Professor Nathan Lansing, Instructor

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MUSC 127/227

Chamber Choir

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday / 1-3 credits

15-109/1:30-3:30pm T,Th; 2-3pm F

Prerequisite: successful audition

**Chamber Choir** is a small (12-24 voices) ensemble selected by audition with the instructor. This choir is the elite choral ensemble, one of the prime representatives of the Music Department & SFCC, and does the most traveling and performing throughout the academic year. Students will learn and perform a variety of pieces for the small choral ensemble. Emphasis is placed on the development of artistic maturity on the part of the student and upon artistic and accurate performance at high levels of proficiency. A SUCCESSFUL FALL AUDITION ASSUMES A FULL ACADEMIC YEAR COMMITMENT TO THE CHOIR – EXCEPTIONS **MAY** BE CONSIDERED FOR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

As part of the course content, the following **course outcomes** will be addressed:

* *Communication*: Students learn to express all basic and many complex choral music concepts through a wide range of choral music idioms and styles, in a range of languages.
* *Effective thinking*: Students advance their skills in choral singing through teamwork and collective effort to reach the highest possible musical & artistic expression through choral music.
* *Aesthetics*: Students gain a deeper understanding of musical and expressive concepts, and gain confidence in presenting those skills in performance on a regular basis.
* *Professional development*: Chamber Choir also affords students the opportunity to travel across the state, region and nation for performances at festivals, with college or high school choirs, and once a quarter in our own home concerts. We also host groups who may be on tour and share performances with them in the hopes of developing relationships with schools and groups of all levels both locally and regionally.
* *Additional outcomes*: Being a part of a collective artistic endeavor feeds the soul and fosters skills in cooperation, listening, self-reliance and the consideration of others. Constant application of correct singing techniques is emphasized, and advanced music using unusual techniques is explored.

To achieve these outcomes, the following **learning** experiences will be undertaken:

* Instructor-facilitated warm-ups, rehearsals, explanations
* performances and travel for the purposes of public relations exposure, recruitment, expression, or all three
* Sight-singing and ear-training drills and practice

To address **leadership** skills, students will learn:

* *Communication:* Music is qualitatively described through means both verbal and non-verbal, as well as musical notation.
* *Critical thinking:* individual musicians listen constantly and make decisions about tone production, diction, dynamics and more in order to best augment the sound of their section, and the sound of the choir as a whole.
* *Individuality:* Students will understand how their individual sound can be preserved while still in service to the full ensemble’s sound.

**Major Assignments:**

Performance as a group will be an integral part of the ensemble experience and grading process. Students will demonstrate proof of their attention in class by way of score marking (score checks), folder checks (for music and pencils), and singing tests wherein one or two voice(s) from each part will sing their part from a section of a piece of music the ensemble is learning – you will be assigned a score of 1 to 10 based on how well you’ve learned the rhythms, pitches, words and embellishments (accents, dynamics, etc.) of the selected section.

The major assignment for each individual is to have your part learned on the sections of music assigned prior to the combined rehearsal on those sections. If you have little or no skill at playing your own part on an instrument (piano, for example), it is **your job** to ensure that you pair you up with someone in the section who does possess those skills, helps you personally and/or sends you to me so that I may help you. In short, there’s no hiding – **know your part.**

The audition process is designed to select those best suited to this level of musical work and will likely not include those without *some* skill in learning parts on their own.

*How is my progress being* ***assessed****? What* ***grade*** *will I receive?*

Student assessment is mostly dependent upon participation. As such, one’s grade from Chamber Choir will hinge upon active participation in rehearsals, performances, and any other gathering deemed mandatory by the instructor (including caroling, extra rehearsals, concerts, workshops, clinics, and guest artist/guest ensemble opportunities).

Example grades, based on the policy in the following section (see below):

Three or fewer times late, two or fewer times absent, consistent 9/10 average scores on any singing tests =**4.0**

Three absences **or** five times late **and** consistent 9/10 average on any singing tests =**3.8**

Four absences, no times late, 9/10 average on singing tests =**3.4**

Three absences, six times late, 7/8 average on singing tests =**3.2**

* **Students are expected to attend every class.** Your grade will reflect your consistency in being on time and prepared for the days’ rehearsal. Everyone starts with full marks in Participation. Being late more than three (3) times in a quarter or absent more than twice (2 times) in a quarter will start the process that lowers your grade. Each (1) late arrival past the first three results in a lowering of your grade by **one decimal point** (4.0 to 3.9 for example), and each (1) absence past the first two, result in a lowering of your grade by **three decimal points** (4.0 to 3.7 for example). **Missing a PERFORMANCE** without notice will bypass absences and directly lower your grade by **a full grade point** (4.0 to 3.0), and will happen only once – MISSING A SECOND PERFORMANCE WILL RESULT IN YOUR DISMISSAL FROM THE CHOIR.
* The same policy applies to any event with a **call time**. If the call time is 6pm, that’s when you should be there, whether it’s an extra rehearsal, performance, guest group, or any other event that the choir has been told to attend.
* ALL OF THESE POINT VALUES ASSUME NO LEGITIMATE REASON OR NO NOTIFICATION FOR BEING LATE OR ABSENT. I understand extenuating circumstances. Notification PRIOR TO THE START OF CLASS of lateness or absence will be considered extenuating circumstances. Some lessons prior to the start of rehearsals run late – I understand that, and will not penalize those engaged in such lessons. Also, I realize that a few circumstances will not allow for communication via phone, email or through other students. I will hear those circumstances and make an appropriate decision on a case-by-case basis.
* While I am generous with extenuating circumstances, a pattern of consistent lateness or absences with inconsistent circumstances will result in the further **lowering of your grade**. **MISSING YOUR NINTH class** will result in your **removal from the class and the choir**.
* You are expected to know your part on your music in a reasonable time as we progress through rehearsals in each quarter. Periodic part tests will be given over selected sections of selected pieces, and a grade on a scale of one (1 – you showed up and didn’t so much as exhale loudly) to ten (10 – you know every note, rhythm, dynamic and articulation of the selected passage) will be assigned. **Averaging 9 to 10 scores will retain full marks** for your grade. Averaging 8 to 9 will lower your grade **one decimal point**. Averaging 7 to 8 will lower your grade **two decimal points**, and so forth.

**Required texts and materials: *Bring these to class every day!***

* Assigned music. This will be handed out in 8.5” x 11” format, three-hole punched. Please make as many marks as you need, and as I require, during rehearsals – sometimes I change things. Take notes.
* A **black** 3-ring binder (1” or bigger). You should keep choir-related handouts and schedules in it as well.
* *Sharpened* pencil and eraser. Have I mentioned that score marking is crucial?
* Proper formal performance attire for formal performances (see **Performance Attire** below).
* NOT having any of these items when they are required will be considered equal to being **late for a rehearsal or call time** (see above).

***Please note****: at 1:30:01pm, you are late.* ***Each class starts promptly at 1:30pm (2pm on Fridays).*** *The instructor reserves the right to monitor admittance to the class once the door is closed. Time is taken by the CLASSROOM CLOCK – other clocks are not always synchronized with it, so please set your own clock accordingly!*

**Cheating and plagiarism policy:**

Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive zero (0) points for the assignment, quiz or exam and may be referred for further disciplinary action. Cheating involves copying answers or ideas from another student, the course text, individual notes, the Internet, etc., during the course of an exam, quiz or assignment. Plagiarism involves using another person’s words or thoughts without giving that individual proper credit. This includes copying text directly from a book, article, Internet source, or CD-ROM; copying a prior student’s work; working in pairs or groups and turning in the same material; or failure to cite direct quotations or paraphrased ideas from ANY source in ANY assignment. Please familiarize yourself with the section on academic dishonesty in *Student Rights and Responsibilities*.

It is most improbable to cheat in a performance ensemble, but infractions of University policy may be punishable by the assignment of a failing grade.

**Channel for Communication Relating to This Course:**

*Prof. Nathan Lansing (instructor) > Dr. Gerald Krumbholtz (department chair) > Dr. Bonnie Brunt (division chair)*

It is important to follow this communication channel.  Most concerns can be easily and quickly resolved at the instructor or department chair level. You may use any of the following methods to communicate with the instructor: personal face-to-face meeting, phone call/voice mail, email, or a note in the faculty mailbox. Prompt communication with the instructor will facilitate a productive and positive outcome.

**Statement Regarding Reasonable Accommodations:**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other legal mandates, Spokane Falls Community College is committed to working with students with disabilities in determining appropriate and reasonable accommodations for academic and physical needs. If any student has a health condition or disability, which may require accommodation in order to effectively participate in this class, please do one of the following: 1) contact me after class, 2) contact Disability Support Services in Building 17, Room 201, or 3) phone 533-4166 (DSS). **Information about a disability or health condition will be regarded as confidential.**

In order for learning to take place, students must feel safe; this safety is due **all** students, not only those who share your values and beliefs. For this reason, courtesy, thoughtfulness, and acceptance are essential in our discussions in and out of the classroom. Acceptance should not be confused with agreement; one need not agree with a person to listen, and one must listen well in order to disagree respectfully. Every student in this course has a voice, and so deserves the courtesy of attentive listening and the freedom to express diverse ideas.

**Performance Attire**:

* **MEN**: For **formal** performances, such as quarterly home concerts, other concerts where we are a guest group, or any multi-group invitational concert, the required ensemble is a tuxedo. SFCC Music has tuxedoes which we can let you “rent” for the year for a nominal cleaning fee (usually about $20). Alternately (and far more conveniently), you may purchase your own (or use one from prior choirs), so long as it is black, and is of a regular style (notch or peak lapels on a single button jacket, pants w/silk stripe down the side, etc.). In addition, solid black socks, solid black dress shoes, and a standard, wing-collar, white tuxedo shirt must be purchased to fit you. I like to go a little on the larger size in order to have room to breathe. We have a box of cummerbunds and bowties in black you may borrow for performances, or again, purchase your own. Hair should not hang over the face. This is so that sound, vowels and the ability to see the director are not compromised – and so that relatives and friends can see you, and you can use the full range of expression to communicate with the audience through song.
* **WOMEN**: For **formal** performances, we purchase a black performance gown in a sturdy, machine-washable fabric from a catalogue at as low a price as we can pay. This dress usually costs about $60 and is yours to keep once it’s paid for. You must have black, closed-toe dress shoes (I recommend comfort over heels, as you’ll be standing for anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour or more in some cases), black hose or stockings of sufficient length (the gowns are floor-length), and an absence of accessories. The idea is to look as unified as we sound, so ear studs are fine (dangling earrings can distract), and of course any wedding rings, but it’s a concert; it is not an opportunity to show off jewelry, flamboyant hairstyles, or anything like that. Hair should not hang over the face. This is so that sound, vowels and the ability to see the director are not compromised – and so that relatives and friends can see you, and you can use the full range of expression to communicate with the audience through song.
* **Informal performances** will usually mean dressing “semi-formal” or “snappy casual”, usually in all black or black with a color accent. We needn’t look the same, as in the formal look (for example, khaki or other color dress pants and a button-down shirt without necktie would be fine), but we should show some uniformity in color and presentation. I prefer this look to be modest, as opposed to flashy or provocative.
* **Casual** or **exchange** performances while visiting other schools or ensembles can be SFCC t-shirt and jeans casual. I recommend purchasing an SFCC-themed t-shirt and pairing it with jeans that are comfortable without being riddled with holes or provocatively cut. I may try to arrange for a single shirt or set of shirts that have a complementary color scheme and set them aside for you to purchase for this purpose.

**Performances/Events:** THIS IS BY NO MEANS A COMPLETE LIST!

* Tuesday, March 17th, 7pm – SFCC Winter Quarter Choral Concert, Building 15 Auditorium.

**Class will not meet on**:

Class will always meet unless I *specifically* call class off. When I am not here, ***you are expected to work in sections and then together*** to learn new music or new sections of assigned music either with Rachelle Ventura (accompanist, here F) or yourselves (T/Th). Please use this time *wisely*.

I shall be away for the following rehearsals:

Thursday, February 26th – Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival Adjudication, college, elementary & MS/JH vocals

Friday, February 27th – Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival Adjudication, HS vocals