

Comprehensive Course Syllabus

Chamber Choir

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The Chamber Choir course integrates advanced elements of auditory, vocal, kinesthetic, and aesthetic dimensions of choral music through analysis, rehearsal and performance. Particular attention will be paid to ensemble participation in the context of rehearsal and performance. Mandatory performance in IMSA formal concerts as well as auditioned opportunities such as IHSA Solo/Ensemble Contest and the ILMEA District and All-State Festivals are opportunities for students to grow in their overall musicianship.

INSTRUCTOR:

Lara Brink

OFFICE: D105**OFFICE HOURS:**

C: 10:00am-11:00am

I: 2:00pm-3:00pm

Also available by Appointment

Contact Information:

Office Phone: 630-907-5915

E-mail: lbrink@imsa.edu

MEETING TIMES:

A-D (7)

MEETING ROOM:

D110

PREREQUISITES:

Level of expected musicality is intermediate to advanced.

TEXTS/MATERIALS:

- Please bring a pencil to all rehearsals and class times.
- All music, sight-singing worksheets, recordings, and theory assignments will be provided either in hard copy or online.
- Occasionally students will need to bring their laptops to class.

ESSENTIAL CONTENT:

Students will develop artistic habits through:

1. Technical Proficiency: identify fundamentals and develop muscle memory / automaticity through practice
2. Production Technique: combining and processing cognitive skills on a continuum
3. Problem Solving: inquiry, experimentation, application and transfer of knowledge
4. Collaborative Learning: teamwork and leadership opportunities within the parameters of an ethical framework
5. Aesthetic Development: explore creativity through the interconnections of culture, design and historical genre
6. Aesthetic Appreciation / Lifelong learning: magnify personal perception of beauty, meaning, value, intent and emotional content
7. Aesthetic Experience: synthesizes the identified core elements into the resultant product

SSL's and OUTCOMES:

Having participated in Chamber Choir, students will:

- I A. Develop automaticity in skills, concepts, and processes that support/enable complex thought.
 1. Demonstrate skills in body alignment, vocal musicianship, and technical accuracy.
 2. Identify and demonstrate knowledge of selected terms relative to genre-specific ornamentation and accuracy.
 3. Identify, demonstrate, and explain selected terms relative to tempo and meter.
 4. Develop in vocal muscle memory and cognitive skills on a continuum.
 5. Gain a working knowledge of the fundamentals of music, i.e. major/minor scales

- III A. Use appropriate technologies as extensions of the mind.
 1. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the kinesthetic aspects of their vocal production.
 2. Demonstrate a responsibility for learning their individual parts.
 3. Experiment with genre-specific vocal techniques.

- IIIB. Recognize, pursue, and explain substantive connections within and among areas of knowledge.
 1. Experience the problem-based/learner centered steps that lead to a better understanding of the “why’s” and fundamental component parts of music, in practice and performance.
 2. Explore interconnections between culture, history, and music.
 3. Examine the mindset of multiple composers.

- III C. Recreate the “beautiful conceptions” that give coherence to structures of thought.
 1. Display necessary musicianship demonstrating the appropriate artistic interpretation and expression demanded by each piece, adhering first to the composer’s interpretation.
 2. Participate in polished performances.
 3. Respect and understand the ensemble process of working together for a common goal.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND APPROACH:

The focus of this class will be to develop an understanding of the individual music fundamentals necessary to compose an ensemble.

Specific fundamentals include (but not limited to): music notation, tone, dynamic variance, vocal production including body alignment, proper breathing, resonance, diction, balance and blend, ear training, musical interpretation, and analytical preparation of a piece.

These fundamentals, will be practiced during class time as well as rehearsals and performances. Emphasis will be placed on the development of individual singing technique as it relates to solo and ensemble work. Only through growth in personal skillful technique can the collective sound improve.

Understanding the music fundamentals that comprise a piece results in an enhanced performance product and the development of both cognitive analytical and motor skills. Through intermittent aural, verbal, and written analysis of the piece as well as understanding interconnections between culture, history, and evolution of music, students will grow in their overall musicianship.

MUSIC – SPECIFIC STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

1. Students **must** bring their music to class.
2. Students **must** bring pencil (w/eraser) to class.
3. Students must **restrict conversation during class**.
4. Students are expected to practice outside of class time. Quality vs. Quantity.
5. **Students are responsible for acquiring and wearing concert dress.**
6. **Students must perform in all concerts and competitions** unless an excused absence from an IMSA event or emergency has been approved.
7. Students will return all music at the end of a performance cycle when called upon. If music has been lost or significantly damaged, a replacement fee per piece of music will be charged accordingly. The music will be checked-out to you by a specific number. You are responsible for EVERY piece of music issued to your number.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Excused Absence:

An excused absence is an occasion where the student has missed class, which the attendance office has excused. Students are expected to make up class work missed.

Unexcused Absence:

An unexcused absence is an occasion where the student has missed without prior arrangements being made or without being excused by the attendance office. Late work will be reduced by 10% per day.

Tardy:

A tardy will be given if a student is late to class. See the Student Handbook for any needed clarification.

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES, PROCEDURES, AND PROCESSES:

Grades are based on ensemble and personal contributions including:

1. Rehearsal/Classroom attitude and participation
2. Courtesy to the staff and fellow musicians
3. Attendance and punctuality
4. Performance participation
5. Application of musical skill and technique as it pertains to:

Breathing, posture, intonation, development of vocal range, flexibility, and tone.

Singing exams

- a. There will be singing exams throughout the semester at the discretion of the instructor.
6. Written work
 - a. There will be a series of music fundamentals/music theory assignments to work on throughout the semester, and other assignments TBA.
 - b. Self-assessment/reflection
7. Individual initiative and choral dedication.
8. Development in musicality both chorally and in the use and recognition of appropriate terminology and practicum.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students are expected to do original work without plagiarism. Students who have been suspected of plagiarism or turning in work of others will be referred to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action (see page 9 of Student Handbook).

ASSESSMENT PERCENTAGES

Participation: 75%

- Concerts, class participation, part testing, music preparation, rehearsals
 - Breakdown:
 - Each concert=25%
 - Each dress rehearsal= 15%
 - Part Testing=15%
 - Class Participation Grade=20%

In the event that a student is unable to sing in class due to illness, they are expected to let the teacher know at the beginning of class as well as sit aside from the rest of the ensemble and follow along with their music.

This is not an excuse to do other homework, be on social media, etc.

Written Work: 25%

- Analysis/theory assessments, projects, program notes, translations, etc.

ASSESSMENT EXPLANATION COMPONENTS

Grade of "C"

1. Attendance at required rehearsals/performances
2. No apparent individual effort to improve through practice, as evident via the daily rehearsal process and/or playing tests.
3. Average contribution to ensemble activities; reluctant to assume responsibilities.
4. Rehearsal conduct erratic and uncertain; lacking in self-discipline.
5. Poor scores on projects and assignments.

Grade of "B"

1. Prompt, attentive and alert at all rehearsals and performances.
2. Assumes musical responsibility in the ensemble; definite self-improvement through private lessons and/or individual practice, as evident via the daily rehearsal process and/or playing tests.
3. Makes positive contributions to ensemble activities; takes initiative.
4. Exercises good self-control, self-discipline, and a cooperative spirit in ensemble activities.
5. Fair scores on projects and assignments.

Grade of "A"

1. Shows positive leadership and interest in their own vocal section showing initiative and resourcefulness in assisting with rehearsals.
2. Outstanding progress in self-improvement through consistent individual practice, as evident via the daily rehearsal process and/or playing tests; and solo/ensemble participation.
3. Strong, positive contributions to the ensemble and the music department, through participation in ensemble performances, departmental performances, special events and required extra-curricular music activities.
4. Personal integrity and adherence to the principles stated in the IMSA Mission Statement.
5. Superior scores on projects and assignments.

Approved by the Fine Arts Team:

- Scheduled rehearsals and performances are considered a sizeable part of the academic requirements for this class.
- An unexcused absence from a rehearsal will result in your grade being lowered.
- An unexcused absence from a performance will likely result in failure of the course.
- **An Excused absence from a performance will require makeup work** including, but not limited to, a music research paper complete with documentation. Because there is no way to duplicate all of the aspects of a performance, the highest attainable grade on that makeup work will be a B. **No makeup work will be accepted or and unexcused absence.** In addition, excuses from performances must be **submitted in writing** and are *subject to verification*.

SEQUENCE OF TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

- 1. Auditions/Hearings**
- 2. Music Fundamentals**
- 3. Warm up/Cool Down/Vocal Health**
- 4. Practicing: Prove with recorded part testing**
- 5. Intermittent lessons of vocal pedagogy, diction, music theory, history of composers/musical styles**
- 6. Performance Rehearsals**
- 7. Performances**

ACDA STATEMENT ON SACRED MUSIC

IMSA supports and has adopted the position statement of the American Choral Directors Association in regard to this issue. The following statement is printed with the permission of the ACDA:

Choral music educators recognize that choral music may fulfill diverse objectives. At one end of the arc aesthetic performance that can insure development of musicality and sensitivity. At the opposite end of the spectrum is pure entertainment. Between these two poles may be found opportunities to enhance knowledge and understanding through a growing awareness and perspective of history and art as reflected in great music. To achieve any selected educational objective, the quality of repertoire is of paramount importance.

An assessment of the quality of repertoire which can fulfill the highest objectives of aesthetic education necessitates careful examination of the relationship of text and musical setting. The wealth of choral literature which represents and reflects peoples, cultures, and traditions of all lands and compositional styles of all eras includes much music in which the composer has utilized a sacred text. The term "sacred" refers to all manner of religious belief and not only to the practices of the Judeo-Christian teachings. It is important that almost all of the significant choral music composed before the 17th century was associated with a sacred text.

To study and perform music in which the musical setting of a text is artistically accomplished is a highly commendable objective. While public school teaching objectives and criteria for repertoire selection should not include religious broad scope music with a sacred text. To exclude from a public school curriculum all choral music which has religious meaning associated with the text is to severely limit the possibilities of teaching for artistic understanding.

CHORAL GROUPS AT IMSA

CONCERT CHOIR

Mostly Sophomores

This is the introductory choir that is often SSA, 2-part, or SAB.

Admittance is by audition or assignment of the choir director.

Students learn:

- To improve their individual singing voice
- Ensemble singing/blending
- Read music at a beginning/intermediate level
- Work cooperatively
- Solve problems creatively
- Set goals and achieve standards of excellence

CHAMBER CHOIR

Select Sophomore/Junior/Senior

One year advanced level of difficulty

Chamber Choir is a highly select mixed choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). Previous singing and music reading is required with a minimum of one year of choral experience in another ensemble (may be outside school upon choral directors judgment). Admittance is by audition only. *Students learn:*

- To improve their individual singing voice
- Read music/sight read at an advanced level
- Variety of musical styles and techniques
- Work cooperatively
- Solve problems creatively
- Set goals and achieve standards of excellence

In Accordance with the IMSA Honor's Statement:

As a member of the IMSA community, I will respect and take pride in myself, my peers, and our achievements. I will promote growth in myself and our community by using my intellect and energy to their fullest potential. I will act to uphold this statement in all of my endeavors to foster a community of trust by being honest, trustworthy, fair, respectful, and responsible.

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**IMSA's Choral Performing Ensembles** continue to fulfill the IMSA Mission Statement and Standards of Significant Learning, as they help to develop student cognitive and motor skills, and student musical knowledge of culture, and even of the interconnections of that culture to the humanities, math and science. These interconnections result in an increased student awareness of the integrated world around them, and potentially ignite interest for future lifelong learning experiences.

