

**University of Western Ontario**  
**Don Wright Faculty of Music**

**Music 2831A - Choral Conducting: Foundations**  
**Fall 2023**

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**Class Schedule**

Please refer to the OWL course site.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course, students explore the direct application of singing and the voice to conducting gesture, as well as effective teaching, learning, and leadership within a choral setting. We will focus on developing conducting skills and rehearsal pedagogy, integrating them with gestural clarity and expressiveness, score study and analysis, aural skills, and the understanding of basic vocal production. Issues of repertoire selection, concert programming, and choral performance will be explored. Students will have the opportunity to develop their skills in a masterclass / lab-style 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. Students are expected to participate fully as a singer/conductor as assigned in class, as well as practice and study assigned repertoire and/or exercises outside of class time, to prepare in advance for each class.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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

- Develop gestural technique in both simple and compound meters, and clear preparatory and cut-off gestures.
- Develop understanding of choral literature, including awareness of Canadian repertoire and living composers.
- Develop understanding of the fundamentals of vocal production and anatomy, and apply them in rehearsal technique through vocal demonstrations.
- Apply basic score study and marking strategies.
- Demonstrate understanding of rehearsal planning, procedures, and implementation.
- Develop musicianship and listening skills in choral rehearsals.
- Explore topics on repertoire selection and vocal flexibility.

## EVALUATION

Participation & Classwork: 30%

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

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

Choral Project: 20%

### **Participation & Classwork: 30%**

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: Sept. 15, Sept. 28, Dec. 1

Three formal personal reflections will be completed during the term.

1. Personal Reflection #1 (Goal setting) – due Sept. 15
2. Personal Reflection #2 (Guest Speaker) – due Sept. 28
3. Personal Reflection #3 (Rehearsal Observation) – due Dec. 1

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: Oct. 16 & 18, Nov. 29 & Dec. 4 & Dec. 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:** 20%

Due date: Dec. 1

The purpose of this assignment is to combine your score study, conducting understanding, and listening skills. From our class set of repertoire, you will select one piece to focus on each of the following:

1. Score Analysis – complete a full score study of the work (using a given template) and provide a clear scan (PDF format) of the marked score.
2. Performance Analysis – reference two video recordings of the piece and provide comparisons of the performance (a template 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 conducting.

## NOTES:

i) **Course Prerequisites: *Permission of the Department.*** 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 & Missing Work ( $\geq 10\%$ ):** Students are responsible for making up any missed classes or assignments as soon as possible. The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. Academic Consideration provides students with consistent, fair, and pedagogically appropriate consideration, without compromising the academic integrity of the course or program, when they have been unable to complete some component of a course due to short-term extenuating circumstances. Students who have long-term or chronic medical conditions (physical or mental) that may impede their ability to complete academic responsibilities are directed to seek Academic Accommodation through Accessible Education ([Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)).

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the end of the period of absence covered, to the Academic Counselling unit or Office of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (TC210), of the student's Home Faculty together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the academic consideration being requested. Students are directed to read the Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness at the following website for further details regarding various requirements and procedures for the supporting documentation:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf)

Whenever possible, students who require academic consideration should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

iv) **Academic Consideration for Missing Work ( $< 10\%$ ):** In cases where students miss work that is worth less than 10% of the total course grade due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if documentation is voluntarily submitted to the Associate Dean's office and the Associate Dean grants an accommodation, then the missed assignment(s) or quiz(zes) will either be given an extension or be

discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course. If documentation is not voluntarily submitted then the missed assignment(s) will receive a grade of zero. Students who have been denied accommodation by an instructor may appeal this decision to the Associate Dean's office but will be required to present appropriate documentation.

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](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 Thames Hall room 2170. **Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in Thames Hall 2170 or to click on the big green "I Need Help Now" button on the Health and Wellness page above.**

vii) **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Students work with Accessible Education 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](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 (other than statutory 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. The Diversity Calendar from the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion provides information on multifaith, multicultural and diversity related holidays and observances and links to resources for more information. <https://www.edi.uwo.ca/resources/2816-2023-Diversity-Calendar-PDF.pdf>

ix) **Contingency Plan:** Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, should any university-declared emergency require 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 course will adapt accordingly. The grading scheme will **not** change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

x) **Gender-Based and Sexual Violence:** Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, either recently or in the past, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca) or call 519 661-3568.

xi) **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.

xii) **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.

xiii) **Plagiarism Detection Software Usage:** All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism, which includes AI writing detection tools. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).