Department: Music

Course No: 112

Credits:1

Title: University Symphony Orchestra

Contact: Peter Sac

Content Area: CA1-Arts and Humanities

Catalog Copy: Either semester. One credit each semester. Three laboratory periods. Open only with consent of instructor. May be repeated for credit. Sacco Standard symphonic repertoire, technique of orchestral routine, preparation and presentation of concerts.

Course Information: a. The orchestra program is an ancillary to the academic and pre-professional training in the Department of Music. Participation in the ensemble is predicated upon passing strict audition requirements and is thus not open to anyone. Through its performances of a mix of standard, contemporary and crossover repertory it seeks to offer musical experiences which enhance and embellish the academic curriculum.

b. Course requirements: Specify exam formats, nature and scope of weekly reading assignments, nature and scope of writing assignments, problem sets, etc.

The student instrumentalist must come to rehearsals prepared to contribute to the exacting process of refining musical phrasing, rhythms, intonation, and coordinations with other instrumental groupings. Fundamental technical challenges must be anticipated and resolved in the private practice arena and not in the orchestral rehearsal, thus mandating several hours of preparatory work outside of class. The student's attendance at rehearsals and their level of participation will be evaluated and count towards 80% of the final grade.

In addition to their preparation and performance each student will be required to write two short papers (300-400 words) during the course of each semester. Each paper may be a biographical and historical essay on one of the composers whose work is performed during the semester, or a paper on the formal aspects (structure, key areas, motives, etc.) of one composition or one movement of a composition of the student's choice from the semester's repertory. The papers will count for 20% of the final grade.

c. List the major themes, issues, topics, etc., to be covered.

The repertory of the course changes from concert to concert and semester to semester. The orchestra may perform as many as 8 concerts per academic year ranging from full symphonies to short contemporary compositions; from fully staged operas to larger chamber-type pieces.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: Breadth and versatility is gained through the process of preparing and

performing music. It is the translation and interpretation of distinctive musical symbols into landscapes of communication in sound, which is both an intellectual skill and a physical/cognitive challenge. The discipline required by each student in reacting to verbal and non-verbal directions from the conductor while rendering, through their instrument, those directions into channels of expressivity is enormous. In addition, the student must subsume personal musical goals and opinions into those of the group. This is further evidence of the orchestral experience's singular dynamic in shaping minds towards versatility and breadth.

C. Acquire critical judgement;

D. Acquire moral sensitivity; The ability of the student to work closely with others of varying capabilities and backgrounds in an intimate yet corporate setting is a striking and personally challenging aspect of the orchestral experience.

E. Acquire awareness of their era and society; The orchestral repertory extends beyond the confines of Western European musical traditions to American and world contemporary music. The programming chosen each year attempts to deepen the student's experiences with musics of American popular culture, compositional trends in academe, as well as musics which fuse the indigenous and contemporary art forms of Asia, Africa, Latin America, Urban and non-Urban styles. These are powerful new combinations which have infused orchestral and so-called "serious" music of the past thirty years with new life. Orchestral music as presented at the Universitycan be a vivifying medium in which the student can absorb the rhythms of change as well as contribute to the conservation of universal aesthetic values.

F. Acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience; and

G. Acquire a working understanding of the processes by which they can continue to acquire and use knowledge

CA1 Criteria: The notational language of music is a blueprint only for the expression of sound. The attempt to translate the common symbols of notation from the mind of a composer who, as a creative artist, uses notes in highly personal ways, is one of the most daunting tasks an interpretive artist can take on. Although a "universal" language, it takes years of study to know how to use the symbols of notation as graphic lenses which can illuminate a composers intent, to discern through them historical and stylistic legacies, and to successfully ally them with the performer's own interpretive proclivities.

The re-creation of musical works is a discipline of mind, body and spirit. The "page" of music is no more than a superficial indication of musical intent. It takes study and a seriousness of purpose to uncover the music behind the notes. The training of the cognitive and physiological elements, oftentimes at odds with each other and often resisted and limited by of the capabilities of the body, is a lifetime of work, frustration and reward. Further, it is the willingness of the individual to subsume habitual and rote responses to the corporate creative enterprise, which elevates the orchestral experience to the domain of the spiritual.

Role of Grad Students: There is an Assistant Conductor (or two) who are either Master'= ;s or DMA candidates, supervised by the Director of the Orchestra. They take weekly tutorials and have regular coaching within and without the rehearsal periods. As part of the conducting curriculum they have a hand in conducting rehearsals and preparing concerts. As their career at the University matures they are given more and more responsibility, culminating in performances wh= ich they alone prepare and conduct.