

CHAMBER SINGERS (MUS 311A, B)

College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Music

SYLLABUS – Saint Ambrose University

Spring 2018, Madsen Hall, ROOM 125 (Galvin Fine Arts Center)

Time: 1:40–2:55, T/R

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Nathan Windt

EMAIL: windtnathanj@sau.edu

OFFICE: Galvin 109

OFFICE PHONE: 563.333.6146

CREDITS: 1 (311 A) or 0 (311 B)

OFFICE HOURS: **TBA**

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Chamber Singers is an elite group of singers admitted by audition. It is open to students from all areas of the university. The group is fluent in all styles of music, but specializes in Chamber music of the Renaissance and early Baroque, as well as American folk hymns and African-American spirituals.

COURSE PREREQUISITE: Permission of the instructor through vocal audition at the beginning of the semester. It is *ideal* that the student is also a participant in University Chorale, MUS 111.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: The student will achieve the following:

- Develop the ability to perform standard collegiate choral repertoire;
- Improve the skills and techniques needed for chamber ensemble singing;
- Develop an understanding and appreciation of western musical traditions as found in choral literature, as well as other world music traditions;
- Develop an appreciation of artistic performance as a means of personal and cultural expression;
- Develop an appreciation of and skills for communal relationships through cooperative performances, touring, and other shared musical experiences.

REQUIRED READING/TEXTBOOK: There is no required textbook for Chamber Singers; music will be supplied to the students from the SAU choral library, or through printed, public domain sources. Badly worn, destroyed, or lost music will result in the student being held financially responsible for the replacement copies of the music.

TOPICS OR UNITS TO BE COVERED: Many of the topics covered in applied voice will be utilized in this course (such as posture, breath control, resonance control, applicable singing styles, range development, interpretation/expression, and diction). In addition, literature selected for rehearsal and performance will change from term to term. Within the year, students may expect to sing sacred and secular music from a variety of musical epochs, as well as various musical styles (folk, jazz, classical, etc.).

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION AND MODE OF LEARNING: Students must be *present and actively participating* in rehearsals and performances throughout the term. They must develop vocal skills and learn choral compositions to the degree that they

make a positive contribution to the performances of the Chamber Singers. In an ensemble, every member is reliant on the efforts of each member. **THIS IS EVEN MORE APPLICABLE TO A CHAMBER GROUP!** Each member's attendance is directly related to the success of the group as a whole. Take **personal responsibility** for the success of the group, for the benefit of the whole.

LISTENING: Chamber Singers members should set aside time to listen to choral excerpts as they apply to the term's repertoire. I will post study recordings on my website, and there are a number of online resources (SAU library, YouTube, etc.) to utilize if you need additional assistance, outside of rehearsal, with music.

ATTENDANCE: Please see separate sheet (addendum) at the end of this syllabus for a detailed attendance policy (rehearsal and performance) for Chamber Singers.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND MEANS OF EVALUATION:

- Evaluation of student activities (grading) will result from observations by the instructor of apparent effort, evidence of cooperative attitude, musical contribution, and compliance with attendance policies.
- Each member is expected to be *present and actively participating* in all rehearsals and performances unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor; determination of the potential absence or inactive participation as "excused" will be determined by the instructor when making the prior arrangements. *Present and actively participating* includes, but is not limited to: having folder and scores ready, having pencil ready, being in proper attire, etc., at the beginning of each rehearsal and/or performance. The instructor's assessment of *active participation* is part of the daily assessment of being *present*.
- Part of being *present*, both for rehearsals and performances, includes **the silencing of and non-participation with all electronic devices**. Failure to do so in rehearsal *or* performance will result in the course grade being lowered a full letter grade. Neither the instructor nor the other students have time for private phone calls, text messaging, surfing, etc.
- While the primary basis for your grade is attendance and participation, the instructor reserves the right to assess your quality of work through routine performance checks, quartets tested in rehearsal, and other means of musical evaluation. Notice will be given in these matters of assessment, and students who demonstrate a lack of preparation in these evaluations will see a reduction in their overall grade.
- After **one** unexcused absence from rehearsal, the course grade will be lowered a grade level (A, A-, B+, etc.) with each successive absence. Failure to attend either a **dress rehearsal** or a **performance** will result in the course grade being lowered a full letter grade. (See also attendance addendum).
- Tardies, including both late arrivals **to** and early departures **from** rehearsal and/or performance, are counted as well. Two tardies count as one absence per the policies above in determining course grade.

- **Every effort should be made to be punctual out of respect for the instructor as well as fellow students. Choral singing is a cooperative effort and any absence impedes the progress of the entire group!**
- Enrollment from one semester to the next and/or from one academic year to the next is subject to the permission of the instructor.

COURSE SCHEDULE: The following outlines our **tentative** performance schedule for the Spring Semester, 2018. Each Chamber Singers member is expected to attend these concerts and dress rehearsals. Performances may be added at the discretion of the instructor, and all efforts will be made to give proper notification.

Winter Vocal Concert: Friday, March 2, 7:30 pm, Allaert Auditorium. Call time is TBA.
TWO dress rehearsals: Tuesday, February 27, 1:40–2:55, and Thursday, March 1, 1:40–2:55.

Institute for Ambrosian Studies Colloquium: Saturday, April 7, evening (ca. 7–9 pm). More details will follow shortly.

Spring Vocal Concert: Sunday, May 6, 3:00 pm, Allaert Auditorium. Call time TBA.
TWO dress rehearsals: Tuesday, May 1, 1:40–2:55, and Thursday, May 3, 1:40–2:55.

DISABILITY STATEMENT: Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact ARC at 333-6275 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. You may also refer students to our ARC Student Guidelines posted on the Accessibility Resource Center page on the SAU Portal.

STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER:

Students are encouraged to go to the Student Success Center 1st floor Ambrose Hall or to call 333-6331 for information regarding tutoring in this class. The SSC provides free peer tutoring for most 100 and 200 level courses, writing tutorials for papers in all classes, and study strategy advice. The center staff suggests that students seek help early, although drop in and contractual tutorials are arranged throughout the semester.

ADDENDUM: SAU CHAMBER SINGERS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Musical ensembles depend upon each member in the same way as an athletic team. Your presence and participation are important and *essential*. Therefore, the SAU Chamber Singers has prescribed participation policies. You should familiarize yourself with these policies. Your grade and continued membership in the group depend upon your compliance.

- ✓ **Rehearsals:** Each member will be allowed **1** unexcused absence from regular rehearsals. This **does not** include dress rehearsals or performances. Additional absences will affect the grade regardless of the reason for the absence. Each excessive absence after 1 will lower the grade one level (A, A-, B+, etc.). Punctuality is also important. Attendance for the entire rehearsal is expected. Students who are habitually late will find their grade reduced at the discretion of the instructor. **Please be respectful of the instructor, accompanist, and your colleagues in Chamber Singers by arriving on time, warmed up, and ready to rehearse.** This will ensure the optimal use of rehearsal time to make music together.
- ✓ **Performances and Dress Rehearsals:** Failure to attend a dress rehearsal or performance will result in the reduction of the student's grade by one full letter grade (A, B, C, for example). The term "Performance" refers to any event in which the Chamber Singers perform in public. Dress rehearsal is the final rehearsal (or rehearsals, at the discretion of the instructor) before a performance, and is essential to check for balance and other detailed nuances. Illness or *dire* emergency (**not** a television show, sporting event, fight with significant other, etc.) may modify this policy, only at the discretion of the conductor.
- ✓ **Music:** Printed copies of the assigned music for each term will be assigned to members by number. The student is expected to care for this music and return it at the proper time. A charge equal to the replacement cost will be assessed for music that is not returned **or** badly damaged. Storage places will be provided for music between rehearsals, though Chamber Singers members are welcome (and encouraged!) to keep the music between rehearsals for practice. Students who fail to bring their music to regular rehearsals will be counted tardy for the rehearsal. Failure to bring music to a dress rehearsal or performance will result in an absence.
- ✓ **Folders:** Black music folders will be provided **on loan** at no cost to the student during each semester. These folders are to be returned to the department at the end of the semester in which the student leaves the group. Failure to do so, in addition to excessive wear and tear, will result in the student assuming full financial responsibility for the replacement of the folder. Students who fail to bring their folders to performances will be counted tardy or absent for the event.

ADDENDUM: SAU CHAMBER SINGERS ATTIRE

- **FORMAL ATTIRE:** Every member of Chamber Singers is expected to purchase formal attire.
 - **Ladies:** Black formal dress (this will be ordered for you through the music department), black shoes or heels (think comfort).
 - **Gentlemen:** A standard black tuxedo can be purchased through Skeffingtons in the North Park Shopping Center. A white shirt, black bow tie, with black shoes and socks (***NOT WHITE ATHLETIC SOCKS!!!***) are expected complements to the tuxedo. Blue vests and ties and may be loaned to the individual student for the semester, and remain the property of the University.

- **ATTIRE FOR SCHOOL RUN-OUTS:** Throughout the year, our schedule may includes performance opportunities at high schools, community functions, and other events that do not require formal attire. The following dress code will be implemented for such dates, and the students are expected to supply these at their expense:
 - **Ladies:** All Black. Specifics: shoulders and knees covered, no inappropriate necklines, black shoes or heels (think comfort).
 - **Gentlemen:** White, long-sleeved dress shirt *with* collar, all-white undershirt, black dress pants, black socks, black dress shoes, necktie of their choosing (preferably black, but simply avoid gaudy, light-up ties).

- Students will be notified in advance of performance(s) which attire selection will be necessary for each concert (NO LESS THAN ONE WEEK).

- **ATTIRE AND ATTENDANCE:** students who come to concerts unprepared (i.e., missing tuxedo accessories, robe accessories, etc.) will be counted tardy for the evening. Tardies follow the attendance policy as outlined on the attendance and participation addendum.