Syllabus
MUS 273 Instrumental Conducting
Professor - R. Tad Greig
Tue. + Thurs. 8:30 – 9:10

Required Materials: Stith, Gary Score Rehearsal Preparation: A Realistic Approach For Instrumental Conductors. There will also be many handouts. You are responsible for organizing them. Purchase from Dr. Greig @ $22.00

Additional Materials: 3-ring binder, 1 baton (as described in class) you will be recording yourself a great deal in class. Most students simply use their phones. Someone else will video you every time that you conduct. We call these special people “Video Buddies”. You will be responsible for watching each of your videos and reacting to them.


Pre-Requisite- Successful completion of MUS 271
Conducting is first and foremost “Communication”. This communication is defined as the explanation of the conductor's desire for the musical performance; what, how and why the ensemble and piece should sound a certain way.

With this statement in mind, it is imperative that the conductor has the sound of the work in mind. He/she should also be very aware of the potential of the ensemble.
It will be the goal of this course to have the students learn/reinforce; pedagogical aspects of conducting, communication skills, score analysis, time management and baton technique so that they will have the potential to be an effective conductor/communicator.

Conducting is also leadership. To be an effective leader, you must be prepared, motivated, dedicated and dynamic.

Materials – baton, text book, Bach Chorale (warm-up method), Wind or String Instrument.
Assignments and Exercises - There will be actual (with live ensembles) and facsimile conducting experiences (with recording). Additionally there will be score analysis and entrance/release quizzes. You will possibly have time in front of a large ensemble (this will be somewhat limited). You will also have the opportunity of conducting the method ensemble. The class members will also form an ensemble. We will use a variety of primary and secondary instruments to form this group.
Suggested experience: please contact members of the various chamber ensembles on campus. As for a score, take a week to study, to attend their rehearsals to listen and then to conduct. (I suggest woodwind quintet, brass quintet, flute choir, Masterclass brass or woodwinds)
You will also be assigned a score(s) from various large ensembles to prepare along with the primary conductor. You will at one or more times work with the ensemble on this work and will be additionally responsible for substituting for the conductor case of absence.

**Exercises to include:** Symmetrical and asymmetrical beat patterns, left hand independence drills, expressive conducting (Bach Chorales). You will need to bring an instrument to class (primary, secondary)

**Assessment:** Tests and quizzes 60% (mostly performance based), Conducting observations 20%, Classroom Participation and Homework 20%. **Conducting Quizzes as well as practical technique quizzes will be announced throughout the semester.**

**Final – You must choose a piece or excerpt of music (no longer than 7 minutes).** If I have the score, I will gladly share, if not, you must purchase. You need to find a quality recording to use. You will conduct this piece of music as well as complete score map/analysis. Do not procrastinate on this assignment.

**Synthesis/Transfer:** Students will draw on previous learning from Basic Conducting, Music Theory and labs, Various Pedagogy classes, and Ensembles. As this is the second term of conducting it will be assumed that students will have a competent understanding of basic patterns, score analysis and instrumentation.

**Attendance Policy** – As this class meets two times per week, 2-unexcused absences = the lowering of the grade by one letter. Tardies equal ½ of an unexcused absence. This course revolves around classroom interaction, participation and evaluation. Therefore, one must be present to interact and participate. DO NOT MISS CLASS !!

**Topics covered throughout the semester**

- Symmetrical and asymmetrical meters and patterns
- Effective use of the left hand
- Effective non-verbal communication, facial and gesture command
- Score Analysis/Graphing

*Remember that in conducting the baton is simply a non-sounding instrument, it must be practiced as you would practice your Instrument, Keyboard or Voice.*

The key for effective and affective learning will be your preparation for each class. You will be given one copy of the Bach Chorales book to prepare for each class on your instrument(s). Be prepared to sing these as well as play them. If you are a vocalist or keyboardist, choose an instrument to pursue from your past pedagogy experience to develop. If you are an instrumentalist, consider a secondary instrument. The purpose of this is for conducting practice not for the development of a lab band so prepare outside of class.

Movement, gesture, communication as well as technical skill and musical understanding must be brought to the class for development.

Remember that every time you are afforded the opportunity to stand on the podium should be highly regarded and should not be time wasted.

Remember that in conducting the baton is simply a non-sounding instrument, it must be practiced as you would practice your Instrument, Keyboard or Voice.
Week 1: What are the qualities of a good conductor? What are your fears about stepping onto the podium? Discussion regarding being comfortable with oneself. Equipment, baton holding techniques, physical stance. Review of basic patterns 4/4, ¾, 2/4, 5/4, 6/8, 9/8, 12/8. Assign Instruments for Class.

Week 2: Chapter 2 Exploring Parameters of Body and Space: Practice listed exercises (outside of class as well). Discuss 4 planes of conducting. Use of the “hinges” in conducting. Prepare assigned Bach Chorales.

Week 3: Chapter 3 Motion and Emotion: Direction, Design, Velocity and Weight. How can one use these to convey various emotions within a work(s). Begin Individual conducting of Bach Chorales with class ensemble. Starting and stopping dynamics and cueing. Preparatory gestures and releases. Use correlated exercises. (be prepared to play as well as conduct). You must understand the intent of the prep and how size equals dynamic.

(from this point on, be prepared to conduct assigned chorales with the class as well as with the Wind Ensemble or other warm-up chorales with Symphonic Band)

Week 4: Discuss affective movement. Do we always conduct all pulses? Beat minimization. Continued Chorale Conducting. The left hand. Developing independence, using it to more artistically communicate.

Week 5: Review smooth/expressive movement. Chorale Conducting. Chapter 8 The Conductor’s Left hand. What power does this hand have? How should it be used? What signs, mean what? Continued chorale and excerpt conducting.

Week 7: We are hosting a PMEA MPA on Wednesday, March 14th. You are required to attend a portion of the event and to evaluate two ensembles based upon the performance evaluation rubric. We will Discuss immediately prior. Read Introduction to “Score Rehearsal Preparation” (Pgs 1 – 4).

Week 8: Read Phase 1, pgs. 5 – 27 Preparing the Score. Appropriate markings for easier Understanding. Continued Conducting. Score analysis. Look at the score sample for Vaughan Williams’ “Flourish for Wind Band”. Become acquainted with it. Choose final project score.


Week 10: Chapter 11 Nonverbal Cues. Using the body to convey the musical message. What do your hands say: what type of attack, entrance, articulation. Exercises will be provided for your practice. Individual exercises and assessment.

Week 11: The contemporary score. Developing an understanding of the markings associated with more contemporary writing. Check progress on final project. Including Score Maps.
Week 12  Coda: Discussion of what we have learned

Remaining semester:  Conducting and evaluation. Exercises from Book, Chorales, Warm-ups for Band or Wind Ensemble, possibly some band excerpts. Basically, we are going to take the theory and put it into practice.

Final Exam  The Final exam will encompass the final class, plus the final schedule. It will include the conducting of a full-scale work (recorded accompaniment). **Score maps are due at this time.**

*Additional skills development throughout the semester: transposition, score analysis, error detection*