: You will evaluate your own conducting through watching videos of yourself conducting in class and/or conducting in a mirror and doing a critique.
- Conducting Class Ensemble: You will conduct and play or sing in the ensemble comprised of the students in the class throughout the semester.
- YouTube Video Conducting Observations
- Live Rehearsal Observations – You will observe conductors of ensembles and write up your observations. You must observe two ensembles other than the ones in which you perform (one instrumental, one choral). Extra Credit: Observe and write up two additional ensembles (up to 5%).

## **Grading**

Daily Conducting Assignments and Participation, Homework and Quizzes – 40%, YouTube Conductor Observations – 10%, Rehearsal Observations – 10%, Conducting Exams – 40%,  
Grading Scale: A - 90%-100%; B - 80%-89%; C - 70%-79%; D- 60%-69%; F - 59%-below

Content of this syllabus is subject to change with reasonable notice.

**~A Note about Physical Health~**

Your body is critical to your success as a conductor and musician. Please take care of it! It is very easy to injure yourself as a musician through lack of knowledge or awareness and/or physical overuse. This class will help you start to become aware of how to help yourself in this regard, and you are encouraged to deepen that awareness in your own practice and daily life. You are encouraged to ask questions and educate yourself on repetitive and overuse injuries. Please speak to me or go to the music department's website for helpful information.

**Diversity Statement**

I consider this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class.

**Please don't hesitate to seek out extra help!** Conducting is joyous and complex endeavor that requires consistent practice and self-evaluation. I am happy to guide you as you practice and develop your skills.

**Best wishes for an enjoyable and productive semester!  
I look forward to working with you.**

*“To achieve great things, two things are needed: a plan, and not quite enough time.”  
~Leonard Bernstein*

**Syllabus addendum on HSU policies:**

Students have rights and responsibilities at HSU and there are many resources on campus to help students succeed. The link below includes information about Add/Drop Policy, Resources for Students with Disabilities, Academic Honesty Policy, Attendance and Disruptive Behavior Policy, Financial Aid, Emergency Procedures, and Counseling and Psychological Services. <http://www2.humboldt.edu/academicprograms/syllabus-addendum-campus-resou...>

**Course SLOs:**

1. Students will be able to demonstrate effective and expressive conducting techniques – including those used for different dynamics, articulations, tempos, cut-offs, and cues.
2. Students will demonstrate understanding of terminology associated with conducting.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to prepare for and conduct effective rehearsals of both vocal and instrumental ensembles.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to read full choral, orchestral and band scores.

**Music Major SLOs:**

- Students will demonstrate the ability to hear, identify, and work conceptually with the elements of music – rhythm, melody, harmony, and structure.
- Students will demonstrate familiarity with, and an ability to perform a wide selection of musical literature representing principal eras, genres, and cultural sources.
- Students will demonstrate ability in performing areas appropriate to the student's needs, interests, and degree path.

**Fundamentals of Conducting Course Calendar – Fall 2017**  
*Calendar is subject to change with reasonable notice.*

	Tuesday	Thursday
Aug 22 & 24	Intro & Syllabus HW: Questionnaire & Read chapter 1 & 2	Chapter 2 Posture and Position Preparatory gesture Using the metronome
Aug 29 & 31	Ch 3 4-pattern Elements of the pattern Internal and Final releases	Chapter 4 4-pattern Varying the articulation Tempo Terminology
Sept 5 & 7	Chapter 5 Videotaping #1	Chapter 6 3-pattern 2-pattern Daily Dozen Dynamics Terminology
Sept 12 & 14	Chapter 7 Selecting a Baton Dynamic Changes	Chapter 8 Baton Grip Character terminology
Sept 19 & 21	Ch 9 Videotaping #2	Ch 10 1-pattern Midterm preparation Release on 1 Accent, articulation and connecting terms -
Sept 26 & 28	Ch 11 Release on beat 2 Entrance on a pickup note Midterm preparation	Ch 12 Videotaping #3
Oct 3 & 5	Ch 13 Videotaping #4	Ch 14 Midterm, part 1
Oct 10 & 12	Ch 15 Midterm, part 2	Ch 16 Left hand Circle drill
Oct 17 & 19	Ch 17 LH sustaining gestures Coordinating the 2 hands	Ch 18 LH strengthening techniques Repeat markings

Oct 24 & 26	Ch 19 Videotaping #5	Ch 20 Subdivision Cues Alto and tenor clefs
Oct 31 & Nov 2	Ch 21 Composer's intent Listener's response	Ch 22 Entrances on incomplete beats Transpositions: C & Bb
Nov 7 & 9	Ch 23 Videotaping #6	Ch 24 Fermatas Compound meters: 6, 9, 12 Transpositions: F, Eb, A
Nov 14 & 16	Ch 25 Asymmetric meters: 5 and 7 Changing meters	Ch 26 Videotaping #7
FALL BREAK!!		
Nov 28 & 30	Ch 27 Accents Tempo Alterations Section cues	Ch 28 Conducting synthesis 1
Dec 5 & 7	Ch 29 Conducting Synthesis 2	Ch 30 Videotaping #8
FINAL EXAM Tuesday, Dec. 12 ~ 10:20 AM – 12:10 PM		