

Western University
Don Wright Faculty of Music
Music 2832B - Choral Techniques
Winter 2022

Instructor: Dr. Tracy Wong
Email: twong427@uwo.ca
Office: MB 245
Office hours: By appointment

Teaching Assistant: Gankun Zhang
Email: gzhang84@uwo.ca
Office hours: By appointment

Meeting Times

Mondays: 9:30-10:30am, MB 254

Wednesdays: 10:30-12:30pm, MB 254

Course Prerequisite: Music 2831a

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to further develop analytical and musical skills that relate to choral conducting, including score study, aural skills, gestural clarity and expressiveness, as well as knowledge of repertoire selection and preparation for rehearsal. The choral lab and masterclass format allows for applying concepts in an ensemble context as well as for exploring topics of interest to choral educators-conductors. There will also be an emphasis on choral leadership through the development of rehearsal pedagogy/technique specific to the singing voice. Issues of repertoire selection, concert programming, and choral performance will be explored.

Students will have the opportunity to develop their teaching skills and rehearsal leadership in a masterclass format during class time. All students in class will be expected to actively participate as a lab choir for each other. This will supplement class discussions and demonstrations and is thus a crucial element of this course. Each student is expected to participate fully as a singer/conductor as assigned in class.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through in-class experience, personal study, observations, discussions, and practice, students will:

- Improve conducting skills which supports an efficient choral rehearsal process. This includes extended techniques such as familiarity with mixed meters, gestural independence, and musical intent.
- Develop rehearsal technique through score study and marking strategies, aural skills, sequential planning, and understanding of vocal health.

- Implement effective rehearsal strategies to benefit a choral ensemble.
- Utilize inclusive and supportive language.
- Enhance evaluative skills through self and peer evaluation.

EVALUATION

Participation & Classwork: 20%

Personal Reflections: 15% (5% + 5% + 5%)

Conducting & Teaching Opportunities: 35% (15% + 20%)

Choral Project: 30%

Participation & Classwork: 20%

Weekly

This course will require students to work independently as well as in small groups and with the entire class. It is expected that each student will:

1. Practice consistently. (This is essential to improvement.)
2. Prepare tasks in advance for each class with care and consideration.
3. Participate to the best of one's ability in each class – contribute to class discussions, provide helpful feedback to classmates, as well as appropriately receive feedback from others.
4. Show a willingness to learn and improve.
5. Actively participate as a singer in the class – there will be multiple opportunities to act as a musical leader for the class as well.
6. Be supportive of peers and contribute to a positive learning atmosphere.
7. Be prompt and regular in attendance and submissions of assignments.

Assessment criteria includes: consistent commitment to preparation; care and consideration of others; demonstration of effort and initiative; and punctuality and consistent attendance.

Personal Reflections: 15% (5% + 5% + 5%)

Due dates: Jan. 17, Mar. 14, Mar. 21

Three formal personal reflections will be completed during the term.

1. Personal Reflection #1 (Goal setting) – due Jan. 17
2. Personal Reflection #2 (Guest Speaker) – due Mar. 14
3. Personal Reflection #3 (Rehearsal Observation) – due Mar. 21

Prompts for each reflection will be provided on OWL. The purpose of the assignment is to provide the opportunity for you to share your critical reflections in relation to the topics discussed, your own readings,

your experiences in the class as a singer and a leader, and also to explore your own ideas, beliefs, and understandings as they relate to your skills as a musical leader.

Students may choose any of the following format:

1. Written prose (approx. 500-700 words)
2. Audio recording (approx. 5-7 minutes)
3. Audio & video recording (approx. 5-7 minutes)

Assessment criteria includes: clarity of communication; awareness of your own learning; and depth of critical analysis.

Conducting & Teaching Opportunities: 35% (15% + 20%)

Due dates: Feb. 14 & 16, Apr. 4 & 6

Throughout the semester, you will have the opportunity to lead the class in rehearsal. Two of these opportunities will be formally evaluated and a schedule of conductors will be posted one week in advance. For each of these opportunities, you will be required to prepare a written plan, execute the plan within the given time while responding to the needs of the ensemble, and reflect afterwards on the effectiveness of your mini-rehearsal. Feedback and support during the lessons as well as afterwards will be provided by the instructor and peers. Assessment criteria includes: evidence of preparation; appropriateness of selected rehearsal strategies; ability to identify areas for improvement and effectively respond to the ensemble; demonstration of effective gestures and rehearsal strategies as well as inclusive and supportive language.

Choral Project: 30%

Due date: April 13, 2022

The purpose of this assignment is to combine your score study and rehearsal planning skills into one final product. It is important that the final product is practical and useful to you in the future so choose your repertoire wisely. From our class set of repertoire, you will select one piece to focus on each of the following as part of the final product:

1. Analysis – complete a full score study of the work and provide a clear scan of the marked score.
2. Rehearsal planning – provide two sequential rehearsal plans: one that reflects the first rehearsal, and one that reflects a rehearsal closer to performance-ready.
3. Listening – reference two recordings (audio and/or video) of the piece and provide comparisons of the performance (a listening guide will be provided).

COURSE MATERIALS

There is no textbook for this course. As a class, we will purchase a set of scores that we will all use during the second half of the semester. The cost of the music order will be shared among everyone in the class and students will retain one copy of each score at the completion of the course for future use. Budget \$30 for this set of music.

Supplemental materials, scores, assignments, and announcements will be available on the OWL course page. Please check this regularly for updates.

Additional required materials include:

- Music stand for each class
- Three-ring binder for organizing class notes, materials, and scores
- Variety of coloured pencils and highlighters
- Device for recording in-class practicum

NOTES:

i) **Course Prerequisites:** [*Music 283IA*]. Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

ii) **Grading scale:** A+=90-100%, A=80-89%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, D=50-59%, F=0-49%.

iii) **Academic Consideration for Student Absence:** Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. **Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus.** Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are not met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. **Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.**

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office. For the Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Special Note for Covid-19-related Situations:

As a guideline, if a student has been contacted by the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) to self-quarantine due to a Covid-19-related situation, then the Self-Reported Absence system is not to be used to report this absence or to request an academic accommodation. The student should contact the Academic Counselling office as soon as they are notified.

In general, even when the MLHU has not advised students to self-isolate, students are advised to follow the most recent directions from the university and the MLHU concerning when to self-isolate and for how long. Specifically, if a student believes they have Covid-19 then the student is directed to report this to the Academic Counselling office as soon as possible for further direction on receiving accommodation consideration.

iv) **Academic Consideration for Missing Work:** In cases where students are unable to submit work due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if an online self-reported absence is submitted, or if appropriate supporting documentation is submitted to the Associate Dean's office, and the accommodation is granted, then the missed assessments may be rescheduled or discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course, at the discretion of the instructor. If neither a self-reported absence nor an appropriate supporting document is submitted to the appropriate office, then the missed assignments will receive a grade of zero.

v) **Academic Offences:** Submission of work with which you have received help from someone else (other than the course instructor or TA) is an example of plagiarism, which is considered a major academic offence. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, as found at: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

vi) **Mental Health & Wellness:** Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to the Health and Wellness at Western page (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or to go to the Wellness Education Centre located in UCC room 76. **Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in UC11 or to click on the green "I Need Help Now" button on the Health and Wellness page above.**

vii) **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Students work with Accessible Education Western (AEW, formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

viii) **Religious Accommodation:** Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar.

<http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>

ix) **Contingency Plan:** Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, the changing COVID-19 restrictions may necessitate some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

x) **Examinations & Attendance:** Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

xi) **Electronic Devices in Classrooms:** The in-class use of electronic devices (other than for instructor-approved in-class uses) is expressly prohibited. Students found guilty of disrupting the class with electronic devices will be asked to leave the class and may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

xii) **Recording of Online Activities:** All of the remote learning sessions for this course will be recorded. The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers (name displayed on the screen). The recordings will be used for educational purposes related to this course, including evaluations. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals participating in the course for their private or group study purposes. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session recordings.

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor.

xiii) **Online Etiquette:** Some components of this course may involve synchronous online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please observe the following general considerations of “netiquette”:

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.
- Be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing.
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment.

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of “Zoom-bombing” a class, or of other serious online offenses, may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

Course Schedule

N.B. Course schedule and assigned work is subject to change. The course will be flexible to serve the needs of class members. Students will be notified in advance.

Week 1	Jan. 10	Welcome, introductions, course overview. Roles of a choral leader. <i>Read: Sieck, Ch. 1 in preparation of Jan. 12</i>
	Jan. 12	Choral leadership: expanding our perspective The conductor-educator's language (I/we/me)
Week 2	Jan. 17	Understanding the Voice – Developing Voices, Tenors & Basses (Combined with Music 3832B) Personal Reflection #1 due
	Jan. 19	Understanding the Voice (continued) - positioning the choir (Weston Noble) - Choral Tone: what makes good tone? What IS good tone? Conducting – Gestures as vocal support Readings: Music preparation:
Week 3	Jan. 24	Understanding the Voice – Young Voices, Sopranos & Altos (Combined with Music 3832B)
	Jan. 26	Listening Skills – The Conductor as Diagnostician (continued) - What do I listen for? - What do I hear and what am I going to do about it? (rhythm, pitch, text, tone) - tuning the choir Conducting – Connecting Sound and Gesture
Week 4	Jan. 31	Review repertoire – context, style, performance practice Analysis & score marking Collaborative work Music preparation: Conducting & Teaching #1 rep (score marking, analysis, conducting, musicianship skills, listening skills, language)
	Feb. 2	Warm Up Strategies Rehearsal Strategies (repertoire-based) - warm ups

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - planning - sequential teaching - diagnosing / prescribing (listening skills) - practicing - classroom / rehearsal management <p>Collaborative work: discussion for practicum</p>
Week 5	Feb. 7	<p>Collab work coaching 1</p> <p>Review repertoire</p> <p>Conducting – Connecting Sound and Gesture</p>
	Feb. 9	<p>Collab work coaching 2</p> <p>Review repertoire</p> <p>Conducting – Connecting Sound and Gesture</p>
Week 6	Feb. 14	Conducting & Teaching #1 (and self-evaluation due Feb. 18)
	Feb. 16	Conducting & Teaching #1 (and self-evaluation due Feb. 18)
	Feb. 21, 23	Mid-term recess
Week 7	Feb. 28	<p>Conducting & Teaching #1 feedback – Q&A</p> <p>Choral Project - overview</p>
	Mar. 2	<p>Conducting – Connecting Sound with Gesture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gestural independence - filling in the gaps
Week 8	Mar. 7	<p>Guest Speaker - TBD</p> <p>Personal Reflection #2 due Mar. 14</p> <p><i>Read: Sieck, Ch. 7 in preparation of Mar. 9.</i></p>
	Mar. 9	<p>Choral Music – an intro to global perspectives</p> <p>Survey of choral ensembles globally</p> <p>Check in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal Reflections - Choral Project
Week 9	Mar. 14	<p>IPA Basics</p> <p>Personal Reflection #2 due</p>

	Mar. 16	Repertoire for Conducting & Teaching #2 – analysis Conducting – Connecting Sound with Gesture - gestural independence - supporting the singing voice - filling in the gaps
Week 10	Mar. 21	Repertoire Selection & Programming <i>Read: Apfelstadt & Scheibe, 2019, Teaching Music through Performance in Choir, Vol. 5, 119-129</i> Personal Reflection #3 (Rehearsal Observation) due Mar. 25
	Mar. 23	Repertoire for Conducting & Teaching #2 – analysis, continued Conducting – Connecting Sound with Gesture - gestural independence - supporting the singing voice - filling in the gaps
Week 11	Mar. 28, 30	Group Preparation for Conducting & Teaching #2 Individual coaching, as needed
Week 12	Apr. 4	Conducting & Teaching #2 (and self-evaluation due Apr. 8)
	Apr. 6	Conducting & Teaching #2 (and self-evaluation due Apr. 8) Conducting & teaching #2 feedback “But that has nothing to do with making music” Wrap Up
	Apr. 13	Choral Project Due