

**ILLINOIS MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE ACADEMY**  
**STRING ORCHESTRA SYLLABUS**  
**FAR 120**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The String Orchestra will explore the music of different composers via analysis, rehearsal and performance. This exploration will provide the students with an overview of the visual, auditory and aesthetic dimensions of instrumental music. Particular attention will be paid to ensemble participation in the context of rehearsal and performance. Students will perform in formal concerts as well as will have the opportunity to audition for and participate in the IHSA Solo/Ensemble Contest and the ILMEA District and All-State Festivals.

**INSTRUCTOR**

Mary Beth McCarthy

**OFFICE HOURS**

1 p.m.-3p.m. Inquiry Days, or by appointment

**OFFICE PHONE**

630-907-5048

**E-MAIL**

mmccarthy@imsa.edu

**MEETING TIMES**

ABCD 8:00-8:55 a.m.

**MEETING ROOM**

D103

**PREREQUISITES**

Level of expected musical and technical proficiency is *intermediate*.  
Private lessons are *strongly recommended*.

**LITERATURE**

Literature from the comprehensive spectrum of the musical genres will be analyzed and performed. Literature studied will fall into grade level categories 3 and 4.

**SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS:**

*Muller Rusch String Method Books 4 and 5*

*Wohlfahrt Studies Books 1 and 2*

Scale Sheets

IMEA Repertoire

Solo/Ensemble Materials

J. Frederick Muller and Harold W. Rusch

Franz Wohlfahrt

## **MATERIALS**

Students must bring their *instrument* and *music* to class *daily*.

Students must bring *two sharpened pencils* to class *daily*, in order to make rehearsal notes.

Students are responsible for the *prompt repair* and *maintenance* of their *instruments*.

Students must *possess maintenance items* for their instruments, such as *strings, rosin etc.*

Students must have a lock for their locker and a *3-ring binder* for their *music and potential portfolio*.

## **ESSENTIAL CONTENT**

Students will develop artistic habits of mind through:

*Technical Proficiency*: identify fundamentals and develop muscle memory/automaticity through practice

*Production Technique*: combining and processing cognitive skills on a continuum

*Problem Solving*: inquiry, experimentation, application and transfer of knowledge

*Collaborative Learning*: teamwork and leadership opportunities within the parameters of an ethical framework

*Aesthetic Development*: exploration of creativity through the interconnections of culture, design and historical genre

*Aesthetic Appreciation/Lifelong Learning*: magnification of personal perception of beauty, meaning, value, intent and emotional content

*Aesthetic Experience*: synthesizing the identified core elements into the resultant product

## **SSL's and OUTCOMES**

Having participated in Wind Ensemble a student will:

IA. Develop automaticity in skills, concepts and processes that enable complex thought

1. Demonstrate skill in posture, hand position, bowing, fingering and technical acumen.
2. Identify and demonstrate knowledge of selected terms relative to articulation and ornamentation.
3. Identify, demonstrate and explain selected terms relative to tempo and meter.
4. Process muscle memory and cognitive skills on a continuum.
5. Gain a working knowledge of the fundamentals of music, i.e. Major scales.

IIIA. Use appropriate technologies as an extension of the Mind in the performance based class

1. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the mechanical aspects of their instrument(s).
2. Demonstrate a responsibility for learning their individual parts.
3. Generate journal entries.
4. Experiment with composition 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, both in practice and performance.
2. Explore interconnections between culture, history and music.
3. Examine the mind set of multiple composers.
4. Experiment with composition.

### IIIC. Recreate the beautiful conceptions that give coherence to structures of thought

1. Display the musicianship necessary to be able to demonstrate the appropriate artistic interpretation and expressiveness demanded by each piece.
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 a team or ensemble. Specific fundamentals include: music notation, tone production, intonation, ear training, clarity of instrumental diction, dynamic necessities, blend, balance, interpretation and analytical preparation of a piece.

These fundamentals, crucial to ensemble performance, will be practiced during the warm-up period, throughout the rehearsals and the concerts. Emphasis will be placed on the development of individual playing skill as it relates to solo and ensemble work. Only through personal skill development can large group improvement occur.

Understanding the music fundamentals that comprise a piece, results in an enhanced performance product and the development of both cognitive analytical and motor skills. Therefore, written analysis will also take place, via journaling and potential portfolio development. In addition, the mind set of a composer will be explored through hands-on activities, compositional experimentation and an examination of the interconnections between culture, history and music.

1. Students will explore composer mindsets and may experiment with the development of music through composition, both individually and as a collaborative team.
2. Students will attend peer performances and they will be asked to reflect upon those performances. If time permits, students may be asked to attend an additional music performance and then may be asked to use the language of music, to write both a synopsis and review of that performance.
3. Students may be asked to provide journal entries on their personal practice room and performance experiences at various times throughout the semester.
4. Students will participate in sophisticated, polished solo and ensemble performances, which will result in an aesthetic, personalized experience.
5. Students may be asked to create a music portfolio/notebook, which contains class materials both disseminated and generated. This portfolio will engage the students in the problem-based learning and reflective self-assessment processes.

## MUSIC - SPECIFIC STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

1. Students must bring their music to class.
2. Students should bring pencils to class in order to make rehearsal notes.
3. Students must restrict conversation during class.
4. Students are encouraged to practice at least 30 minutes a day outside of class in order to facilitate productive class time.
5. Students are responsible for the maintenance and prompt repair of their own instruments.
6. **Students are responsible for acquiring and wearing concert dress**  
**Guys:** Black tuxes, white tux shirts, black bow ties, black socks and black dress shoes  
**Girls:** The required black dress, black hose and black dress shoes
7. Perform as a member of the ensemble for all Concerts, Events and Field Trips.
8. *Section leaders may be asked to participate as members of the Symphony Orchestra.*
9. Return all music at the end of a performance cycle, or the day after the concert. **Make sure that your music is turned in on time or your participation grade will be lowered. If you cannot be in class, have your stand partner or roommate turn in the music for you.** A replacement fee for lost or damaged music will be charged.
10. Students who wish to attend ILMEA, must own a collapsible, folding music stand.

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

### *Excused Absence:*

An excused absence is a class that a student has missed, which the attendance office has excused. Students are permitted and expected to make up the class work missed.

### *Unexcused Absence:*

An unexcused absence is a class that a student has missed without prior arrangements being made or without being excused by the attendance office. Any work missed due to an unexcused absence *may not* be made up. *ALSO, work not turned in by the due date will not be accepted if it is more than one day late.* Late work will automatically receive a letter grade one full grade lower than the original grade. Therefore, unless there is a serious, documented illness, work must be turned in on the due date.

### *Tardy:*

A tardy will be given if a student is late to class.

## ASSESSMENT PRACTICES, PROCEDURES and PROCESSES

Grades are based on ensemble and personal contributions including:

1. Rehearsal/Classroom attitude
2. Courtesy to the Staff and to the other students
3. Attendance
4. Punctuality
5. Rehearsal/Classroom participation
6. Performance participation
7. Application of music skills
8. Playing assessments (skill tests)
9. Written/Research work
10. Musical exploration and experimentation with composition
11. Individual initiative
12. Development of musicality
13. Evidence of problem-based/learner-centered reflection
14. Self-reflection and assessment

### ASSESSMENT PERCENTAGES (Sample 1<sup>st</sup> Semester)

#### 1<sup>st</sup> QUARTER:

Audition Preparation	10%
Sectionals	20%
Class Participation	50%
Includes rehearsals, class projects, analysis and critiques	
1 Technique/Rhythm Assessment	10%
2 Worksheet packets	10%

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> QUARTER:

Sectionals	20%
Class Participation	25%
Includes rehearsals, class projects, analysis and critiques	
1 Technique/Rhythm Assessment	10%
1 Worksheet packet	5%
Post Test	15%
Fall CONCERT	25%

#### FINAL:

Holiday CONCERT

## PARTICIPATION ASSESSMENT EXPLANATION

### Grade of "C"

1. Attendance at required rehearsals
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 responsibility
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 instrumental section; shows independence and resourcefulness in assisting rehearsal procedures
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 Field Trips
4. Personal integrity and character and adherence to the principles stated in the IMSA Mission statement
5. Superior scores on projects and assignments

**Scheduled rehearsals and performances** are considered part of the **academic requirements** for this class. An *unexcused absence* from a *rehearsal* will result in your *grade being lowered*, and **MOST ABSENCES ARE CONSIDERED UNEXCUSED ABSENCES. ALL PERFORMANCES** are comparable to a final test. Music Tests are reflective of cognitive, skill-based achievement, cooperative teamwork and personal effort. An *unexcused absence* from **any performance** may result in **failure** of this course, and **will result in failure** for that portion of your grade. The Fine Arts Team determines excused absences on a case by case basis. 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 for an unexcused absence.** In addition, excuses from performances must be **submitted in writing** and are *subject to verification*.

**IMSA's Instrumental 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.

## **SEQUENCE OF TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES**

- 1) Auditions**
- 2) Warm-up Studies**
- 3) Music Fundamentals**
- 4) Music in Society, History and Culture**
- 5) Analysis/Hands-on Beat Pattern for Conducting**
- 6) Performance Rehearsals: Analysis, Sectionals, Practice**
- 7) Practicing: Problem-Based Learning**
- 8) Composer Mindset: Discussion and Hands-on Activities**
- 9) Collaborative/Individual Projects and Presentations**
- 10) Performances: Concerts, Contests, Festivals, Field Trips, Service**
- 11) Self-Reflection/Assessment**
- 12) Culminating Experience Portfolios**

