

Choir Syllabus

2020-2021

T. Watkins
Office – Music Building (Choir)
Extension 1193

I. DESCRIPTION

Membership in Beginner Choir is by signing up; in the other ensembles (Advanced Choir, Contest Choir and Vocal Alliance) membership is by audition. A choral ensemble of men and women. Repertoire is of varied quality and is chosen to represent a wide range of historical periods and styles. Choir is an elective in which the student will participate daily by singing. The student will be challenged to improve their singing abilities by using proper posture and breathing techniques. Students will be reading musical notation and applying the elements they have learned to reach the performance level. Students will be challenged to begin sight-reading and singing music before they have heard it played on the piano. Students will be required to attend several concerts throughout the semester. The director will do his best to not conflict with other high school activities going on during these times. May be repeated for credit.

II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- A. To provide students with a high quality performance choir.
- B. To perform choral literature.
- C. To provide an environment for vocal development, both as an individual and as an ensemble.
- D. To provide opportunities to learn about music; its development, construction and expression.
- E. To create awareness about different styles of music, with emphasis on the various historical and cultural styles within Western traditions.
- F. To increase awareness of how music is unique in its expressive and communicative nature, particularly non-verbal aspects.
- G. To provide a place of belonging, a sense of unity, and a source of fellowship for students.
- H. To engage artistic culture at the highest levels of complexity and competence.

III. TEXT and SUPPLIES

- A. No text required to buy. Music is currently supplied to students by the Choir Department. Music will be issued to students and must be returned for credit. Replacement costs will be charged.
- B. Black three-ring binder - 1"-1½ " ring.
- C. CONCERT ATTIRE
MEN: Assigned at beginning of year. Concert shoes - black dress shoes.
WOMEN: Assigned at beginning of year. Concert shoes - black dress shoes.

IV. EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING

Students in a choral ensemble are required to put forth their best effort at all times.

- A. Students are expected, at this level of distinction, to excel in dedication. Members will strive for and be evaluated on:
 - 1. Mastery of performance literature including:
 - a. Pitches and rhythms
 - b. Texts and translations
 - c. Diction
 - d. Phrasings and dynamics
 - e. Memorization when required
 - f. Expressive elements of the choral art

2. Punctual attendance at all rehearsals and performances.
 3. Fulfillment of policy expectations for rehearsal and performance (see Choir Handbook).
 4. Attendance at sectional and small group rehearsals.
 5. Completion of all assignments, exams and job tasks.
- B. These will be assessed and graded by:
1. Attendance records (rehearsal and performance)
 2. Group exams
 3. Individual exams
 4. Instructor observations
 - Including evaluation on rehearsal and performance
- C. Attendance at all rehearsals is of the utmost importance.
Schedule appointments, projects and homework (including study groups) for other classes, etc. at times other than rehearsal.
All must attend- critical work is done in rehearsal.
- D. Missing a concert results in a failing grade
Exceptional circumstances may be negotiated with the director.
- E. Extra rehearsals are needed only if students are not putting forth their best effort in regularly scheduled rehearsals.
An exception may be if instruments are participating (i.e., when we perform with an instrumental ensemble) or a performance with multiple ensembles.
*Critical situations may demand extra rehearsals, but efficient work in normal structure by all members should preclude this necessity.
- F. Although not required, all members are expected to study vocal technique outside of choir, either by private instruction or class voice.
- G. Grades are based on the following:
1. Major Assignments – 60%
 2. Minor Assignments – 40%
- H. **PLEASE NOTE:** It is not difficult to get a good grade in this class- show up on time, practice and learn your music.
- All members are expected to earn an "A" or "B" at this level of selectivity.
- If you receive something other than an "A", you must correct the situation.
A student receiving a "C" must re-audition and be re-admitted into one of the upper ensembles.
A student receiving a failing grade will only be re-admitted into the ensemble after a meeting with the director, administrator and parents

V. **CLASSROOM RULES AND PROCEDURES:**

- A. Students will be seated by sections (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). The director reserves the right to hear each student individually to place them in sections. Students will come into the room promptly, get their folder and go to their seat. When warm-ups are begun on the piano, students will be expected to quit their private conversations and give 100% of their attention to the director for the rest of the class period. Every rehearsal will follow the same format:
1. Attendance and Warm-up
 2. Sight Reading Skills
 3. Read through music, rehearsing individual parts or sections
 4. Complete read through
 5. Repeat last two steps with additional music selections
- B. When the director is rehearsing with individual sections, the groups NOT rehearsing are to follow along in their music, using their inner ear to hear their parts. They are not to sing along, talk or move around the room. Rehearsal will finish 3-5 minutes before the end of

the period to give students time to return music folders to cabinet. (Please do not take them home.)

VI. REHEARSAL POLICIES

Efficient rehearsals are essential. Focus is expected at all times. Choir members are responsible for all material and information covered in rehearsal. To accomplish this a few simple principles must be followed:

- A. Excellent attendance is expected as described above.
- B. Punctuality is expected as described above.
- C. 100% participation and concentration.
- D. All cell phones, pagers, beepers, watches, etc. must be inactivated. No phone calls during rehearsal.
- E. Every member must have his/her OWN music in hand at all rehearsals.
- F. Every member must be equipped with a pencil and make judicious markings.
 - A direction or instruction (such as breath, phrasing, diction, etc.) need only to be given once.
 - Always mark music accurately and completely.
- G. Conversations between choir members are unnecessary.
 - Please refrain from personal and social activities during rehearsal.
- H. Sit or stand in assigned formations. They are designed for specific purposes.
- I. Absolutely NO food or drink in rehearsal room (this includes coffee, tea, latte, candy, etc.). Water is the only exception.
 - Keep rehearsal room neat and orderly.
- J. Professionalism is expected at all times
 - during rehearsals, performances and anytime we are in contact with others (visitors, tour, etc.).

VII. PERFORMANCE POLICIES

Professional performances are essential. Focus is expected at all times. To accomplish this, a few simple principles must be followed:

- A. Attendance is required.
- B. Punctuality is required. Be prepared at the right time and place.
 - Fulfill jobs promptly and lend a hand when assistance is needed (set-up, tear-down, etc.)
- C. All cell phones, pagers, beepers, watches, etc. must be inactivated.
- D. Every member must have his/her OWN music in hand at all performances.
 - You cannot "share" or "look over shoulders" in performance.
 - On entrance/exit, carry music away from audience.
- E. Line-up and perform in assigned formations. No exceptions except by director.
- F. No noise or talking "back-stage" or "on-stage."
 - Listen carefully for any last moment instructions.
- G. Behaviors "on-stage" are to be professional.
 - No conversations, gum-chewing, scratching or other distracting behaviors are acceptable.
 - Be disciplined but SMILE and COMMUNICATE! Be an artist!
- H. Concert Dress required for all performances unless specified by director.
- I. Personal appearance is to be professional.
 - Hair to be neat, clean and out of your face.
 - Men are to be clean-shaven.
 - Concert dress is to be neat and clean.
 - No perfume or cologne!
 - Women should wear make-up to ease harshness of lighting, but remain tasteful and appropriate.
 - Avoid anything that draws attention to an individual (jewelry, incomplete concert dress, etc.).
- J. Professionalism is expected at all times
 - Respect and honor other performing groups in joint performances.
 - Be an example of excellence anytime we are in contact with others (before, during and after a performance).