



Student Syllabus
2016 – 2017

Entertainers . Bel Canto . Concert Chorale . Chamber Singers

Mr. Rob Blaney, Director

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whs-vocal-music.org

Room: M103

(P2) Entertainers (P3) Bel Canto (P4) Concert Chorale – Men (P5) Chamber Singers (P6) Concert Chorale – Women

Office Hours: Arranged As Needed

Course Description

The Vocal Music Department is comprised of 5 choral ensembles that perform music appropriate for the level of students in the class. Students will sing music from a variety of musical genres and will acquire skills in reading music notation and in vocal production. During the course of the year, students will gain historical and cultural perspectives by studying, analyzing and performing music from across the ethnic and historical spectrum. Students will gain knowledge in the areas of vocal production, aural training skills, diction, balance and blend, music reading, harmony, intonation, interpretive elements, styles and periods of music history, performance skills, and rhythmic precision. Through participation in concerts and festivals, students will respond to and assess the technical and aesthetic aspects of choral performance. Students will gain understanding of the choral art in relation to other performance disciplines and potential future career opportunities.

Learning Materials and Supplies

-  Positive attitude
-  Choir Music *
-  Choir Folder *
-  Pencil *
-  Calendar/Planner

* Provided by the Vocal Music Department

Course Evaluation

Sometimes students are having such a great time preparing music for performance that they forget that this is an academic class! Virtually everything students do in connection with this course is evaluated. In order to minimize the subjectivity inherent in such evaluation, each activity will be evaluated for its quality and completeness, with emphasis upon commitment, discipline, improvement, participation, written work, and performance. Grades are calculated using a point system and some assignments will have a grading rubric to assess the grade. Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor at any time to review their progress. The final course grade is comprised of total percentage points in four main areas:

-  25% Class Participation/Attitude
-  20% Homework/Class Work
-  25% Class Projects/Tests
-  30% Performances/Rehearsals/Sectionals

*25% of this course is graded on **Class Participation and Attitude**.*

You start the semester with 100% of your participation points. When you are in class and prepared each day you earn full credit for the day. What does *being prepared* look like?

- Backpacks, cell phones, and other non-class materials are to be left on the side of the room.
 - You will lose “2” percentage points if you have an unexcused tardy or have your cell phone out during class.
- Absolutely no food is allowed to be eaten in the classroom.
 - Bottled water is the only acceptable drink to have in the classroom.
 - You will lose “2” percentage points if you have food in the classroom.
- You are making progress with learning music and vocal development.
 - Eventually, you will lose percentage points if you are not making progress.
- You are singing, participating in class discussions, and have a positive and cooperative attitude.
 - Everyone has an *off* day every now and then. Just let Mr. Blaney know and he will overlook it. However, you will lose percentage points if this becomes a habit.

*20% of this course is graded on **Homework, Class Work, and Sectionals.***

I'll be honest with you. There is very little homework. Your homework will mainly consist of returning papers requiring parent signatures (like the last page of this syllabus), returning fundraising packets on the due date, and the occasional theory or listening assignment. Your **daily** homework is working to memorize your music. I will give you a date when this needs to be accomplished by. It will be weeks out, and I have very little sympathy for those who are not memorized by the due date. We will test you for memorization and you will lose points if not prepared by the assigned date.

Occasionally, there will be work that you will complete in class and turn in at the end of the period. I expect all of your work to be neatly written, well thought-out, spelled correctly, and use proper sentence structure. Take pride in your work... it is a reflection on you!

Sectionals: Aside from our daily rehearsal time, sectionals are when you will bond as a section and really perfect the work that we are doing in class. When school begins we will meet as sections (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) to determine the best meeting time for all students. It is important that all members of the section be at each sectional rehearsal. Most students choose to meet during Tutorial for Sectionals, however you may meet before or after school, or at lunch if this works out better for your section. I realize that you will need to meet with other teachers and subjects, but this subject is also important. **You are required to meet as a section for one half-hour each week.** If you miss a sectional, you must make it up with your section leader. Sectionals will begin on the week of August 29th.

*25% of this course is graded on **Live Performance Critiques, Projects (To Be Announced), and Tests:***

- **Live Performance Critiques**

Students are required to attend **one** live music performance **per semester** and critique it following specific guidelines. These performances may be of any genre (solo artist, band, musical theatre, choir, opera, etc.) as long as it includes live singing by people high school age or older. **Late work will not be accepted for any reason.**

One of these performances may be **informal** (coffee shop, church, shopping center, a lunchtime concert on-campus, etc.). These performances will usually be free and may not have a printed program. Mr. Blaney will have a brief meeting to ask you specific questions about the performance. Only a short fill-in form will be required to turn in for oral critiques.

At least **one** of your critiques must be **formal** concert events, meaning that there is a ticket and program. These will be written, and must follow specific guidelines. We will let you know about upcoming concerts as we hear about them, and periodically during the year will offer free tickets to concerts.

- **Music Theory Quizzes and Exams**

Please use <http://www.musictheory.net> at least once a week to keep up on your theory. If you need more understanding beyond what we cover in class, then spend more time on the site. You will have periodic quizzes during the semester, and a weighty music theory mid-term and final. For Sight Singing, we use <http://thepracticeroom.net>. Using it will improve your sight singing, which you will be tested on. Both of these websites are free for you to use. Please take this part of the class seriously, as it seriously affects your grade.

*30% of this course is graded on **Performances, Dress Rehearsals, and Festivals.***

First off, let's be clear: If you are in this class, you are expected to perform when the choir performs. Period. For most students, this is something that they look forward to and really enjoy. I expect that you will do your absolute best to schedule work and family events around the performance schedule to be sure that you are in town and available to perform. You will receive the performance schedule on the first day of school so there is really no excuse for missing a performance. There will be a few events added during the course of the year and I will do my absolute best to let you know as soon as I do so you can make them a priority. If you don't perform, I can't give you a grade. With that said, there are events that warrant an exception to this rule such as severe personal illness, death in the family, or other extreme circumstance. Celebrating your own birthday or celebrating with a parent/guardian/brother/sister/friend is not an excuse to miss a performance, and will **not** be counted as an excused absence.

I also expect that you will keep your grades well above a 2.0 GPA as this is the minimum required in order to participate in performances. Choir is a group activity, and you owe it to your fellow singers to remain eligible to perform.

Each performance, dress rehearsal, and festival is worth 100 points. You will lose “10” points for each tardy and “10” points if you are not in the correct attire (dress rehearsals, concerts, and festivals). If you have an unexcused absence for a performance, dress rehearsal, or festival you will not receive any credit. Unless directed otherwise, you are expected to stay at these events for the entire time. Excused absences may be made up by writing a paper, and must be cleared by Mr. Blaney at least 2 weeks before the concert or rehearsal. Failure to clear the absence, in advance, with Mr. Blaney will result in a grade of “0” for the concert.

Performances: On the first day of school you will receive a calendar of the performances for the year. Please make them a priority. Unless notified by Mr. Blaney, you are expected to stay for the duration of the performance. *

Dress Rehearsals: On the first day of school you will receive a calendar of the dress rehearsals for the year. Please make them a priority. These are important, as this is our time to work with instrumentalists, lights, sound, and costumes to be sure that we are ready to give our best performance for our audience. Unless notified by Mr. Blaney, you are expected to stay for the duration of the rehearsal. *

Festivals: On occasion, the choir will travel to a choral festival off-campus. We do not always know these dates at the beginning of school, but will do our best to give you as much advanced warning as possible. Unless notified by Mr. Blaney, you are expected to stay for the duration of the performance. *

** Please plan your work and family schedules to be sure you are available for all Dress Rehearsals, Concerts, and Festivals. If you are on a WHS sports team, please see Mr. Blaney in person to make arrangements for practice and game conflicts. It is your responsibility to recognize conflicts. If you play a CLUB sport (a non-WHS team) your commitment to the WHS Vocal Music Program is expected to take priority. Absences for non-WHS sports teams will not be excused.*

WHS Tardy Policy

I strictly adhere to the WHS Tardy Policy. Choir is a team sport, and everyone suffers when students are tardy to a rehearsal.

Students who are tardy to class will be subject to the following progressive discipline:

Tardy 4-6: *Students will receive a Teacher Assigned Detention for each Tardy.*

Tardy 7-9: *Students will receive an Administrative Referral and Saturday School for each Tardy.*

Tardy 10+: *Students will receive an Administrative Referral and SARB process will begin.*

Homework

All assignments, handouts and music will be posted on the WHS Canvas website.

If your absence is excused, homework work is due the day you return. **All other work you missed while absent will be due according to the amount of days you were gone.** (example: if you are absent two days from class, then you have two days with which to return the work). Any work NOT turned in at that time will be graded as late. Homework that is one day late will be awarded 50% of the total points EARNED. Athletes who are excused early from class must turn in all work due that day BEFORE they leave and must turn in all work assigned the next class.

If your absence is Unexcused, you will receive a “0” for the assignment or performance.

Homework Format

✚ Proper heading in the top right hand corner of the first page:

✚ Your Name

✚ Class Name

✚ Date

✚ Assignment Name

✚ NO NAME, NO GRADE

✚ Any work acceptable to be handwritten must be neat and legible.

✚ Do not turn in papers with torn edges or papers from spiral notebooks.

✚ Staple homework that is more than one page.

✚ All assignments except journals must be typed. The only acceptable format is double spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman font.

Due to the nature of this class, much of the homework will involve learning songs and practicing for consistency. Due to the performance aspect of the class, all songs will be memorized for performance.

Quizzes and Tests

Students will be learning musical terms, music theory, and sight singing. This information is the foundation of the class material and an indispensable part of gaining familiarity with the subject.

The mid-term and final exam will be comprehensive covering information given during the semester. You begin preparing for it the first weeks of school. Review sheets will be given and discussed in class two weeks prior to the exam.

If you are absent on a test day and the absence is excused, you will be expected to make-up the test or quiz by appointment within 2 days of your return. It is **your responsibility** to contact me to schedule a time for this test. A timely response is imperative for your sake and allows your grades to be kept current. If you have not made arrangements to make up the test by the end of the second day, you will receive a grade of “0”.

If you are absent on a test day and the absence is UNexcused, you will receive a grade of “0”.

Cheating

Cheating is the deliberate or attempted use of an unauthorized materials, information, technology, study aides, or unauthorized group work on assignments, projects, tests, or other academic exercises during class or outside of class. You will be told when group work is appropriate. Representing or attempting to represent oneself **as** another is cheating. Any attempt therefore, to give or receive improper assistance is cheating. Taking a picture of the test or answer key with your phone is considered cheating. The consequence for cheating is a “0” for the assignment, and referral to the administration in accordance with the WHS Academic Honesty Policy. Using technology to disseminate quizzes or tests via email, Facebook, Twitter, etc., is cheating. WHS has a ZERO TOLERANCE for cheating.

Rehearsals

We do our best to use every minute of class time during the regular school day to learn and perfect our music. That being said, we use lighting, costumes and staging in our concerts, which may be necessary to rehearse apart from the school day. Therefore, we will schedule a *Dress Rehearsal* – usually the afternoon or evening before a scheduled concert. These dates will be on the calendar provided on the first day of school so that students may plan for meals and homework. We encourage students to bring homework to dress rehearsals, and we schedule our time so we don’t call students needlessly.

Performances

Please refer to the calendar of performances for all dates scheduled so far. Additional performances will be added throughout the year. We make every effort to allow for advanced notice of added events so that students may plan around homework, sports, and work schedules. As such, students are expected to make performances a priority. In the event that a conflict arises, students should let Mr. Blaney know *immediately* so that a resolution might be worked out. Except in emergency situations (hospital, death in the family), missing a dress rehearsal or performance with less than 2 weeks notice will result in a grade of “0”.

Some performances will take place during the school day and require students to miss academic classes. When this occurs, students are expected to make arrangements with the teacher of that class. As a courtesy to your other teachers, Mr. Blaney requests that all homework and tests be made up before the absence occurs (when possible). Missing another class for a performance is something that we avoid as much as possible.

General Class Procedure and Expectations

- ✚ Each class will start at the tardy bell. Students not in the classroom when the tardy bell rings will be marked absent.
- ✚ Food and drink (except water) is not permitted at any time in class unless the instructor gives express permission.
- ✚ Music is a collaborative art, which requires participants to commit to each other and to the whole group; perfect attendance should be your goal. This class will strictly adhere to the school’s attendance policy.
- ✚ We will use the entire class period each day. Please show respect to the teacher, your classmates and the learning environment by staying on task until the bell rings or until asked to put your music away for the day.
- ✚ Students are provided with one copy of each piece of music we will perform. If the student loses this copy, he/she will be responsible for payment to replace it.
- ✚ Students are expected to be dressed according to the school dress code at all times. Failure to do so will result in the student being reported to the administration. When performing as a group, students may be required to wear specific clothing according to dress code. If a student is not dressed appropriately for a performance, he/she may not be able to perform. This will result in a grade of “0” for the performance.
- ✚ Students may not drastically change their look (hair length and/or color), piercings, tattoos, without approval from Mr. Blaney (Entertainers, Chamber Singers, Bel Canto).
- ✚ Using the bathroom during class disturbs the rehearsal and the collaborative learning process. If you should have an emergency, let Mr. Blaney know, take the hall pass, and return as quickly as possible.
- ✚ When using e-mail, please practice formal, mature and courteous language. Text message format is not appropriate when addressing your instructor. Should a transmission be inappropriate, parents and the administration will be notified.
- ✚ Cell phones must be turned off or on “silent mode” during class and kept in a backpack, purse, or pocket. Cell phones may not be used in class. **Cell phones seen being used during class will be taken to the school office and retrieved at the end of the school day.**
- ✚ Students are expected to sell tickets to concerts, and to participate fully in fundraising activities. Students and families should speak with Mr. Blaney in person or via email with any concerns.

- ✚ Some songs that we sing will include parts that are solos. These are auditioned in class and awarded to the voice that best fits the needs of the song, not by seniority. Audition dates are announced in advance, and those students who are absent or sick on that day will not be able to audition. When auditioning for a “stand-alone” solo, pay close attention to the theme of the concert and the types of solos that are requested. When in doubt, choose an up-tempo song.
- ✚ As a member of the WHS Vocal Music Department, it is expected that you will treat other students and faculty in a courteous manner with dignity and respect. Students who engage in fighting, use foul or rude language, are disrespectful to other students in class, send inappropriate text messages, or post inappropriate message on social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) create a negative image for the department. These actions will not be tolerated. If you are upset with something happening in class, a decision that was made by Mr. Blaney or another class member, please talk with them personally to work it out. There is a “zero tolerance” policy for drug use of any kind. On occasions, students who are consistent in these types of behavior are asked to drop the class and find another elective.
- ✚ At the end of the year, moving to a higher-level choir is at the discretion of Mr. Blaney, and is not based on seniority. Mr. Blaney watches each student during the school year to check for musical progress, performance improvement, attendance, humility, and attitude. It is his job to be sure that students are placed in the appropriate class; not only to meet the needs of the individual student, but also to fulfill the voicing needs of the department. Just because a student may be a “junior” or “senior” does not necessarily mean that he/she will remain in or be moved to an advanced choir. Students are encouraged to participate at 100% and to conduct themselves with an attitude of joy and in a manner of excellence.

Performance Attire*

When we perform, we want to look our best! We take great care to be sure that all of our women are dressed the same, and that all of our men are in the same outfit so that the attention is on our beautiful music, and not the different suits and dresses that we are wearing.

Ladies will rent black concert dresses from the department. We will take time in class to fit the ladies for dresses. Any alterations needed are the responsibility of the student and family. We suggest that families donate \$25 to help off-set the cost of wear and tear, as well as dry cleaning. Checks should be made payable to WHS, with the student’s name in the memo line of the check.

Ladies will also be asked to wear black closed-toed dress shoes. These may have a heel or not, depending on preference. Ladies in Entertainers, Bel Canto, and Chamber Singers will be asked to purchase black character shoes with a 1.5” heel. These will run about \$30 online.

*** No student shall be denied the opportunity to participate in the program due to financial reasons. If you are in need of assistance, please contact Mr. Blaney for information.**

Nondiscrimination in activities and programs

The Irvine Unified School District is committed to equal opportunity for all individuals in education. District programs and activities including membership in student clubs shall be free from discrimination based on race, color, ancestry, nationality, ethnic group identification, age, religion, actual or potential parental, family, or marital status, or the exclusion of any person because of pregnancy or related conditions, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, or genetic information; the perception of one or more of such characteristics; or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

