MUSC 3850-Conducting-Spring 2010
Humanities 331, TR 9:30-10:45AM
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Required materials
- *The Modern Conductor* (7th edition), Elizabeth A.H. Green (available in bookstore)
- Baton
- Your principal instrument
- Mini DV videocassette
- metronome
- baton

Course Description
This course examines the fundamentals of conducting instrumental and choral ensembles. General topics include manual conducting technique, non-verbal communication, musical terms, transpositions, interpretation, leadership, score analysis, and repertoire.

General Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes
- demonstrate a mastery of exercises in the development of physical technique
- use both the right and left hands effectively to demonstrate a command of the four basic conducting styles (legato, staccato, marcato, and marcássimo)
- develop a mastery of the following conducting skills: preparatory exercises, variety of articulation styles, gesture of syncopation, ritards and accelerandis, handling of fermatas and asymmetrical beat patterns
- develop effective verbal communication skills
- develop score preparation/analytical skills
- demonstrate a working knowledge of transpositions, clefs, and musical terminology
- develop a familiarity with all metronome markings
- develop a knowledge of repertoire in your specialty (band/chorus)
- develop the ability to articulate observations, critical thoughts, and understandings in writing and orally
- write a full score analysis/resource guide for a chosen piece of music
- express concepts related to conducting, score analysis, and repertoire effectively in writing
Course Assignments

In-class conducting excerpts: Students will be assigned excerpts to prepare throughout the semester. Rehearsals and performances of the excerpts will be videotaped for individual assessment, and will be graded during class by the instructor.

Lab ensemble conducting excerpts: Students will be assigned excerpts to rehearse with the band and choral ensembles throughout the semester. Rehearsals will be videotaped for individual assessment, and will be graded by the instructor. The Thursday class meeting prior to each lab ensemble meeting will consist of individual conferences to check each student’s score knowledge and rehearsal plan. Students will be required to present a rehearsal plan to the instructor at these individual conferences and will be required to play any part of the score at the piano for the instructor. Any student who does not submit an acceptable rehearsal plan and/or does not pass the piano score reading on her/his excerpt will not be allowed to conduct the following Monday and will receive a zero for that lab ensemble grade.

Score reading exercises: Students will be assigned score excerpts to learn at the piano and perform for the instructor.

Score memorization exercises: Students will be assigned score excerpts to memorize for in-class quizzes.

Error detection exercises: These activities are designed to develop a strong connection between eye and ear as students acquire score reading skills. Students will be given excerpts from scores and asked to identify discrepancies between the printed page and live performance.

Metronome marking/musical term/transposition/clef quizzes: These weekly quizzes consisting of brief written responses will assess (1) the student’s ability to recognize specific tempi, (2) the student’s familiarity with musical terms, and (3) the student’s ability to deal with transpositions and clefs commonly found in band, choral, and orchestral scores.

Video journal (self assessment and conductor observation): Students will be required to regularly assess their own progress as conductors in a journal. Students will observe conductors on video throughout the semester and include written evaluations of these conductors in the video journal. The journal will be submitted to the instructor several times during the semester.

Individual critique/work sessions with instructor: Individual students may have several out-of-class appointments with the instructor to assess progress on the analysis/resource guide project.
Attendance
Perfect or near perfect attendance will be essential for your successful completion of MUSC 3850!! An attendance chart will be circulated during each class. You will be responsible for signing yourself in each day. You are allowed (but not encouraged to take) two absences for the semester. After the third absence your semester grade will be lowered by one full letter. After the fifth absence you will receive an automatic “F” for the semester. Absences may be excused and not count toward a student’s total absences for the semester in extreme conditions (serious illness, hospitalization, death in family, auto accident). If a student wishes to have an absence excused she/he must (1) contact the instructor by email within 48 hours of the absence and (2) present documentation that justifies the absence within one week of the absence. If this procedure is not followed the absence will count toward the student’s total absences for the semester. Absences will be considered excused at the instructor’s discretion. Following the procedures listed above does not guarantee that an absence will be excused. The instructor will notify the student by email within one week of receiving documentation if an absence will be excused or not. Class will begin promptly at 9:30 each day—please be punctual! Students coming to class after the door has been closed will be considered late (no exceptions). Each late arrival will be counted as 1/2 absence, so two late arrivals will be the equivalent of one absence, four late arrivals will be the equivalent of two absences, etc. Students arriving more than 10 minutes late will be assessed a full absence. Students enrolled in MUSC 3850 are required to attend all lab ensemble meetings (February 1, February 8, March 29, and April 5, 3:30-4:45PM). You will receive weekly course schedules each Tuesday with topics, assignments, exam dates, etc. as the semester progresses. NOTE: Any student accumulating six total absences (any combination of excused and unexcused) will receive an automatic “F” for the semester. Peer observation, discussion, and offering feedback are as important to the learning process in MUSC 3850 as student’s individual conducting opportunities. A student who has been absent for six classes (three weeks of class time) has missed a sufficient amount of time to warrant a failing grade for the semester.

Semester Grade
Your semester grade will be based on the following:

Daily performance 90%  
- Conducting assignment, score reading assignments,  
- error detection exercises, lab ensemble conducting,  
- score memorization assignments, class participation

Metronome/musical term/transposition/clef quizzes 5%  

Video journal (self assessment) 5%