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ISU Symphony Orchestra

Syllabus – MUS 181, Fall 2021

(1 credit)

Primary Instructor

Dr. Jonathan Govias Music Hall 109

Student Hours: I'm normally available MWF 10:00am-11:00am, Tues-Thurs 3:00pm-4:00pm. If you knock at those times and I'm not there, I may have stepped out for just a few minutes. If you can't meet at these times, please make an appointment. These are *student* hours, not *office* hours; they are set aside for you. Don't hesitate to interrupt me.

Please feel free to email me, (jgovias@iastate.edu [\(Links to an external site.\)](#)), or we can set up a time to teleconference via Zoom, Webex or Skype (jgovias). You may also text my mobile at 617.304.6458.

1. [Class information and scheduling](#)
2. [Requirements, Attendance Policy](#)
3. [Dress Code, Wellness](#)
4. [Summary \(If you don't read anything else, read this... but you should read everything else\)](#)
5. [Grading and pass-throughs](#)
6. [Appendices](#)

Section 1

Why you need this

This syllabus is intended to help you be successful in this course by communicating important dates, establishing expectations, and by outlining codes of preparation and conduct to create a positive, productive learning atmosphere for all participants. It will assist you in understanding how your participation and performance relate to your evaluation. I may have to change this syllabus over the semester, but I will provide written notification by Canvas when I do so. By staying registered in this class, you acknowledge that you have read this syllabus and agree to abide by it.

Scheduled Times

Tuesday / Thursday: 4:10-6:00pm, Simon Estes Music Hall, MET Recital Hall Rm. 140

Unscheduled Times

Additional rehearsals and performances outside the scheduled class time will be required. Confirmed dates currently include

Wednesday Oct. 27, 7:30pm | runout concert (Soundtracks) in Ottumwa at Indian Hills Community College

Saturday Oct 30, 7:30pm | Concert (Soundtracks) in METRH

Sunday Nov. 7, 6:00pm | Opera Rehearsal at Fisher Theater

Monday Nov. 8, 7:00pm | Opera Rehearsal at Fisher Theater

Tuesday Nov. 9, 7:00pm | Opera Rehearsal at Fisher Theater

Wednesday Nov. 10, 7:00pm | Opera Rehearsal at Fisher Theater

Thursday, Nov. 11, 10:00am | Opera performance at Fisher Theater

Friday, Nov. 12 at 7:30pm | Opera performance at Fisher Theater

Saturday, Nov. 13 at 7:30pm | Opera performance at Fisher Theater

Sunday, Nov. 14 at 2:00pm | Opera performance at Fisher Theater

Saturday December 4, 8:30am | Orchestra/choir rehearsal at Stephens Auditorium, 8:30am

Sunday December 5, 3:00pm | Concert at Stephens Auditorium

Changes, with the exception of cancellations outside of ISU's control, will be communicated at the earliest opportunity.

Course Materials

All printed performance materials will be supplied by ISU. All materials relating to the proper maintenance and functioning of your instrument are your responsibility.

Course Description

ISU Symphony Orchestra is an ensemble performing music from across the chamber, symphonic, choral, and operatic repertoires. As a musical group, it is devoted to the exploration, in rehearsal and performance, of the repertoire of the orchestra, and of the art and science of cohesive, integrated musical interaction.

Course Objectives

Through participation in orchestra, you will expand your technical and artistic capabilities. you will acquire enhanced audition and performance experience, engage with a wide spectrum of orchestra repertoire, and develop collaborative sensitivities.

Course Expectations

If you haven't played in a University-level orchestra before, expectations can be quite different from high school groups. This isn't a string technique class, or a woodwind or percussion class. Rehearsals are not used to teach participants how to play their instruments or learn their parts. We use the time to learn repertoire, and how to play together as a group. If you are having trouble with your part, your first resource is your private instructor. If you don't have a private instructor, talk to me about getting the right kind of help.

Student Conduct

In order to foster a healthy learning environment, students are expected to be respectful towards each other and the instructor, and should be familiar with the *ISU Code of Student Responsibility*, which can be accessed at <https://knowthecode.dso.iastate.edu/code-of-conduct>Links to an external site.

Section 2

Requirements

1. It's not an exaggeration; everyone is counting on you. Please show up. Each unexcused absence will result in the loss of a full letter grade. Performances and listed dress or acoustic dress rehearsals constitute final examinations: any unexcused absences in these instances may yield a final course grade of F.
2. I'll post a schedule of when each piece will be rehearsed. Please be ready to play at the time listed. Each 15-minute period after the start of rehearsal segment that a student is late will result in a final grade reduction of one-third of a letter grade. If you're not required for a work, you don't need to be at rehearsal. If I choose to start a work earlier than the time listed, and you're not there, you're not late until the posted start time. If you know you'll be late because of an academic commitment, please notify me in advance. If you're late because the barista took too long, make sure you bring something for me (Mocha Frappuccino...)
3. Show up prepared to the highest level of your ability and equipped to a professional standard - this means spare strings, valve oil, mutes, etc. as applicable.

I'll post deadlines for part preparation on Canvas, and there may be penalties if you're not ready on time. Additionally, poor performance in concert can result in deductions up to a full letter grades, depending on the severity or extent of the deficiency.

Excused absences

Orchestra is the musical equivalent of a team sport. You need to show up, unless you're sick, experiencing a family emergency, or have an academic conflict you brought to my attention at least four weeks before, a conflict that the Department was unable to resolve. If you have a health condition that could affect your attendance on more than

one occasion, please bring appropriate documentation. If you have a major family emergency, please work with the Office of the Dean of Students or relevant campus agency to have the situation properly communicated to all your teachers. In all cases, talk to me if the time and situation allows, and log your request at <http://bit.ly/isuorchabsent>. ([Links to an external site.](#)) *You have to log your request and receive a response from me in writing before you are excused, regardless of any conversation we have.*

Music and Materials

ISU will provide you with music in folders. All materials given to you are your responsibility, and you should have them at all rehearsals. A minimum \$50 charge will be added to your UBill, should you lose any parts, plus actual replacement costs.

Section 3

Concert Dress

The standard for orchestra is black jacket, tuxedo or tailcoat, white dress shirt, black bow tie, (white for tailcoat only) black dress shoes, black socks. If you choose to wear a waistcoat, it must be either black (tuxedo) or white (tailcoat), and in no case may it extend below the front of the jacket. Absolutely none of the following may be striped or any colour but black: cummerbunds, suspenders, bowties/ties, socks. If you choose to wear a skirt or dress, it must be all black, with black dress shoes.

This rule applies *regardless of gender identity*, and is intended to eliminate the current gender bias in dress codes.

Dress restrictions: there are no rules about “minimum hem/neckline length” or similar, but if you keep adjusting your clothing to keep yourself decent, then it’s not the right thing to wear.

If you perform a concert improperly dressed, you will lose a full letter grade.

Student wellness

There are no heroes in music, only survivors. Playing hurt/sick isn’t “professional,” it’s just...not smart. If it hurts, a) stop playing b) let me know immediately c) go to the Student Health Center, the Counseling Center, or your family doctor. I’m the wrong kind of doctor for this, but I can help you find the right one if you need any assistance.

Section 4

Basically...

Show up on time, learn your part on time and be respectful and supportive of your colleagues (that team sport thing again.) If you can’t do this for any legitimate reason,

then communicate as early and often as possible. And it's not a legitimate reason, it will negatively affect your grade, or I might ask you to leave the class, especially if what you're doing is disruptive.

Beyond the Code of Student Conduct, the University has policies on accommodations for reasons relating to religion or disability, among others. All of these policies are intended to promote an inclusive, tolerant, ethical, and constructive learning environment. The University is committed to being respectful of your thoughts and your person. It's important you read these policies so you know how you are protected and respected but also so you are aware of what your own responsibilities are in turn. Continuation registration in this course indicates you have read the policies and are willing to abide by them.

Section 5

Grading

Music Majors/Minors: Aside from deductions for absences or late arrival, 10% of the student grade is allocated to the audition with between 80-90% allocated to the timely preparation and delivery of parts in rehearsal for each concert. For non- music majors/minors, part preparation counts for all of your grade (aside from deductions for absences or late arrivals) with the "Additional Assignments" exception noted below.

Strings: your grade will be determined in large part by your performance in "pass-throughs" at least twice per semester (so once per concert cycle). I will ask you to play excerpts from the current repertoire in time with a metronome, the tempo not to exceed the tempo of the concert, with accuracy of pitch, intonation, and rhythm (plus accurate bowings, for strings.) Since each musician is at a different level, there is no one set metronome mark for the full ensemble. I am happy to assist students in setting appropriate goals if asked in advance. Pass-throughs are normally reviewed within 48 hours of submission.

Each pass-through is worth a letter grade. If I have to ask you to resubmit the pass-through, you'll lose half a letter grade. If the resubmission is not at an appropriate standard, I will ask you to submit again with the loss of another half letter grade.

There's a penalty of a full letter grade for every calendar week (or part thereof) for pass-throughs that are submitted late without prior arrangement.

Due to the soloistic nature of winds, brass and percussion in the orchestra, evaluation of these students is monitored on an on-going basis. I may still ask students in these instrument groups to submit a pass-through: regardless, following the designated pass-through period I will expect every musician in the orchestra to have reasonable command of the assigned part.

If you're not sure how best to practice, the only advice I have to offer is PRACTICE SLOWLY WITH A METRONOME. That is all.

Additional assignments

On occasion I may ask you to complete an online poll or listening assignment by a certain deadline. If you don't do this by the deadline, you will lose half a letter grade per poll/assignment.

Evaluation tools

If we've admitted you to orchestra, we believe you to have enough experience and skill to know whether you have achieved a reasonable level of part mastery. Saying "I didn't know I was playing badly" is never an excuse. If you have any doubts, please make an appointment to play for me outside of class time, before pass-throughs. I will use a variety of tools to evaluate the performance of students. These include any combination of observations during rehearsals, audio recordings, video recordings, or playing tests conducted outside of rehearsal time by appointment.

Exception to the Code of Student Conduct

Unlike traditional academic classes, students are actively encouraged to plagiarize the playing of industry leaders, such as Itzhak Perlman, Gil Shaham, Yo-Yo Ma, Kim Kashkashian (NOT KARDASHIAN), Edgar Meyer, Emmanuel Pahud, etc.

Grading Scales/Methods

This course uses the following grading scale:

A = 100-92

B = 91-83

C = 82-74

D = 73-65

F = 64-0

Section 6

First Amendment Policy

Iowa State University supports and upholds the First Amendment protection of freedom of speech and the principle of academic freedom in order to foster a learning

environment where open inquiry and the vigorous debate of a diversity of ideas are encouraged. Students will not be penalized for the content or viewpoints of their speech as long as student expression in a class context is germane to the subject matter of the class and conveyed in an appropriate manner.

COVID-19 health and safety requirements

Face Masks Encouraged: Because of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, all students are encouraged—but not required—to wear face masks, consistent with current recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Further information on the proper use of face masks is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html> ([Links to an external site.](#))

Vaccinations Encouraged: All students are encouraged to receive a vaccination against COVID-19. Multiple locations are available on campus for free, convenient vaccination. Further information is available at: <https://web.iastate.edu/safety/updates/covid19/vaccinations> [Links to an external site.](#) Vaccinations may also be obtained from health care providers and pharmacies.

Physical Distancing Encouraged for Unvaccinated Individuals: Classrooms and other campus spaces are operating at normal capacities, and physical distancing by faculty, staff, students, and visitors to campus is not required. However, unvaccinated individuals are encouraged to continue to physically distance themselves from others when possible.