

**Humboldt State University**  
**Department of Music**

**Syllabus**

**Music 384 – Advanced Choral Conducting and Literature**

Spring 2018  
11:00 – 12:20 pm, Music A, #109  
Office hours:  
Mon & Wed 2-3 pm and by appointment

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“Alas for those who never sing, but die with all their music in them.”  
– Oliver Wendell Holmes

**A Bit About This Course**

Welcome to Advanced Choral Conducting and Literature! In this course, you will expand upon the basic conducting patterns, gestures, and applications you were introduced to in MUS 334, Fundamentals of Conducting. Our work will focus on conducting choral repertoire and working with singers. You will also discuss, practice and implement rehearsal strategies for working with choirs. Furthermore, since many of you are prospective teachers, you will explore resources for locating, evaluating, and preparing musical literature for performance with school choirs.

We'll use the following course objectives to focus our work together. The following learning objectives can be a way to describe and name what you are learning this semester. You will:

- develop a deeper understanding of the choral conductor's role.
- refine your execution of the basic conducting patterns.
- develop effective body language and non-verbal forms of communication.
- demonstrate knowledge of proper physical alignment.
- develop and increase your repertoire of gestures with right and left hands for effective conducting of a variety of meters, tempi and styles.
- refine gestures for basic rhythmic, dynamic and articulation functions.
- achieve ease and grace in cueing.
- gain knowledge about the voice as an instrument, including the changing voice
- start to develop a knowledge of choral repertoire and skills to determine appropriateness of repertoire for various ages and skill levels.
- understand and practice basic score analysis for choral performance.
- practice basic rehearsal procedures, including leading warm-ups.
- begin to develop the fundamental ability to listen critically while conducting.
- begin to develop clear inner sound imagery and interpretive ideas.
- combine all of the above elements into dynamic conducting.

## **Required Texts and Materials**

- Fenton, Kevin. (2013) *Foundations of Choral Conducting*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. U Singers Publishers.
- Conable, Barbara. *The Structures and Movement of Breathing*. GIA.
- Adams, Charlotte. *Daily Workout for a Beautiful Voice – Singer’s Edition*. Santa Barbara Music Publishers.
- Metronome

## **How to Succeed in This Class**

- Attend class regularly and on time (see Attendance and Participation below).
- Practice daily.
- Participate fully in class activities, which include singing and playing the piano\*.
- Complete assigned homework, written work and exams successfully and on time.
- Possess an open mind and a constant willingness to learn.
- Be courteous to and supportive of your colleagues, both in and out of class.
- Phones should not be seen or heard in class (with the exception of occasional class-relevant purposes such as using a metronome). Texting is prohibited.

\*I realize that singing and/or playing the piano in front of others might be challenging for some of you. If some of these skills pose a challenge for you, I would encourage you to take some time to brush up. Have courage!

## **Attendance and Participation**

For your personal progress as well as the collective progress of the class, regular attendance and active participation are essential. Arriving late can be disruptive to the class activities, so punctual attendance at all class meetings is mandatory. If punctuality becomes a problem, your grade will be lowered. If you do not participate actively in class on a regular basis (you must be present to participate), your grade will be lowered. For each absence after three times, your final grade will be lowered by a third letter grade (for example, B to B-), with a maximum of six absences for a passing grade. Extenuating circumstances such as serious illness, death in the family, etc. will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **Final Exam**

There will be no written final exam. However, you are expected to come to the Final Exam time, Tuesday, May 8, 10:20 am -12:10 pm to finish final presentations. Punctuality is expected.

## **Late Assignments and Missed Exams/Presentations**

Late written work will be accepted with a penalty of 10% for each class it is late, with a maximum of 40%, after which it will not be accepted. Unless there is some kind of emergency, exams and in-class presentations, etc. will not be made up. Extenuating circumstances such as serious illness, death in the family, etc. will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Format for Written Work**

Most written assignments will be turned in on Canvas and should be word-processed. Use a standard font such as Times, New Times Roman, Courier, or Helvetica, in size 12. Please use proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, syntax, etc. as is described in the style manual of your choice. Please be sure to proofread your work. (Suggested manual: APA, 5<sup>th</sup> edition).

### **Grading**

Attendance & Participation	see above
Conducting Presentations and Exams	40%
Homework	10%
Written Quizzes	15%
Breathing Assignment	10%
Journal Article Report	5%
Literature and Analysis Evaluation	20%

### **Diversity Statement**

I consider this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect. 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.

You are strongly encouraged to educate yourself on repetitive and overuse injuries. Please go to the music department's website for helpful information.

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

And now, some quotes:

*"I feel there should always be a piece in there for every listener to love, and one to hate. I like challenging people but also giving them what they want."*

– Alondra de la Parra, conductor

*"What they see is what you get."* – Rodney Eichenberger, conductor

*"Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn."*

– Harriett Beecher Stowe, author

**Best wishes for a wonderful semester! I look forward to working with you.**

**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-resources-policies>

**Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will be able to clearly conduct basic and advanced beat patterns beyond the level achieved in Fundamentals of Conducting (MUS 334).
2. Students will be able to demonstrate effective technique with unusual conducting issues such as mixed meter, frequently changing tempi, irregular meter, and senza misura.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate effective use of cue and release gestures.
4. Students will be able to understand and apply rehearsal strategies, pacing, and effective podium presence.
5. Students will be able to identify and evaluate printed resources for literature appropriate for school choral ensembles.
6. Students will be able to identify and evaluate online resources for literature appropriate for school choral ensembles.
7. Students will develop criteria for evaluating literature for use with choral ensembles.
8. Students will apply criteria to specific scores, revealing suitability of a composition for a particular choral ensemble.
9. Students will prepare a prioritized rehearsal plan based on score analysis.
10. Students will be able to locate and assess resources for core repertoire for choral ensembles at K-8 and secondary levels.
11. Students will be able to describe and apply grades of difficulty associated with choral music.

**Student Learning Outcomes for Music Education Program**

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to hear, identify, and work conceptually with the elements of music – rhythm, melody, harmony, and structure.
2. Students will demonstrate familiarity with, and an ability to perform a wide selection of musical literature representing principal eras, genres, and cultural sources.
3. Students will demonstrate ability in performing areas appropriate to the student's needs, interests, and degree path.
4. Students will demonstrate effective English writing skills.
5. Conducting and Musical Leadership: Music Education majors will be able to demonstrate knowledge of physical gestures (accurate beat patterns, cueing, entrances, releases, expression) and rehearsal strategies that lead to musically expressive and technically accurate performances with large and small ensembles found in K-12 settings.

8. Analysis/History/Literature: Music Education majors will be able to apply knowledge from music theory, history and literature studies to curriculum development, lesson planning, and daily classroom and performance activities.
9. Motivation: Music Education majors will be able to excite the imagination of K-12 students, motivating them to seek musical knowledge and skills and to develop an appreciation for music as an art form that is part of their intellectual and cultural heritage.
12. Repertoire Selection: Music Education majors will study and apply prioritized criteria for selection of music literature to be rehearsed and performed with K-12 students.

### **Music Department Assessment Goals and Outcomes**

This course explicitly contributes to your acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant to these Music Department Goals and Outcomes:

Goal 2: Students will demonstrate familiarity with, and an ability to perform a wide selection of musical literature representing principal eras, genres, and cultural sources.

- Outcome 2A: Students can identify and trace essential developments in Western Art Music history.
- Outcome 2B: When listening to an unfamiliar musical composition, students can identify its historical era, cultural sources, genre, texture, instrumentation, and possible composer when appropriate.

### **HSU Learning Outcomes**

This course explicitly contributes to your acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant to these HSU Learning Outcomes:

#### **HSU graduates will have demonstrated:**

- Effective communication through written and oral modes.
- Critical and creative thinking skills in acquiring a broad base of knowledge and applying it to complex issues.
- Competence in a major area of study.
- Appreciation for and understanding of an expanded world perspective by engaging respectfully with a diverse range of individuals, communities, and viewpoints.

#### **HSU graduates will be prepared to:**

- Succeed in their chosen careers.
- Take responsibility for identifying personal goals and practicing lifelong learning.