MUSC 3850-Conducting-Spring 2006
Humanities 331, TR 9:30-10:45AM
Instructor: Dr. John Bleuel
Office: Humanities 336
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Email: jbleuel@westga.edu

Required materials
- The Modern Conductor (7th edition), Elizabeth A.H. Green (available in bookstore)
- Baton
- Your principal instrument
- Mini DV videocassette
- metronome

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 marcattissimo)
- 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
- develop the ability to write program notes
- 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
Writing Across the Curriculum Component

MUSC 3850 is a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) course, and places a strong emphasis on developing effective written and verbal communication skills. Students will be required to articulate musical goals, pedagogical insights, and critical evaluations in writing. Students will be required to write in a variety of formal and informal settings, including written self-evaluations of videotaped conducting sessions, written observations of other conductors, writing program notes, and writing an analysis/resource guide on a chosen piece of music. Although this course will cover material pertaining to the art of conducting, an emphasis will be placed on writing as an integral part of the learning process. The activities and assignments of MUSC 3850 will underscore the fact that writing and thinking are parts of the same process, and that an idea, concept or argument has not been completely developed until it has been written. An emphasis will therefore be placed on critical thought as unified with the writing process, stressing the acts of critiquing and revision. The following writing activities will be included in MUSC 3850:

- A variety of in-class writing activities including one-minute writes, group consensus documents, think/pair/share exercises and empty outlines.
- Essay examination questions designed both to assess the student’s mastery of the material as well as the ability to project musical stylistic tendencies beyond examples presented in class to the general repertoire.
- The analysis/resource guide assignment
- Writing workshop activities in which students will be required to assess their performance as well as those of their colleagues.
- Individual critique/work sessions with the instructor to assess progress on major writing assignments

Course Assignments

Analysis/resource guide: Each student will select a piece of music to develop a teaching guide consisting of background research on the work, an analysis of the work, and a general rehearsal strategy.

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.

Empty outlines: The instructor will occasionally distribute empty outlines pertaining to class material. Students will be required to complete the outlines as a type of formative assessment of listening skills and comprehension.

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.

Individual critique/work sessions with instructor: Individual students will have several out-of-class appointments with the instructor to assess progress on the analysis/resource guide project.

Metronome marking/musical term/transposition/elef 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.

Skills exams: Three or four skills exams will be given during the semester. These exams are designed to serve as capstone experiences after large units of course material have been covered,
and will require students to synthesize a variety of conducting skills. **Skill exams must be conducted from memory-no exceptions.**

**Think/pair/share activities:** The instructor will ask for short, individual written responses to various topics related to conducting to be shared and discussed with a partner, followed by a class discussion.

**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.

**Writing workshop activities:** Several in-class writing workshops will be held during the semester for the purpose of refining writing styles. Students will be required to assess their own writing as well as the writing of their peers.

**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 (January 30, February 6, March 13 and March 27, 3:30-4:45PM). You will receive weekly course schedules each Tuesday with topics, assignments, exam dates, etc. as the semester progresses.

**Semester Grade**

Your semester grade will be based on the following:

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<th>Daily performance</th>
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<td>Assigned conducting &amp; score reading excerpts, Lab ensemble conducting, class participation</td>
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<tr>
<th>Metronome/musical term/transposition/clef quizzes</th>
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<th>Skill exams</th>
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<th>Video journal (self assessment)</th>
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