

**DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC AND THEATRE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA**

**Choral Conducting  
Spring 2013**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Course Number:** MU 384-01

**Contact/Credit Hours:** 2/2

**Professor:** Dr. Ian Loepky

**Office:** Choral and Recital Room, MB 146

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**Office hours:** Open-door policy; best times to be reached are 9:00-11:00 a.m. Monday-Friday. Best reached by email for questions or assistance.

**Meeting time and place:** Monday and Wednesday, 8:00am-8:50am, MB 146

**Texts:** Elizabeth A.H. Green and Mark Gibson, *The Modern Conductor*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (required text; use no previous editions)

Dennis Shrock, ed. and arr., *Music for beginning conductors: an anthology for choral conducting classes*.

Benjamin Britten *Rejoice in the Lamb*

All of these texts are available at the bookstore. Starting on Wednesday 30 January, you will receive the equivalent of a late for each day that you cannot present an original copy of these materials.

**Other source texts (all are on reserve in the Music Library or in my library):**

Sally K. Albrecht, ed., *The Choral Warm-up Collection*.

Barbara A. Brinson, *Choral Music Methods and Materials*.

Don. L. Collins, *Teaching Choral Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

Harold Decker and Julius Herford, *Choral Conducting Symposium*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

Kevin Fenton, *Foundations of Choral Conducting*.

Gordon H. Lamb, *Choral Techniques*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.

Brock McElheran, *Conducting Technique for Beginners and Professionals*.

Kenneth H. Phillips, *Directing the Choral Music Program*.

Ray Robinson and Allen Winold, *The Choral Experience: Literature, Materials, and Methods*.

Dennis Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*

Homer Ulrich, *A Survey of Choral Music*.

**Other materials:** Set of blue and red coloured pencils.

**Course description:**

This course assumes knowledge of basic conducting gesture as taught in Fundamentals of Conducting (MU 382) as it relates to ALL musical ensembles (not just choruses); namely, showing tempo, articulation, and dynamic in the right hand, and matters of expression and precision in the left. The course builds on that body of knowledge to attain advanced competency in obtaining nuance, rhythmic precision, and subtle accentuation through one's conducting technique as related to choral ensembles. Advanced conducting technique, appropriate gestures, score preparation and rehearsal techniques will be emphasized.

**Course objectives:**

1. Students will continue to refine the conducting of beat patterns in all meters, and to learn strategies for keeping these clear over a lifetime of conducting
2. Students will build on the basics of right-hand pattern-keeping (i.e. tempo, dynamic, articulation) to include subtleties of cues, sustains, releases, melded gestures, preparatory gestures, ritards, accelerandos, and fermatas with both hands (but primarily the left).
3. Students will be able to conduct literature from all eras with appropriate expression and style.
4. Students will learn to identify and correct matters of blend, balance, tone, vowel uniformity, and diction in the choral rehearsal.
5. Students will be able to prepare and mark a score for rehearsal
6. Students will regularly conduct the rest of the class members on selected repertoire. In addition, each student will conduct a portion of either Chamber Choir or Vocal Jazz Ensemble on the last two days of classes.

The prospective teacher will demonstrate the

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
290-3-3-.32(2)(b)2.(iv) Ability to utilize score reading, stylistic analysis, rehearsal management, performance practice, and conducting techniques while conducting music ensembles.	Unit tests, in-class conducting assignments, ensemble conducting assignments, final exam
290-3-3-.32(2)(f)1.(ii) Knowledge of content, methodologies, philosophies, materials, technologies, and curriculum development for choral music.	Unit tests, in-class conducting assignments, ensemble conducting assignments, final exam
290-3-3-.32(2)(f)1.(v) Knowledge of the organization and training of singers in the performance of appropriate choral literature.	Unit tests, in-class conducting assignments, ensemble conducting assignments, final exam
290-3-3-.32(2)(f)2.(vi) Ability to conduct ensembles.	in-class and ensemble conducting

## Required Work

Work for this course will consist of the following:

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Three conducting reviews of other conductors          | 24% (8% each) |
| 2. In-class conducting assignments with self-evaluations | 40% (8% each) |
| 3. Chamber Choir/Vocal Jazz session with self-evaluation | 16%           |
| 4. Final exam  | 20%           |

## Conducting Reviews

You will need to attend three rehearsals of any UNA ensemble **of which you are not a member**: Other ensembles such as local community bands or choruses, church choirs, school choirs, etc. may be acceptable—check with the instructor before attending. Please obtain the permission of the conductor of ANY ensemble before attending his/her rehearsal. **Each review must be of an ensemble conducted by a different conductor i.e. three different conductors in all.** One of these may be the instructor of this course. Conducting observation forms will be provided on Angel.

## Conducting Assignments

You will be given specific conducting assignments six times throughout the quarter. These assignments will consist of conducting an assigned piece out of Shrock's *Music for Beginning Conductors* while the rest of the class sings this piece. You will be expected to teach the piece to the class; show the appropriate tempo, dynamic, and articulation with the right hand, and subtleties of all of these as well as phrasing and fermatas with the left; and explain the structure of the piece (a "phrasal analysis") and any other factors that inform your musical decisions. Your score will be marked for performance (red for cues, blue to bring out all other expressive or technical markings). These assignments are as follows:

1. **Any one of Shrock 27 through 43:** conduct these pieces with permutations of tempo, articulation and dynamic in right hand, with attention to vowel uniformity, clarity of diction, phrasing, and other expressive gestures.
2. **Any one of Shrock 63 through 76:** Conduct canons with independent use of cueing with left hand to multiple sections, with attention to showing changes in phrasing and tempo .
3. **Any one of Shrock 94 through 103:** Conduct music with four independent voice parts, demonstrating cueing and assessment of individual lines for blend, balance, tone, phrasing, and clarity of diction.
4. **Choice of choral piece:** prepare and conduct a repertory work of choral music (repertoire to be chosen in consultation with the instructor). See list at the end of this syllabus for suggestions.
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6. **Any one of the pieces from Assignments #1-5:** Conducting in front of an actual collegiate chorus (Chamber Choir or Vocal Jazz Ensemble).

These conducting assignments will be video recorded. The departmental Flip camera is to be used for recordings; with approval, you may use your own camera (such as a “smartphone”) for this purpose.

Within **one week** of your assignment you will be required to review your recording with the instructor during office hours or by appointment, and complete the Conducting Observation Form together with the instructor.

For the sixth and final time, you may choose any of the previous five assignments to conduct with the UNA Chamber Choir or Vocal Jazz Ensemble during the last week of classes. No Conducting Observation Form will be required for this conducting session, but you will be graded on your conducting with this group by the instructor.

### **Class participation**

All students are required to participate in the class either by singing or playing as the in-class “laboratory chorus”; this course is a performance-oriented class. Both the quality of your work and your growth over the course of the semester will count toward your class participation and conducting assignment grades. Also, you will discover that just as much (and often more) can be discovered in the role of observer as that of conductor; therefore, good attendance is important and expected. To this end, attendance will be taken at each class period, and each unexcused absence will result in a deduction of 2.5% from your final grade. Two lates equal one absence. Outside obligations must not conflict with your being on time for all classes.

### **Absence Policy**

Absences are automatically considered unexcused unless a reason is provided that can be proved unforeseeable and unavoidable.

- a. This reason must meet both of these criteria, and be backed up by written documentation from an authority figure. For example, reporting an illness without a doctor’s note is considered an unexcused absence.
- b. Your roommate is not an authority figure, but your resident supervisor, parent, landlord, mechanic, physician, employer, pastor, teacher, police officer, or judge is (i.e. people with professional reputations to protect).
- c. Prolonged illness should be explained to the instructor on an individual basis.
- d. Excessive *excused* absences will be dealt with according to UNA policy.

### **Final Exam**

The Final Exam will be a practical demonstration of the gestures needed in the performance of Benjamin Britten’s *Rejoice in the Lamb*, opening to page 10. Students will be asked to conduct this work with special attention paid to rapid changes in meter, dynamics, tempi, and articulation; and handling of fermati and transitions between

sections. This work will be conducted in real time in front of the instructor, who will provide real-time auidial feedback.

**Course Outline (revised 23 August 2012);**

Note: this outline is subject to change depending on class enrollment. Any changes will be announced in the previous class.

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Additional assignments (due for this date)</b>
Week 1 (9 Jan.)	Introduction to course, textbook	
Week 2 (14, 16 Jan.)	Review of basic patterns (4,3,2)—single hand and mirrored Review of odd meters, asymmetric meters Review of left-hand cueing on all beats of the measure Review of permutations of tempo, articulation, and dynamic in the right hand Review of broken and joined fermatas	
Week 3 (23 Jan.)	<b>Conducting assignment #1</b>	Green Chapter 5
Week 4 (28, 30 Jan.)	<b>Assignment #1 continued</b>	
Week 5 (4, 6 Feb.)	<b>Conducting assignment #2</b>	Green Chapters 6 Conducting Review #1 due
Week 6 (11, 13 Feb.)	<b>Assignment #2 continued</b>	
Week 7 (18, 20 Feb.)	<b>Conducting Assignment #3</b>	Green Chapters 7
Week 8 (25, 27 Feb.)	<b>Assignment #3 continued</b>	
Week 9 (4, 6 Mar.)	<b>Assignment #4</b>	Green Chapter 10
Week 10 (11, 13 Mar.)	<b>Assignment #4 continued</b>	Conducting Review #2 due
Week 11 (18, 20 Mar.)	<b>Conducting Assignment #5</b>	
Week 12 (1, 3 Apr.)	<b>Assignment #5 continued</b>	
Week 13 (8, 10 Apr.)	<b>Conducting final exam preparation: Britten Rejoice in the Lamb, pp. 1-10</b>	
Week 14 (15,17 Apr.)	<b>Final exam preparation continued</b>	Decisions for CC/VJE conducting due by this date
Week 15 (22, 24 Apr.)	<b>Assignment #6 and final exam preparation continued</b> Review and preparation for final exam and Chamber Choir/Vocal Jazz session (assignment #6)	Green Chapter 16 Conducting Review #3 due
Week 16 (29, 30 Apr.; 1 May)	<b>Assignment #6 and final exam preparation continued</b>  <b>Assignment #6:</b> Conducting selected repertoire with a choice of either Tuesday 11:00 – 12:15 p.m. (Chamber Choir) or Wednesday 4:00 – 5:15 p.m. (Vocal Jazz)	
Monday, 6 May, 3:15 – 5:00 p.m.	<b>Exam (order chosen randomly at the beginning of the exam).</b>	

### **Suggestions for choral pieces for Assignments #4 and 5:**

(parentheses indicate UNA Choral Library catalogue number)

Desprez – El Grillo  
Palestrina – Sicut cervus  
Tallis – If ye love me  
Morley – Now is the month of maying  
Handel – “For unto us a child is born” from Messiah  
Purcell – “Come away, fellow sailors” from Dido and Aeneas  
Vivaldi – Mvt. I of Gloria (D43)  
Mozart – Ave verum corpus  
Mozart – “Lacrimosa” from Requiem  
Haydn – “The heavens are telling” from The Creation (D76)  
Mendelssohn – “He, watching over Israel” from Elijah (D32)  
Mendelssohn – Die Nachtigall (A986)  
Schubert – “Sanctus” from Deutsche Messe (German Mass)  
Schubert – Ständchen (A941)  
Brahms – O Schöne Nacht (A268)  
Brahms – “Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen” (D75)  
Faure – “Kyrie” from Requiem (D13)  
Saint-Saens – “Finale” from Christmas Oratorio (D24)  
Rachmaninoff – “Borogoditsye Devo” from All-night vigil (or Vespers) (A1094)  
Stanford – The Blue Bird  
Bruckner – Locus iste  
Dvorak – Songs of Nature  
Poulenc – Gloria (mvt. I)  
Hindemith – “La Biche” from Six Chansons (A680)  
Ives – Sixty-Seventh Psalm (A389)  
Durufle – Requiem, mvt. I  
Copland – The promise of living  
Thompson – Choose something like a star (A272)  
Hogan – My soul’s been anchored (A864)  
Thomas – Keep your lamps (A950)  
Lauridsen – O nata lux (A823)  
Whitacre – Water night (A897)

### **Accommodation Statement**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the University offers reasonable accommodations to students with eligible documented learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities as compared to an average person in the population. It is the responsibility of the student to contact Developmental Services prior to the beginning of the semester to initiate the accommodation process and to notify instructors within the first three class meetings to develop an accommodation plan. Appropriate, reasonable accommodations will be made to allow each student to meet course requirements, but no fundamental or substantial alteration of academic standards will be made. Students needing assistance should contact Developmental Services.