

MUSI 4224 – Conducting II (Choral)

Dr. Joshua Bronfman

Gaertner Performing Arts Center, Room 220B

joshua.bronfman@shsu.edu

936-294-1391

Office Hours: By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class will cover intermediate level skills in conducting, focusing on techniques for conducting and rehearsing choirs. Most topics will apply to both choral and instrumental conducting, however we will explore these topics through the choral ensemble and its literature. Subjects will include effective use of gesture, building sound, rehearsal technique, preparation, and use of the keyboard. Assignments will include readings, written work, in-class conducting, and exams.

MATERIALS

Metronome, Conducting Baton, Video recording device, the purchase and printing of approximately \$90 of sheet music for personal file.

COURSE CONTENT

Preparation

- Learning the Score
- Analysis and Marking the Score
- Rehearsal Planning

Rehearsal Technique

- Demeanor
- Pace
- Repetition
- Sequencing/Instruction

Gesture

- Control
- Expression

Building Choral Sound

- Warm-ups
- Choral Tone
- Intonation
- Diction

Keyboard Skills

EVALUATION

Assignments will be given standard letter grades (A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, and F=less than 60). Each assignment will be weighted according to importance, difficulty, and time to prepare.

Daily Participation, Attendance	30%
Assignments/Small Exams	50%
Large Exams	20%

Attendance

Attendance will be taken at every class. Two absences are allowed for any reason. For each subsequent absence your attendance grade will be lowered by one letter grade (or 10%). Exceptions to this policy will be made only in extreme circumstances (as determined by instructor) and with documentation (e.g. death in immediate family, extreme illness, official university functions). Tardiness impacts your grade as well. If you are late more than one or two times, expect your grade to be lowered as a result.

Though attendance is only 30% of your grade, you cannot pass the class if your absences exceed seven missed days (about 25% of the available class days).

Make-up Assignments

If you miss your in class conducting time, *you cannot make it up*. Late-non conducting assignments will be lowered by one letter grade per class period late.

Accompanying (Competency Based)

Having adequate piano skill is essential to being a successful choir director. *You will be expected to accompany both yourself and others on a regular basis, and will be graded on your ability*. Expect keyboard practice to be a significant portion of the expectations in this class. If your keyboard skills are inadequate, you will not be able to pass the class.

EXPECTATIONS

- Class starts on time. No exceptions. It is unacceptable to start a rehearsal late, so don't do it here. Set up for this class will take about 10 minutes, so plan on arriving as early as possible to aid in set up. Everyone is expected to help.
- All written assignments must be proofread and contain minimal errors in punctuation and grammar. If there are too many errors, your paper may be returned, in which case you will have a chance to correct those errors, but it will lower your grade by one letter.
- Some of the things I will be saying to you will be subjective (i.e. my opinion on what is good and what isn't). *You are allowed to disagree. You are allowed to leave my class and never do any of the things I suggest*. However, you have to do it my way in class for the assignment *in order to pass the class*.
- You will have to *change* to pass this class. I will take you where you are at, and I will push you to be better. But that will require substantial change in how you think about conducting, prepare to conduct, and maybe even how you view yourself as a conductor. This can be difficult. If you resist the change, it is even harder. Remember the lobster.
- Sheet Music: You are expected to acquire, organize, distribute, collect, and refile all your own music. This must be done *outside of class*. We cannot waste any class time for dealing with music (as it should be in your rehearsals as a conductor...all music is organized ahead of time).
- A number of lessons will be videotaped. This must also be set up ahead of time. Please assist in this.
- Dress professionally when you are conducting.
- This class is designed to develop the mental and physical skill necessary to effectively lead a choir. As a result, practicing conducting (and keyboard skills) is a crucial component of successfully completing the class. In order to get a good grade in the class, you should expect to do about 5 hours of conducting practice per week. This is in addition to the written assignments and readings.