Course Overview

Music 9783L: Choral Literature and Leadership

Western University Don Wright Faculty of Music
Summer 2020
Instructor: Patrick Murray (pmurra29@uwo.ca)

Welcome! This course will explore the connection between our roles as leaders in the choral ensemble and how we approach repertoire and choral pedagogy. You will be developing written and audio-visual teaching resources related to specific repertoire to share and refine within a collaborative class forum, and reflecting on your own practice as teachers, artists, and citizens who conduct choral ensembles. I am also excited that we will be joined by several guest conductors throughout the course, who will offer their own perspectives and expertise on topics that have shaped their own professional development as leaders.

A typical graduate sequence in choral literature would proceed through different eras and styles of music, asking questions about historical and cultural context and performance practice. While we will still do some of that, this course aims to shift that focus toward the core musical, cultural and personal competencies we want students and ourselves to acquire through our choral musicking. In other words: how can we use repertoire as a vehicle for exploring our responsibilities as leaders to the students and singers who make up our ensembles.

Some guiding questions for the course:

- What do we (want to) teach, musically and culturally, through the music we select?
- How do we analyze music in order to assess it for these possible teaching and learning outcomes – technical, personal, and socio-cultural?
- What current discussions in choral pedagogy, leadership, and research contextualize and inform our repertoire choices and teaching strategies?
- How do our reflections on the queries above shape our understanding of our leadership roles in our ensembles and classrooms?

Learning Outcomes

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- Identify key leadership competencies of choral conductors in relation to different professional contexts and your own practice.
- Explain current topics in choral music pedagogy and leadership with reference to relevant literature and research.
- Apply knowledge of topics in choral pedagogy and leadership to your own online teaching

demonstrations of specific choral repertoire.

- Analyze choral repertoire in relation to anticipated challenges and learning outcomes through written repertoire guides and lesson plans.
- Develop new teaching resources that can contribute to your own students' understanding of the connections between pedagogy and repertoire in face-to-face and online teaching contexts.
- Reflect, through collaborative journaling, on how the topics and experiences explored in the course can influence your own role as a choral leader.

Schedule, Communication, Office Hours, and Course Materials

Course schedule: July 13-31st.

Course content will be delivered through a combination of synchronous online video meetings and asynchronous (pre-recorded) mini-lectures, readings, and forum contributions. All synchronous meetings will occur on Zoom in the afternoons between 2-4pm EDT. Participants can expect an approximately 2-hour daily commitment divided between synchronous and asynchronous portions of the course, with additional time spent on readings and completing assignments. A more detailed schedule will be sent in advance of July 13.

Communication: Much of our correspondence for the course will take place through Piazza. If you have questions about course content or organization, please pose them using the Question tool on Piazza. That gives both me and your colleagues a chance to answer. After the start of the course, please keep most of your correspondence on the Piazza platform

Office Hours: I welcome the chance to meet with you individually as part of the course. **If you wish to have a one-on-one, please email me** (the exception to the rule above). Please contact me at least 24 hours in advance if you wish to schedule a one-on-one. I will generally be available for office hours during the hour before and after synchronous classes: **1-2pm, and 4-5pm.** On days when we do asynchronous work, I will be responding to your posts on Piazza and available to meet between **2-4pm.**

Course Materials: All readings and scores will be made available to you through OWL. There is no textbook or other required materials.

Grading

Grade Weighting

Attendance, Participation and Forum Posting: 20%
Be active and engaged on the Piazza forums, attend all classes or speak to me if you have a schedule conflict, contribute when requested, respond to your peers, participate actively in online synchronous classes.

Collaborative Journals: 20%
5% for each week's journal prompt+response, plus 5% for your meta-reflection.

Repertoire Resource Guide: 20%
Will not be graded until final submission.

Teaching Demonstrations: 20%
10% each, x2

Critical Listening Lesson Plan: 20%
All members of your team will receive the same grade.

Assignment: Collaborative Journals

Collaborative Journals

Every Monday, at the start of each week of the course, you will be writing a reflective journal prompt to another member of the class. Journals will offer a chance for both of you to reflect on your current practice - in teaching, conducting, or otherwise leading music. On Sunday at the conclusion of each week, your journaling partner will write back to you. You will have a different journaling partner every week. One week following the conclusion of the course, you will submit these journals to me along with a meta-reflection.

Guidelines for reflection will be discussed on the first day of class. A good journal prompt will identify an aspect of your own teaching/conducting that you wish to reflect on, offer some descriptive background, connect to at least one reading or topic we have explored, and provide some guidance as to how your partner might respond. A good response similarly will offer some evidence from your own practice, connect to literature and activity in the course, and provide some avenues for future exploration and improvement. Your final meta-analysis will combine reflection on your own journals, your partner's responses, and your learning in the course as a whole.

Prompts and responses should be c. 500 words or the equivalent of two-pages, double spaced.

Journals will be submitted through Piazza. To submit, create a "New Post" and choose the option to "Post to Individual Student/Instructor." Send to Instructor (me) and your journaling partner.

Due dates:
Journal 1:
Prompt - July 13
Response - July 19
Journal 2:
Prompt - July 20
Response - July 26
Journal 3:
Prompt - July 27
Response - Aug 2

Meta Journal Due Aug 7

Assignment: Repertoire Resource Guide

Repertoire Resource Guide

Throughout the course, you will be responsible for developing a resource guide to one of the pieces from the course packet, informed by your analysis of the piece and our work throughout the course. A resource guide provides valuable background information and teaching strategies for prospective conductors interested in programming a piece of music.

During the first week of the course, you will post a draft of your resource guide to Piazza. This will provide a basis for the rest of our work in the course on this piece, and you and colleagues will have the opportunity to refine the guide throughout your work in the course. The week following the course, you will submit your final guide, along with any revisions and teaching activities you wish to include from yours and your colleagues' work.

Resource guide guidelines will be discussed, along with an exemplar, in class. Your final guide should include the following sections:

- Catalogue information (Title, composer, publisher, duration)
- Brief background information on the composer
- Brief background information on the piece
- Historical/cultural considerations
- Technical considerations for teaching (vocal, melodic, rhythmic, harmonic difficulties)
- Stylistic concerns (overall considerations of genre/style, could apply to other works in that style)
- Musical features (specific to this piece)
- Form and structural characteristics
- Text/translation/diction concerns (as relevant)
- Relevant recordings or research related to the piece/composer
- A "teaching analysis" of the piece, using one of the formats discussed in class or another salient format of your choosing (mind-map, if-then chart, structural chart)

Due Dates:

Draft resource guide due: Friday July 16, 2pm

Final resource guide due: Friday Aug 7

Assignment: Teaching Demonstrations

Teaching Demonstrations (x2)

You will complete two short (c5-8 minute) teaching demonstrations in a small group on Zoom, focusing on specific modeling and instructional techniques related to the repertoire we are studying. As we can't

really replicate an ensemble experience online, these may require some flexibility, good natured-ness, and imagination!

Both of these teaching demonstrations must focus on different pieces that are **not** the piece that you are responsible for writing a repertoire guide about.

Teaching Demo 1 - Connecting to Repertoire through Warmups (Monday July 20)
You will design three vocal warm-up activities that connect to musical/technical elements of your chosen piece. Exercises should address an anticipated challenge in the music before singers encounter the piece in rehearsal. Demonstrations should incorporate appropriate vocal and kinesthetic modeling, and connect to principles of good vocal technique. One person in your online group will be designated to sing back to you.

You will also notate/describe and submit your exercises to the class.

Teaching Demo 2 - Connecting to Repertoire through Movement (Friday July 31)

You will lead your small group through a brief movement activity or series of activities that elucidates musical/technical/stylistic aspects of your chosen piece. For this assignment, you may use pre-recorded audio of your piece, sing or play with the class if you have that capability, or designate one singer in the group. You will also describe your activity in writing and submit.

Review and assessment:

Teaching demonstrations will be conducted either through Zoom breakout groups or as separate Zoom meetings, and will be recorded for you and your class colleagues to review. At least two peers will be assigned to provide feedback and peer assessment on each demonstration, which will be used along with the instructor's assessment to determine your grade for each teaching demo assignment. In addition to your ability to connect your demonstration to the musical content of your chosen piece, you will be assessed on your leading of the activity - general comportment, language use, scaffolding principles, appropriate vocal and physical modeling etc.

Assignment: Critical Listening Lesson Plan

Critical Listening Lesson Plan

In a small group, you will design a lesson plan featuring 2 or 3 objectives-based, sequential critical listening, reflection, and/or creation activities related to pieces in our repertoire packet.

Choose 2 or 3 works that members of your group have worked on. Make an argument for why these pieces should be studied together through listening. What are the connections between them? Can you create a theme or concept that links them together? What structural/stylistic/technical elements of the piece can you address through listening that will assist your singers to connect to the music in rehearsal? How can you teach towards emotional resonance through this activity? (If you wish and it is relevant, your third work/activity may focus on a piece not in the course packet).

Target your lesson plan at a specific age/grade/ability level. Each activity in your lesson plan should have a clearly defined objective, assessment strategies, sequential procedures, and provide links to resources (videos, recordings, scores, apps) when necessary.

Your final lesson plan should be flexible to be delivered in-person or online, and can incorporate elements of online learning technologies if you feel comfortable and confident with using them.

Submit your final lesson plan through Piazza for all to see, reflect on, and use! Another small group will be assigned to "run through" your plan and provide peer feedback.

Due: Monday July 27 by 2pm.

Zoom classroom protocol

We will be using Zoom for all synchronous class sessions. While many of you may be familiar with the Zoom app already, others may be using it for the first time. Here are some helpful hints and class protocols.

1. Western University's Zoom help page, where you can download the app if you don't have it already. https://wts.uwo.ca/zoom/index.html
2. Please keep your video on during class when possible. This will help us establish a welcoming atmosphere for all.
3. If you join the meeting before class starts, you're welcome to leave your microphone on to chat with colleagues. Once class starts, we'll all mute our microphones except when speaking, to reduce background noise.
4. To pose a question, use the "raise hand" feature, which is located in the "Participants" tab which you can access from a button along the bottom of the screen.
5. We will be doing a few teaching demonstrations in small groups on Zoom. For these, it would be best for you to turn on "Original Audio" so that the audio of any singing demonstration you do doesn't become compressed. Learn how to turn on original sound here. https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115003279466-Enabling-option-to-preserve-original-sound
6. Please refrain from using the Chat feature to ask questions and have side conversations. That will help us recreate a seminar atmosphere during synchronous sessions.
7. Treat Zoom class like an in-person class: arrive on time, be engaged, close extra browser windows, silence your cell phones, etc.
8. All sessions will be recorded and posted for your review.

Attendance and Accommodation for Illness

Students should attend all classes unless leave has been granted for medical or academic reasons. Unexplained absences will result in an immediate 5% deducted of the final course grade. Students should consult the policies found here https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf

Students should provide medical documentation when appropriate, and are permitted by university policy to self-report up to two short (up to 48 hour) absences for work worth 30% or less of their final grade. Students may not self-report their absences for exams. Any absences should be immediately discussed with the course instructor within 24 hours of the absence, or preferably before an anticipated absence. Provided all parameters of the university policy have been met, the absence will be considered valid and the instructor will negotiate a new due date for any missed assignments.

Grading, Late Work and Extensions

Grading Scale: A+ (90-100), A (80-89), B (70-79), C (60-69), D (50-59), F (00-49)

Extensions on assignments may be granted on an individual basis for valid medical or academic reasons as per the accommodation policy above. Deadlines missed for invalid reasons will be subject to a penalty of 10% taken off the assignment and a new date of submission must be immediately negotiated with the instructor within 24 hours of the missed deadline. Missed work which is not discussed within this timeline will receive a grade of 0%.

Statement on Academic Offenses

Academic proficiency is expected in all written assignments. This means using an appropriate tone, correct grammar, citations, and original work. Instances of plagiarism will result in a mark of 0 on the assignment in question and will be referred to the Department Chair for other appropriate disciplinary measures.

See the University policy here https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Statement on Mental Health

Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.