

# OPERA WORKSHOP SYLLABUS

MUEN 1119 - Spring 2018

School of Music: 202

## DIRECTOR

**Dr. Nicole Asel**

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**DESCRIPTION:** This performance ensemble covers the following the aspects of the theater and stagecraft:

- Singing and acting in opera scenes with costumes and staging
- Solo and ensemble performance opportunities
- Behind-the-scenes stagecraft experience
- Community engagement and personal relations promoting opera performances

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will develop their skills in the technical aspects of opera and theater, including:

- Preparation and performance of operatic literature, culminating in a staged and costumed opera scenes performance
- Stage movement and performance skills.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:** This course provides a variety of musical and theatrical experiences; the Learning Outcomes include:

1. Demonstrate academic knowledge and practical skills in stage performance.
2. Demonstrate competence as a music performer.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Learning outcomes will be assessed throughout the beginning of the semester in the following ways:

- Beginning and end-of-semester evaluation of goals for improvement
- Testing of individuals' pitch accuracy and memorization

**REQUIRED MATERIALS:** All students are required to purchase the following:

- Three ring binder for music
- Stage makeup: foundation, black eye-liner, highlight and contour powder, lipstick, and blush
- Students may be expected to purchase or provide parts of their costume.

## **GRADING PROCEDURE:**

- **Attendance**                      **Required; see Attendance Policy below**
- **Preparation**                      **45%**  
Music is learned accurately and on time; music rehearsals do not include teaching pitches. If are a member of this ensemble, you are expected to practice your music outside of class. Assessment of preparation will include choral sectionals and periodic testing of individuals' pitch accuracy and memorization. Students are expected to be memorized by staging rehearsals. Students will be graded on the second staging rehearsal for each scene on music and dramatic preparation.
- **Participation**                      **45%**  
Students' attitude reflects the Cardinal Rules as posted in classrooms and below; these apply to classroom rehearsals, as well as during rehearsals and performances - onstage and backstage. The use of cellphones during rehearsal is prohibited (unless used specifically for opera promotion). Assessment of participation will include daily attendance and the director and pianist's evaluation of students' attitude; a record will be kept of exceptional participation (positive and/or negative).
- **Personal Growth**                      **10%**  
Students will define and evaluate personal goals for improvement in the course. Students need to write and submit a semester reflection about their goals and growth. Reflections will be due Friday, April 20.

Throughout the semester, if the Faculty have concerns regarding a student's preparation, participation, and/or performance, they will ask to meet privately with the student to address these concerns. Every student is welcome and encouraged to request a meeting at any point if he/she is concerned with his/her grade.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

- A student is allowed up to 3 hours of unexcused absences. Unexcused absences exceeding 3 hours will result in the final grade being lowered 10 points for every 1 class period missed.
- A student may be tardy to class three times per semester without being penalized. After three tardies are recorded, an absence will be marked for each tardy thereafter. A tardy is defined as less than 15 minutes late. Students over 15 minutes late will be counted as absent.

The Attendance Policy also applies to the tech week that precedes the performances. All students are expected to attend every rehearsal during tech week.

- Conflicts with work and other classes are unavoidable during tech week. It is the student's responsibility to immediately inform his/her other instructors and work supervisors of scheduling conflicts. Work or class conflicts need to be communicated at the start of the semester. If you are not able to miss work or a class, you need to let Dr. Asel know TWO/FOUR WEEKS prior to the conflict or it will be an unexcused absence (see below).

**All attendance issues, including illness, as well as class and work conflicts during tech week, should be e-mailed to Dr. Asel.**

### **EXCEPTIONS TO THE ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

- Absences due to illness will count toward the final total, however, if the student provides advance notice and a doctor's note, the absence will not result in a grade deduction.
- Absences during tech week may be excused if the student has a class during rehearsal time, and he/she notifies Dr. Asel of the conflict a minimum of four weeks before tech week.
- Absences due to work schedules may be excused in exceptional circumstances, however, the student must make every possible effort to work around the tech week schedule. In this situation, students must inform Dr. Asel of the conflict a minimum of two weeks before tech week.
- If notification is given after these deadlines, the absence will not be excused, regardless of the reason.

### **COURSE CALENDAR:**

Students will meet with Dr. Asel every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, from 3:30-5:00 pm.

Thursday from 3:30-5:00 pm will be rehearsals with the cast of *Dido and Aeneas* under the direction of Dr. Grimes. Additional rehearsals and performances will include:

#### **Scenes Program Dress Rehearsal**

Sunday, April 15, noon-dismissal

#### **Scenes Program Performances**

Monday, April 16, 7:30 pm. Call time TBA.

Please see attached document for *Dido and Aeneas* rehearsal schedule.

# 10 Cardinal Rules for Rehearsal

*by J.J. Hudson*

## **1. ARRIVE EARLY.**

Early arrival communicates eagerness and interest. It speaks volumes about your respect for others, your attitude towards the project, and your own level of maturity and awareness.

## **2. GREET YOUR COLLABORATORS.**

A simple greeting, followed by a “How are you?” acknowledges not only the presence, but the humanity and dignity of your collaborators. Such clichéd phrases are welcomed and welcoming. Establishing a human connection goes a long way towards generously giving (and generously receiving!) benefit of the doubt.

## **3. KNOW YOUR PART COLD.**

When you are musically and dramatically prepared, you lift the room and those around you.

## **4. WATCH AND LISTEN IN THE REHEARSAL ROOM.**

If you are waiting in the rehearsal room, you are a part of the theatrical environment. Support your colleagues by giving your attention to their performance (keep chat to a minimum). More importantly, use the opportunity to observe as a valuable opportunity to learn from your fellow actors and the production staff. (Nothing on your phone is more interesting or relevant to you than what’s happening or being said in that room.)

## **5. PERFORM IN EVERY REHEARSAL.**

If you love performing, then do it. Perform early; perform often; and perform with a passion. Treat rehearsals as early performances. Avoiding performance until dress rehearsals or opening night is disrespectful to your collaborators, and possibly detrimental to the project. Welcome the vulnerability of fully performing in rehearsal, and embrace the constructive criticism of your directors. (Note: you can vocally mark and fully perform.)

## **6. APPEAR ENTHUSIASTIC AND PLEASED TO BE IN REHEARSAL.**

If you have to fake this, then please do – for everyone’s sake. If you regularly have to fake enthusiasm, you might re-evaluate your career choice.

**7. OCCASIONALLY COMPLIMENT YOUR ACTOR-COLLEAGUES.**

For better or worse, as artists we all emotionally live or die by the approval of others. As artists, we interpret a lack of feedback (positive or negative) from our colleagues as a sign of disapproval. We all want to please, and hopefully, to be pleased. Occasionally, find something kind to say about your colleagues' performances.

**8. KEEP CRITICISM OF YOUR ACTOR-COLLEAGUES TO YOURSELF.**

There are people in the room who are being paid to give constructive criticism. You're not one of them. If praise (warranted or unwarranted) by colleagues is always appreciated, then unsolicited criticism (no matter how innocently given) is always resented.

**9. GO WITH THE DIRECTOR/ CONDUCTOR.**

As a performer, you are not obligated to agree with a director's interpretive or staging choices. You are, however, obliged to go with them.

**10. SAY THANK YOU, EVEN WHEN PEOPLE ARE JUST DOING THEIR JOBS.**

Like giving a greeting to colleagues, saying "thank you" to production staff and colleagues goes a long way. Say "thank you" to the staff pianist, to the conductor, to the director, to the stage manager, to the assistant stage manager, to whomever. You don't even need to have a reason to say it; just say it. It makes everyone feel better, and people who feel appreciated perform better.