November 29, 2012

1. School of Liberal Arts
Performing Arts Department
Perfa 121 Conducting

Reason for upper-division designation
Conducting has a prerequisite of Perfa 12, 03 Intermediate Piano, as it’s vital for conductors to prepare by playing through a score at the piano and also have facility reading both treble and bass clefs. The class demands a high degree of cognition, as conductors must constantly be aware of what each and every musician should be doing, and what they are actually doing. Moreover they must convey information to their ensemble as much as possible through physical gestures, using as few words as possible. Appropriate physical technique demands a high degree of psychomotor practice. Beyond familiarity with the score and physical technique, students must be close to the artistic heart of any work they prepare. Finally, there is never, ever enough rehearsal time so student conductors must learn to budget their schedule with maximum efficiency.

2. Justification for Course
Learning to conduct intensifies and deepens a student’s intellect and artistry. To do it successfully multiple cylinders must be firing at once: the intellect, the ear, the physical, the artistic. Moreover it is a widely-used skill that some will use in the professional world from conducting a church choir to middle school band to college or professional ensembles.

2a. Learning Objectives:
The student will develop skills in verbal communication, physical technique, and musical understanding including:
a) Conducting stance
b) conducting patterns for 4,3,2,1, and 6
c) conducting preparatory beats, cut-offs and fermatas
d) conducting changes of tempo and dynamics
e) conducting subdivisions
f) left hand technique
g) conducting articulation- legato, marcato, staccato, accents
h) conducting cues
i) using your hands; using a baton
j) analyzing music in terms of form, harmony and melody
k) developing rehearsal technique
l) tempo changes
m) asymmetrical and changing meters
n) score markings and preparation
o) understand the relationship between text and music and how it affects conducting
p) choral terms; brass terms; woodwind terms; string terms; percussion terms

2b. Conducting will advance the Performing Arts Department learning outcome (listed on p. 166 of the 2012-13 catalog) that states: “Adapt performance skills both in rehearsal and
performance to the technical demands of specific masterworks of various styles and eras, as well as to original/contemporary works. “

2c. Kinds of Assignments:
   i. daily physical drills (executed in front of a mirror and often videotaped)
   ii. Score analyses and preparing to conduct your classmates (you will also sing/play for your classmates)
   iii. analyzing renowned conductors on video
   iv. conductor observations: each student is to observe two different conductors in rehearsal (excluding SMC faculty). Any church, school, or community or professional ensemble is acceptable. A written summary of strengths and weaknesses will be due afterwards.

Since the class will be an elective Pass/Fail will be allowed.

3. Student Population will consist of music majors plus a handful of ambitious minors. The department intends to offer Conducting every two years and expect 9-14 to enroll.

4. Relationship to Present College Curriculum
   No other course need be modified as a result of adding Conducting. There will be no impact on courses outside the department.

5. There will be no extraordinary implementation costs.

6. Library Resources Pending

7. Course Credit and Grading Options
   Conducting will be worth one credit and meet three hours/weekly, thirty-nine hours per semester. Projected out-of-class time will range from 8-12 hours weekly. The class format will be lecture.

8. Prerequisites, Perfa 12, 03 Intermediate Piano

9. Course Description Wording for Catalog
   This course focuses on the physical technique, score analysis, and preparation of a conductor: beat patterns, preparatory beats, cutoffs, gestures of dynamics, tempo and character, cueing, fermatas. Topics of discussion include rehearsal techniques, how to study and learn a score, gestural communication. Prerequisite: Perfa 12, 03 Intermediate Piano.

10. Course Content: Tentative Syllabus
    This course focuses on the physical technique, score analysis, and preparation of a conductor. You will learn the many physical gestures required to communicate effectively to ensemble, rehearsal techniques and pitfalls, how to study and learn a score.

By the end of the semester you will:
   • Better understand the unique demands of conducting different kinds of ensembles: strings, brass, woodwinds and choral
• Be able to conduct a small instrumental and small choral ensemble with technical accuracy and musical artistry.
• Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of other conductors

Required Text: None (online resources are much more effective than textbooks)

Unit One: Essential Terms
Tempo terms, Articulation terms, Character terms, Dynamic terms, Odds and Ends

Unit Two: The Physical Vocabulary of Conducting:
stance, metric patterns, pick-ups, cut-offs and fermatas

Unit Three: The Physical Vocabulary of Conducting
changes of tempo, dynamics, rhythmic subdivisions, articulation

Unit Four: Learning your score and preparing for rehearsal
What you need to know before the first rehearsal (the MUSIC!); efficient vs. inefficient rehearsals

Unit Five: The Physical Vocabulary of Conducting
Left-hand technique; using a baton assymetrical and changing meters

Unit Six: What you need to know about strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion

Unit Seven: What you need to know about conducting a choir

Grading
Execution of daily physical drills  30%
Terminology Quizzes 10%
Two Conductor Observations 20%
Conducting your Classmates 25%
Final Exam 15%