

# MUS 285 - Conducting I

Fall 2011

## **Instructor:**

Dr. John LaCognata  
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## **Online Resources:**

<http://www.uncw.edu/music/>

## **Text:**

*Basic Conducting Techniques (Sixth Edition)* by Joseph A. Labuta

## **Materials:**

- Conducting Baton: Mollard, "P", "S", or "E" Series, 14 inch, any hardwood, white shaft
- Flash Drive

## **Course Description:**

Conducting I is an introduction to basic conducting skills with an emphasis on the art and study of conducting, baton technique, left hand technique, non-verbal communication, conducting terminology, transpositions, score reading, and rehearsal techniques.

## **Course Objectives:**

The student enrolled in Conducting I is expected to demonstrate basic conducting techniques (physical gesturing) and understand associated terminology. The student will also demonstrate performance preparation and score preparation of assigned musical excerpts. Finally, the student will develop appropriate rehearsal techniques and error detection skills necessary to rehearse a music ensemble.

## **Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Demonstrate coordination of the right hand and arm to conduct the traditional rhythmic meter patterns of 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 and their subdivisions, as well as the ability to "meld" smoothly from one beat pattern to another and from non-divided beats to subdivisions and the reverse.
3. Demonstrate the ability to achieve a precise initial attack and release on any pulse or anacrusis of all meter designs.
6. Demonstrate the ability to communicate effective cuing, fermatas, dynamics, articulations, and tempo changes as required by a variety of music selections.
7. Demonstrate a coordinated flow of the left hand and arm, either intermittent or continuous, to achieve all of the above mechanics in sympathy with the right hand and arm.
5. Demonstrate a coordinated gesture to achieve any expressive element within musical thought and the skills necessary to make an emotional and musical connection with a musical ensemble.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of band and orchestra instrumentation well as voice-part division.
9. Demonstrate an understanding of effective skills for score study, analysis of compositions, historical research, style, interpretation, preparation, and rehearsal techniques.
10. Demonstrate an understanding of the terminology necessary for successful conducting.
11. Demonstrate the ability to detect errors in performance and select the appropriate rehearsal technique for correction.

## **Learning Activities:**

- A. Conducting Sessions/Evaluations
- B. Conducting quizzes
- C. YouTube video conductor reviews
- D. Conducting research paper

### **Course Attendance and Grading Policy:**

A. Attendance is part of the learning experience and is required for maximum achievement.

- Each unexcused absence lowers your final grade three (3) points.

- Each tardy lowers your final grade one (1) point.

- Excused absences/tardies do not count against your final grade (at the discretion of Dr. LaCognata). Absences will be excused for: illness serious enough to warrant a doctor's excuse, death in the family or significant family emergency, or a sanctioned university activity.

- For an absence to count as excused, you must email Dr. LaCognata before the scheduled class.

Include in your email:

- Your name (first and last)
- Date of anticipated absence
- Reason for absence

- In emergency situations where email is not possible, call Dr. LaCognata at 962-3391 and leave a message.

B. Tests and assignments must be completed at the time they are scheduled for full consideration. Points will be deducted for late work.

### **Grading**

#### **A. Conducting sessions (50 pts)**

The student will be evaluated and video-taped each conducting session. The student will turn in a self-evaluation form following a video review of their conducting session.

#### **B. Conducting quizzes (24 pts)**

There will be six (6) conducting quizzes taken during the semester. They are worth four (4) points each.

1. Basic patterns, prep, beats and cut-offs
2. Basic articulations and dynamic changes
3. Accents and gesture of syncopation
4. Subdivision
5. Fermatas
6. Use of left hand

#### **C. YouTube conductor reviews (10 pts)**

##### 1. Guidelines

- a. Two (2) reviews required (one of a professional conductor, one of an amateur).
- b. Camera angle must be on-stage, facing the front of the conductor.
- c. Video clips should be a minimum of 5 minutes in length.
- d. The written review will be a minimum of 2-pages (see specs under research paper).
- e. Must include URL and date accessed (it must be currently accessible).
- f. Title should include: name of conductor, date of performance, ensemble, composer, title of composition, length of clip.

##### 2. Written Review Contents

- a. First impressions of presentation: introductory information, camera angle, video quality, sound quality.
- b. What happens in the video?
  1. Is this a concert, rehearsal, conducting-teaching session?
  2. Describe what happens in the course of the video.

3. Does the clip start at the beginning of the musical work, somewhere in the middle, what is the musical progression (run through, rehearsal, discussion)?
  4. How does the video conclude?
- c. What does the conductor do?
1. Analyze conducting style, gestures, facial expression, and effectiveness (i.e. big conducting, small conducting, clear, unclear, expressive etc...).
  2. Analyze the conductor's rehearsal technique (when appropriate).
  3. Would you want to play for this person as a musician in the ensemble being conducted by them (why or why not)?

#### **D. Conducting research paper (16 pts)**

Each student will write a 10-page research paper (Normal Margins, 12 pt Times New Roman Font, Double-spaced) on an approved conducting topic (i.e. "A Brief History of Conducting", "Comparing the Approach and Organization of Two Conducting Texts", "The Life and Training of a Specific Historical Figure in Conducting", etc...). The results of this research will be presented to the class (five (5) minute presentation with a hand-out) (4 pts).

#### **Grading Scale**

For the final course grade, the following grading scale will be used:

92-90=A-	100-93= <b>A</b>	
82-80=B-	86-83= <b>B</b>	89-87=B+
72-70=C-	76-73= <b>C</b>	79-77=C+
62-60=D-	66-63= <b>D</b>	69-67=D+
	59-below= <b>F</b>	

#### **Course Schedule**

A detailed course schedule will be distributed.

#### **Caveat**

The above procedures, policies, and schedule for this course are subject to change. No change will occur without adequate notice and preparation.

**Student Academic Honor Code:** All members of UNCW's community are expected to follow the academic Honor Code. Please read the UNCW Honor Code carefully (as covered in the UNCW Student Handbook). Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated in this class. Please be especially familiar with UNCW's position on plagiarism as outlined in the UNCW Student Handbook. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty in which you take someone else's ideas and represent them as your own.

**Cell Phones, PDAs, Laptops:** Please silence your cell phone and do not make calls, access applications or text during class. If you have a personal, urgent matter for which you need to be on call, please let me know in advance. In addition, please do not have active any PDAs or laptops/netbooks/iPads open and active unless the activity warrants. We will use these devices in selected activities and they are permissible then.

**Religious Observance Policy:** In accordance with NC SL 2010-211, you are entitled to two excused absences for religious observances per academic year. You must inform me in writing the first week of class if you will be missing any classes due to religious observance and using one of the two permissible absences for the academic year. In addition, please inform the Registrar the first week of class who will then confirm your intentions to miss class with the impacted course instructors. Any absence for religious purposes will be considered unexcused unless you submit the request in writing the first week to both me and the Registrar.

**Students with Disabilities:** Students with diagnosed disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (962-7555). Please give me a copy of the letter you receive from Office of Disability Services detailing class accommodations you may need. If you require accommodation for test taking please make sure I have the referral letter no less than three days before the test.

**Campus Respect Compact:** UNCW has recently instituted a Respect Compact to affirm our commitment to a civil community, characterized by mutual respect. That Compact may be accessed at: <http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/pdc/documents/SeahawkRespectCompact.pdf>. Further information about the respect Compact is available from the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion.

**Statement regarding violence and harassment:** UNCW practices a zero tolerance policy for any kind of violent or harassing behavior. If you are experiencing an emergency of this type contact the police at 911 or UNCW CARE at 962-2273. Resources for individuals concerned with a violent or harassing situation can be located at <http://www.uncw.edu/wsrc/crisis.html>.

**The UNCW Statement on Diversity in the University Community:** As an institution of higher learning, the University of North Carolina Wilmington represents a rich diversity of human beings among its faculty, staff, and students and is committed to maintaining a campus environment that values that diversity. Accordingly, the university supports policies, curricula, and co-curricular activities that encourage understanding of and appreciation for all members of its community and will not tolerate any harassment or disrespect for persons because of race, gender, age, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, or relationship to other university constituents. Students with Disabilities information and resources available at <http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/disability/>

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### SELF EVALUATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Excerpt Conducted \_\_\_\_\_

After viewing the video-tape of your conducting evaluate the following areas for very good elements and for those that need improvement. It is important to be fair to yourself where you excel and where you need improvement. Evaluations are due the following class period after your exam.

Use the following categories and specific areas in your self evaluation.

**Posture – Arm/Hand Positioning** (proper foot position, knees relaxed, straight spine, upper body posture, upper arm forward, elbow lifted, forearm – upper arm angle, forearm extended, proper hand position, fingers naturally curved)

**Preparation** (mental set, group scan, smooth preparatory gesture, rhythmic breathing motion, eye contact, tempo, dynamic level, articulation, clear ictus, confident and assuring demeanor)

**Beat Patterns and Releases** (vertical plane location, vertical plane amplitude, horizontal plane location, horizontal breadth, clear ictus on each beat, pattern clarity, internal releases, final release, release preparation, communication)

**Baton Grip and Use** (proper contact points, natural curve of fingers, correct direction of baton, baton on vertical plane, ictus at baton tip, ictus on horizontal plane)

**Left Hand** (at rest position: side, at rest position: front, attention position, smooth and independent, appropriate dynamics, crescendo – decrescendo, appropriate releases, sustaining gestures)

**Rehearsal Techniques** (error detection, isolation of error, clarity of instruction, effectiveness of instruction, rehearsal flow)

**Evaluation Summary:** Summarize your conducting evaluation in narrative form. Write one paragraph summarizing the positive elements of your conducting and a paragraph on those elements that need improvement.

**SUMMARY OF POSITIVE ELEMENTS:**

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**SUMMARY OF THOSE ELEMENTS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT:**

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