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Introduction to Conducting Syllabus – MUS 361, Fall 2021

(2 credits)

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.

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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

Monday / Wednesday / Friday : 8:50am-9:40am, Simon Estes Music Hall, Rm. 102

Unscheduled Times

The final lab will take place Tuesday Dec. 7 at 4:10pm, Simon Estes Music Hall Rm. 140 (Recital Hall)

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

Course Description *(from the catalog)*

Introduction to conducting; score reading and analysis. Conveying musical ideas through appropriate gestures. Leadership role of the conductor.

Course Materials

There is no set textbook for the course. Almost (almost) everything you need has been uploaded to Canvas. Over the semester I will ask you to print select pages, so please ensure that you have the pages in hardcopy when requested. Downloading them to an electronic device is not sufficient. I understand there's a cost to printing, but the alternative is a \$150 textbook.

You will need a baton of minimum 14", maximum 16" length from tip to base of handle. The most common manufacturers of professional quality batons, properly balanced, are Mollard and Newland. If you decide to purchase a baton from a different maker, please ensure it balances at the point where the shaft meets the handle. Please order one immediately via Amazon or another music retailer. I also recommend white baton shafts (as opposed to natural) made from carbon fiber. If you need help selecting a baton, please come see me.

For lab weeks, please bring a video-recording device (mobile phone/camcorder) with sufficient battery and memory for 10 minutes of SD video recording. You are also welcome to videotape me at any time if you would like a reference or demonstration video.

For the final, you will need to purchase a score. You should budget approximately \$10 for the document plus shipping and tax.

Course Expectations

The physical act of conducting is just like learning any musical instrument. There are technical elements which must be acquired through extended, deliberate practice and

repetition. Students should commit on average 20 minutes total throughout a day to acquiring physical mastery of specific gestures, exercises or repertoire. As with any musical instrument, practice cannot be left to the last minute. Ever.

Learning Objectives

Through your participation in this course you will be able to:

- 1) Read music effectively in multiple clefs, transpositions and time signatures in scores of increasing complexity.
- 2) Develop and calibrate your internal clock/sense of rhythm and timing.
- 3) Apply concepts from music theory and music history towards the development of informed artistic interpretations.
- 4) Conduct in a variety of meters, dynamics and articulation.
- 5) Demonstrate a variety of gesture in both hands, including but not limited to the cues, fermatas and artistic instruction.
- 6) Acquire basic tools in ensemble rehearsing and problem solving.

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

Attendance Requirement

You need to show up for class, unless you're sick, experiencing a family emergency, or have an academic or performance conflict you brought to my attention at least two weeks before, a conflict that the Department was unable to resolve. If you have a condition that could affect your attendance on more than one occasion, please bring appropriate documentation from the relevant ISU office. If you have a major family emergency, please work with the Office of the Dean of Students or the relevant campus agency to have the situation properly communicated to all your teachers. In all cases, talk to me beforehand if the time and situation allows. Each class you miss without a valid reason will incur a deduction of half a letter grade. Each lab day you miss will incur a deduction of a full letter grade.

You may opt out of components of this attendance policy if you sign and submit the opt-out form available on Canvas by the second class. You cannot opt out of the attendance policy any later. There are specific terms that will apply if you opt out, so read the document carefully.

Section 3

Dress / Professional deportment

There is no dress code. Simply be mindful when choosing wardrobe that you select garments and accessories that will not disrupt either you or your colleagues when you are on the podium. Sleeveless garments, shorts, bright arm jewelry (including watches), long necklaces and earrings, clothes that need to be adjusted to remain on will all make it more difficult for you to do your job. Similarly, long hair that is not tied back, or improperly fitted glasses, will take your hands off task.

Student wellness

There are no heroes in music, only survivors. Conducting is physically intensive, and improper exercise or excessive tension can cause injury. If you get hurt, come to class but don't move anything that isn't healed. Better still – stay well by monitoring your own well-being carefully at all times, or seeking help from me and/or medical professionals if you develop any strains. I don't give medical advice, but if something in conducting class is hurting, you're probably doing something incorrectly and I might be able to help.

Section 4

Basically...

This course is designed to privilege and reward hard work, not “natural talent,” if such a thing exists. Students who take the course seriously, show up, and who apply themselves consistently to the physical and mental aspects of the tasks will do well. So come to class, practice regularly and safely (Avoiding repetitive stress injuries) and be respectful and supportive of your colleagues. If you can't do this for any legitimate reason, then communicate as early and often as possible. And if it's not a legitimate reason, it will negatively affect your grade.

Accessibility

A lot of things – some of which might surprise you – can make it difficult for students to access the full benefits of education anywhere. The barriers easiest to identify are things like disabilities. The more subtle ones are the ways in which our world discriminates against people of colour, gender or sexual identity, religion or other qualities. It's essential for members of this class, as students and as future conductors, to confront this reality because conductors are in a privileged leadership position, able to perpetuate the status quo or effect change. For my part, I will do what I can to make this class more accessible to all students, but I invite students to be actively engaged in that process as well through discourse. If there's something I can do, please let me know.

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

I use a system that instantly communicates the relative weighting of every graded component. There are 100 points available to be earned throughout the semester.

3 Conducting labs @ 15 points each = 45 pts total

3 Conducting etudes @ 5 points each = 15 pts total

7 or 8 quizzes/small assignments = 30 pts total

Rehearsal observation @ 10 points = 10 pts total

Be aware that the dates for quizzes on Canvas are for general reference purposes only. The dates **will** change. Transposition quizzes will not be announced in advance - but they are open book.

Any work submitted after the posted deadline will be subject to a minimum 50% deduction of the total points available for the assignment. Exceptions are noted in the rubrics.

Grading Scales/Methods

This course uses the following grading scale:

A = 100-95 points

A- = 94-89 points

B = 88-85 points

B=84-79 points
C = 78-75 points
C-=74-69 points
D = 68-59 points
F = 58-0 points

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.