

MUS 183 and MUS 186: Chamber Singers and Concert Choir COURSE SYLLABI

Undergraduate Catalogue Descriptions:

MUS 183. Chamber Singers (1) Prerequisite: Audition by director. Select group chosen by audition. The singers study and perform the gamut of repertoire for smaller choir. Three rehearsal hours per week. May be repeated for credit.

MUS 186. Concert Choir (1) Prerequisite: Auditions by director. The singers study and perform repertoire of various historical periods and styles appropriate for large chorus. Three rehearsal hours each week. May be repeated for credit.

Course Descriptions:

Concert Choir provides an opportunity to study, rehearse, and perform great choral music from a variety of styles and historical periods. The course is designed for students with some ensemble experience and/or minimal music reading skills and seeks to develop ensemble singing skills, fluency in music reading skills, and group dramatic expression techniques. The student will develop critical thinking skills in finding solutions for musical and ensemble problems during the development of a project, and, ultimately, will be involved as a performer with the Concert Choir. It is a spiral curriculum and more experienced ensemble singers will learn to develop leadership skills and be asked to serve in leadership roles (section leader, etc.) in the ensemble.

An individual in Chamber Singers must, by design, be a leader in his/her section and, ideally, should be a member of the Concert Choir as well as the Chamber Singers. The Department of Music recognizes Concert Choir as the “major choral ensemble” and Chamber Singers as a “small ensemble.” Among other reasons, this is because some of the major repertoire of the choral singer is large ensemble repertoire and will be presented by the Concert Choir. Given the reality of schedule compression and inevitable schedule conflicts on campus, there are some exceptions made for individuals, but generally members of Chamber Singers are expected to be available as part of the pool of singers that can be called upon to present with the Concert Choir.

Concert Choir is a one-credit basic studies class. It may be repeated for credit with up to three credits applicable to basic studies. Chamber Singers is an elective course and it may be repeatable for credit.

In spring 2011, the Concert Choir and Chamber Singers groups will share one concert, after which the Chamber Singers group will be involved with an opera scenes program and the Concert Choir will present a second concert. All registered students are expected to attend all of the performances, whether or not they are directly involved singing.

Text and Materials:

The textbook for this course is the music the ensemble is performing and typically will be loaned to the student from the choral music library. In the case of standard choral works, students will be given the opportunity to purchase personal copies to maintain in their library after the experience of singing the work. Each student is also asked to obtain a black folder in which to carry music and a pencil, and will be expected to purchase and

maintain an appropriate performance outfit. In addition there will be learning tools such as recordings and scholarly program notes made available on Blackboard Vista for outside preparation when assigned.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate the ability to sing with a freely produced tone, supported by the breath and properly resonated.
- Students will develop fluency in music reading and will learn to find practical solutions for musical problems that arise in rehearsal.
- Students will develop ability to communicate with the audience through performance of the music and to express the text so that it can be understood clearly.
- Students will develop their creative, critical, and analytical thinking skills through analysis and evaluation of progress made during preparations.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of musical style through the decision making process in the preparation of works in a variety of styles.
- Students will develop their creative, critical, and analytical thinking skills through analysis and evaluation of recordings (video and audio) of rehearsals and performances as well as model recordings of other ensembles.
- Students will recognize the value and richness that cultural, social, and ethnic diversity bring to music and related fine arts.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to critically analyze, appreciate, and make cogent subjective judgments about the role of the music in history and the medium of music as a means of interpretation and self-expression.
- Students will understand the role of music in society and will learn the skills to help them be active in the arts in the future.

Grading:

The student grade will be based primarily on attendance and active participation in rehearsals and performances. These are the characteristics of an active participant::

- an active participant arrives on time, prepared with music and pencil
- an active participant is attentive and makes annotations in their music when asked to do so
- an active participant listens attentively when the director is working with other sections or other singers in the group
- an active participant demonstrate good singing posture and attention to projecting the dramatic ideas in the texts

In addition there will be periodic assignments, including reflections on a concert or rehearsal, reaction to program notes provided by the instructor, and spot checks for markings given during rehearsal.

Attendance Policy

It is understood that singing is a physical activity that requires the student to be healthy, and especially those with contagious illnesses are encouraged to stay away. 2 unexcused absences are permitted for Chamber Singers and 3 unexcused absences for Concert Choir are permitted before the grade is reduced. For an absence to be excused, three conditions

must be met:

1. it is a legitimate reason for being absent
2. the instructor is notified not less than one class period before the rehearsal in question
3. the student will get all markings from a student colleague and practice the passages that were rehearsed so that he/she does not continue mistakes that were fixed during the missed rehearsal. If a student is late for rehearsal more than twice, it will be considered the same as an unexcused absence.

Special dates (dress rehearsals and performances) are announced with the syllabus and are required of all students without exception as a condition of enrollment in the course. Each student is required to obtain and wear appropriate concert clothing.

Assessments:

The primary assessments of the class are the rehearsals and performances of the group. Each individual will be assessed on his/her advancement of skills (singing, music reading fluency, problem solving, and group dramatic expression). If any individual in the class is (in the mind of the conductor) not sufficiently prepared to sing on a concert, that person will not be permitted to sing on that concert. The instructor will assign written informal reports in which the student is asked to reflect on a performance, a rehearsal, or a recording (typically submitted in the form of an e-mail). Periodically, the instructor will ask individuals in a rehearsal to summarize in writing the main points that were made at that rehearsal. Each student is asked to schedule a 5-10 minute appointment at least three times during the semester to review attendance and assessments, so that there are no surprises at the end of the semester.

Academic Honor Code

"The University of North Carolina at Wilmington is committed to the proposition that the pursuit of truth requires the presence of honesty among all involved. It is therefore this institution's stated policy that no form of dishonesty among its faculty or students will be tolerated. Although all members of the university community are encouraged to report occurrences of dishonesty, each individual is principally responsible for his or her own honesty." (Above is an excerpt from the "Student Code of Life" in the UNCW Student Handbook. All students are encouraged to read all of section V, "Academic Honor Code" for definitions of plagiarism, bribery, and cheating; and the procedures for reporting and adjudication of any activities involving student dishonesty).

University Statement on Academic Expectations

"In choosing UNCW, you have become part of our community of scholars. We recognize that the UNCW learning experience is challenging and requires hard work. It also requires a commitment to make time available to do that hard work. The university expects you to make academics your highest priority by dedicating your time and energy to training your mind and acquiring knowledge. Academic success in critical thinking and problem solving prepares you for the changes and challenges you will encounter in the future. Our faculty and academic support resources are readily available as partners in this effort, but the primary responsibility for learning is yours."

Disability Accommodation

Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities will be made as specified in federal regulations. If you have a disability and need accommodation, please follow this procedure. First, contact and register with the office of Disability Services in Westside Hall (962-3746). Second, obtain a copy of your accommodation letter, and then make arrangements to speak with me.

Spring final rehearsals and performances

These obligations are considered a condition of your enrollment in the class and so cannot be excused except in the case of a major emergency. If you have any conflicts with these dates, they should be negotiated in writing with your instructor by the end of Add-Drop.

Saturday, February 25: 9 – 11:30 rehearsal

Sunday, February 26: 4 p.m. performance

Saturday, April 16: 9 – 11:30 a.m. rehearsal

Sunday, April 17: 4 p.m. performance

Other dates that may arise will be presented as voluntary participation.