

MUSC 3850-Conducting-Fall 2018

Humanities 331, TR 9:30-10:45AM

Instructor: Dr. John Bleuel

Office: Humanities 336

Office Phone: 678-839-6274 Email: jbleuel@westga.edu

<http://www.westga.edu/UWGSyllabusPolicies/>

Required materials

- *The Modern Conductor* (2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th or 7th edition), Elizabeth A.H. Green (available in bookstore and from internet sources)
- your principal instrument
- 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 marcatissimo)
- develop a mastery of the following conducting skills: preparatory exercises, variety of articulation styles, gesture of syncopation, ritards and accelerandi, 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
- 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. Due to the size of the class each student will likely have two conducting sessions of about ten minutes each with the lab groups. Rehearsals will be videotaped for individual assessment, and will be graded by the instructor. Students will be required to present a rehearsal plan to the instructor **ONE WEEK** prior to their conducting sessions. Students will also schedule individual conferences with the instructor to discuss the rehearsal plan and will be required to sing or play any part of the score at the piano. Any student who does not submit an acceptable rehearsal plan by the two week deadline 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.

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 setting/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.

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 (**September 10, October 1, October 22, and November 1, 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. Any student found to have fabricated circumstances/excuses regarding absence from rehearsal(s) will be given an "F" for the semester on the grounds of academic dishonesty.

PLEASE NOTE: The use of cell phones in class is prohibited. Texting, doing Facebook, and checking the internet while your colleagues are standing in front of you trying to master skills that require your active participation is profoundly disrespectful and will not be tolerated. **Any student using a cell phone in class will have her/his semester grade lowered by 5% each time this occurs.**

Choral Lab Conductors: Justin Tarver has agreed to perform as rehearsal pianist for your lab ensemble rehearsals as well as your in-class work sessions (Tuesdays and Thursdays during class the week before lab ensemble Mondays). You will be required to pay Justin a fee of \$50 per student for his services at the four choral lab ensembles. **PLEASE NOTE:** Instrumental conductors may be able to get some time with the choral lab, in which case you'll need to pay Justin as well.

Weekly Schedule

You will be given a weekly schedule at the beginning of class each Tuesday listing activities, assignments, quizzes, etc. for the week.

Semester Grade

Your semester grade will be based on a percentage of points earned over the semester relative to the sum total of actual points. Each conducting assignment and lab ensemble performance will be worth 100 points. Each quiz, score reading assignment, in-class participation grade, will be worth from 10 to 20 points.

90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
0-59%	F

