

Sul Ross State University
Fundamentals of Conducting – Fall 2012
MUS3313

Instructor: Jeffrey J. Meyer, D.M.A.

Office: FAB 103 **Office Hours:** TBA

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Course Description

This course is designed to cover the fundamentals of conducting technique including beat patterns, baton technique, cuing, subdivisions, fermatas, preparatory beats, releases, and expressive gestures for dynamics, phrasing, terminology, and multi-staff systems.

Textbook and Materials

- Notebook or folder for compilation of materials.
- Conducting baton

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Perform the independent physical movements of conducting techniques including symmetrical and asymmetrical meters, cuing, and dynamics.
2. Perform, as conductor, multiple pieces of music while conveying succinct musical ideas through gesture.
3. Study scores effectively and efficiently to aid the rehearsal process.
4. Identify numerous musical terms and techniques used by composers and conductors.
5. Seek out resources to answer questions and problems beyond their knowledge.

Music Program Learning Objectives

This course is a required course for a major in music. As such, it helps the student to meet one or more of the program learning outcomes for the major. These learning outcomes include:

The graduating student will demonstrate:

1. the ability to integrate appropriate musical expression into performance.
2. the ability to prepare appropriate program notes.
3. the ability to evaluate and critique a musical performance.

ADA Needs

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Mary Schwartze, M. Ed., L.P.C., in Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-122 Sul Ross State University, Alpine, TX 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8203. E-mail: mschwartze@sulross.edu.

Class Policies

1. Students are expected to attend each class and to arrive on time. Excessive absences or late arrival may hinder student progress and negatively impact the student grade; instructor will not wait for all to be present. Inform instructor of any known absences beforehand.
2. Students should complete readings prior to arrival at class, and have questions ready to discuss. Classes will start with questions, and proceed to lecture of the assigned topic. Written assignments will be due the next class day.
3. Any assignments are due at the beginning of class.
4. There is no such thing as a silly question...really.

Attendance Policy

Since we have relatively few class meetings, and a great amount of material to cover, attendance is required. Extenuating circumstances should be discussed with the instructor prior to an absence, or as soon as possible following. Unexcused absences will be treated as follows:

- 1st Absence: Warning
- 2nd Absence: Lowering of earned grade by one full letter
- 3rd Absence: Lowering of earned grade by two full letters
- 4th Absence: Lowering of earned grade to an F
- 5th Absence: Expulsion from class

Tardy Policy

Being late to class is disruptive to other students, the teacher, and the learning process. If you enter after the start of class, you are tardy. The start of class is defined as the point at which the teacher begins teaching. Your first tardy is free. After that, every two tardies will be counted as one unexcused absence, and will fall under the attendance policy in effecting your grade. If you are tardy for what you believe is an excusable reason, please speak with me in person after class.

Cell Phone Policy

Class time is limited and use of cell phones causes unneeded distraction to the learning process. Therefore, cell phone use during class is strictly prohibited, and repeated violation of this policy will have an effect on your grade. The following are the grade repercussions for violation of this policy:

- 1st Offense – Warning
- 2nd Offense – Lowering of earned grade by one full letter
- 3rd Offense – Lowering of earned grade by two full letters
- 4th Offense – Lowering of earned grade to an F

5th Offense – Expulsion from class

Professional Communication Policy

All communication with me should be done via email or my office phone number, both of which are listed at the top of the syllabus, or in person. You will be expected to check your email on a regular basis for communications from me. Contact by cell phone is for *emergency* situations only. Please use text messaging only as a last resort. I reserve the right to not respond to text messages in non-emergency situations. Facebook is not an acceptable form of professional communication.

Grading

Grades are not given, they are EARNED. Students will be given the opportunity to earn points in the following areas:

Attendance/Participation – 5 pts/day

Observation/Journal – 20 pts each

Terms/Clefs quizzes – 20 pts each

Conducting Project: SRSU Chorus at President’s Tree Lighting Ceremony (please discuss with Dr. Freed) – 50 pts

Conducting Project: Alpine Community Band – 50 pts

Any other conducting project that you organize – 50 pts each

To determine your percentage grade at any time, add up points earned, and divide by points possible. Keep in mind, you EARN points, they are not given.

Letter grades will be based on the following percentages:

90-100 = A = Excellent

80-89 = B = Good

70-79 = C = Average

60-69 = D = Poor

Below 60 = F = Failure

I = Incomplete

Calendar

This class meets for a weekly seminar on Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 12. p.m. in FAB 103.

Outside of class, you will be required to observe and conduct rehearsals. Those could include Sul Ross State University ensembles, other ensembles in the community such as community bands and choruses, symphonies, high school ensembles, or online videos of conducting.

Weekly Topics:

Week 1 – Syllabus, basic position and preparatory gesture, Carlos Kleiber and “sound line conducting”

Week 2 – basic 4-pattern, dynamics, releases

Week 3 – articulations and style: legato, tenuto, marcato, staccato, cutoffs

Week 4 – musical terms quiz

Week 5 – 3-pattern, 2-pattern

Week 6 – baton discussion, types, grip, baton-less conducting

Week 7 – 1-pattern, discussion of ensemble repertoire, choral conducting style, jazz band directing

Week 8 – function of left hand: mirroring, dynamics, independent mobility

Week 9 – more left hand: sweeping, cut-offs, fermatas, orchestral style

Week 10 – subdivision, cueing, score study, programming

Week 11 – anacrusa, instrument ranges and transpositions

Week 12 – history of conducting, compound meters

Week 13 - changing meters, Stravinsky, Saito and “focal point conducting”

Week 14 – accents, tempo changes, marching band conducting

Week 15 – careers, graduate school, professional conducting (PR and media kits)

Daily exercises to consist of:

- Discussion of relevant weekly topics, with accompanying lecture

- Writing (journal observations)

- Conducting ensembles in rehearsal and performance

- Discussion of conducting and rehearsal techniques

- Watching and critiquing videos of student conducting (and famous conductors)

- Terms quizzes

- Score study

- Discussion of individual conducting projects