



MUSC 2091 Section 201 – Communiversity Ensemble

Spring 2025

M 6:00-8:20 PM, Fain Instrumental Music Building 105

Out of class engagements will be announced during the first week of classes.

Contact Information

Instructor: Matthew D. Luttrell, D.M.A

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Course Description

Communiversity Ensemble is open to all students by audition and presents concerts throughout the semester. Repertoire includes standard and new literature for symphonic orchestra and chamber groups. This ensemble is considered to be of the highest quality and standard at Midwestern State University.

Required Course Materials

Each member is issued his/her own folder and music. Care should be taken to keep the music in good condition. It must be returned free of all rehearsal markings. Lost music is subject to fines up to the total replacement cost of the set.

Course Objectives

- The student will demonstrate a high level of competence in skills required to perform with other musicians and as soloist in the large ensemble setting, i.e. matched tone and style, intonation, balance, blend and musical communication. This will also include the ability to collectively run a sectional rehearsal.
- The student will demonstrate the ability to respond to non-verbal performance instruction from the conductor.
- The student will demonstrate a high level of competence in technical aspects of performance, i.e., tone quality, articulation, pitch consistency, dynamic control, technical agility and accurate rhythmic concepts.

- For music education and performance students, one key attribute for this ensemble is to continue to foster your education on processes, techniques, and training tools that will be available to you on leaving MSU. We are here to create fantastic music educators and musicians first and foremost. The more preparation time put in at the beginning, the more involved the instructors may teach.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will possess a better understanding of performing in a symphony orchestra, a familiarity with current and traditional repertoire for this genre, and rehearsal techniques required to prepare orchestras for public performance.

Student Assessment

Students will be assessed on their ability to arrive before rehearsal and be prepared to play at the assigned rehearsal time, arrive with music prepared for upcoming performances, and participate throughout the class period.

Grading

Your grade is determined by a combination of your attendance, professionalism, music preparation and performance. Your grade is lowered one letter grade for each unexcused absence or two unexcused tardy. Absence from a dress rehearsal lowers your grade one letter. Absence from a performance results in a failing grade for the semester. Excessive excused absences or tardiness may also affect your grade.

As for rehearsal preparation, the advantage for an ensemble director conducting a chamber-style ensemble is that there is no hiding on your part. You are your own part, your own section, and your own ensemble. It is the goal of every musician, professional, amateur, and student to provide the very best they have to offer. This will require you to prepare outside of rehearsal. There are opportunities built into the schedule to help facilitate this approach. If a part is not prepared, you may be asked to leave the rehearsal. Please do not put your ensemble peers in a difficult position. If one part is not ready, then the other parts have no ability to adjust, conform, and complete their task. A single individual can hurt an entire ensemble.

If you feel that you cannot approach this course in this manner, please let Dr. Luttrell know immediately. Thank you!

Attendance

Attendance at every assigned rehearsal is expected. Students should arrive early to assemble equipment and then be prepared to play once the clock strikes the assigned rehearsal time. Two (2) unexcused absences will result in the maximum grade of a B, three (3) unexcused-maximum grade of C, four (4) unexcused-maximum grade of D. Any more unexcused absences result in a failing grade. Dr. Luttrell must approve any excused absence at least 48 hours IN ADVANCE of the rehearsal, or the student must provide official documentation of illness or family emergency for an absence to be

classified as “excused.” Any student who is absent from a performance will be removed from the ensemble and receive an “F” for their final semester grade.

Special Needs

If a student needs class accommodation(s) because of a documented disability, (2) has an emergency medical condition that may interfere with class performance, or (3) requires special handling in case the building must be evacuated, he/she is encouraged to contact the office of Disability Support Services in room 168 Clark Student Center (940) 397-4140 and make an appointment with the professor as soon as possible.

Student Conduct

Behavior that interferes with either the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the instruction will result in the instructor removing the disruptive student(s) from the class, either temporarily or permanently (instructor drop), and assigning a final lower grade, up to and including an F. In addition, and depending on the nature of the behavior or conduct, the student(s) may be subject to further disciplinary actions as per MSU policies.

Privacy Statement

Federal privacy law prohibits the instructor from releasing information about students to certain parties outside of the university without the signed consent of the student. Thus, in almost all cases the professor will not discuss a students’ academic progress or other matters with his/her parents. Please do not have them call. Regardless of these important legal considerations, the professors’ general policy is to communicate with the students, not their parents, even when a student has signed a consent form. College students are adults and are expected to behave accordingly.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty including plagiarism and giving or receiving unauthorized assistance is prohibited. Plagiarism is (1) the use of source material of other persons (either published or unpublished, including the Internet) without following the accepted techniques of giving credit or (2) the submission for credit of work not the individual’s to whom credit is given. If a student in the class plagiarizes material, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. The Student Honor Creed developed and adopted by the MSU Student Government reinforces the discouragement of plagiarism and other unethical behaviors. The first statement of the creed reads, “As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so.” Plagiarism is lying, cheating, and stealing.

Social Justice

Social justice is one of Midwestern State University’s stated core values, and the professor considers the classroom a place where students are treated with respect as human beings, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Moreover, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided the students can

agree to disagree. The professor's expectation is that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.

Campus Carry

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at MSU Campus Carry Policy.

COVID-19 Statements

Scientific data shows that being fully vaccinated is the most effective way to prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19 and has the greatest probability of avoiding serious illness if infected in all age groups. Although MSU Texas is not mandating vaccinations in compliance with Governor Abbott's executive orders, we highly encourage eligible members of our community to get a vaccination. If you have questions or concerns about the vaccine, please contact your primary care physician or health care professional. Given the recent rise in cases, individuals are also strongly encouraged to wear facial coverings when indoors among groups of people, regardless of vaccination status. Although MSU Texas is not currently requiring facial coverings, they have been an effective strategy in slowing the spread.

Weather Delays and School Cancellations

In the event of delayed openings or campus closure, we will NOT go to an online model. Wear your pajamas, drink some coffee/tea/cider/cocoa, and get some rest. We'll start up again on the next meeting time. ☺

Hearing Loss Statement

As a musician, your hearing is one of your most valuable assets. Unfortunately, high exposure to sound-producing activities can lead to noise-induced hearing loss. While this can be temporary, it can lead to tinnitus (ringing in the ears), permanent loss of hearing (particularly in the higher frequencies), and deafness. In addition to affecting a student's enjoyment of music, it also may render them incapable of continuing as a professional musical or music educator.

Musicians are also susceptible to musculoskeletal and vocal injury, particularly overuse injury. Failure to take adequate precautions can greatly shorten a student's performing career. Means to minimize risks associated with hearing loss and performance-related injuries will be discussed during applied lessons and/or master classes. Faculty members can only present information to students and offer resources and assistance in seeking professional medical help when needed. The student has the final responsibility to take proper precautions.

Values of the Midwestern State University Instrumental Program

EVERY REHEARSAL IS A PERFORMANCE

Experience the musical flow with every rehearsal moment. Don't wait until the concert to turn on musical concentration. Musical discoveries made during rehearsal can be retained and enhanced in subsequent rehearsals and the performance. Work with as much diligence during rehearsal as in a concert and listening/adjusting will be tremendously enhanced. Some players don't realize that passages are out of tune, for instance, until the concert. That is, obviously, too late.

MUSIC IS MADE OUT OF SILENCE

Musical sensitivity is based on the ability of players to hear. It is difficult to hear during a loud rehearsal. Talking destroys not only the silence, but also the concentration level of the players. Players who talk are not listening and interfere with the ability of others to concentrate. Players who do not listen cannot play musically.

A REHEARSAL IS NOT THE PLACE FOR INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE

Prepare your parts ahead of time. Rehearsals are needed to put together musical ideas, nuance, blend and balance, not work out notes that can be practiced individually. Don't hold the rest of the group back by not being able to play your part. Make it a personal goal to work out all technical problems immediately after the first reading.

Good performances are constructed, little by little, through progress in good rehearsals.

“Rehearsal as Realization”

- A rehearsal should be where musicians come together to learn each other's parts, not their own.
- A rehearsal must unite the performers in a shared understanding of the composer's intent and the conductor's interpretation of that intent.
- Each player must accept an equal responsibility for the outcome.
- Each player must know their parts well enough to concentrate on listening to others.
- Every rehearsal must have the potential to create beauty.
- Rehearsals must focus on what's right as well as what needs to be altered.
- Technical proficiency cannot dominate an entire rehearsal.
- Each rehearsal must encourage both extrinsic and intrinsic musical growth for the entire ensemble.

“Energizing the Ears”

- Listening must be of highest importance from the FIRST sound.
- Always tune in a way that promotes evaluative listening.
- Establish listening goals in tuning and warm-ups (i.e. match the clarinet, get inside the trombones, etc.).

- We will use real music or excerpts whenever possible.
- The conductor's actions are designed to guide the ensemble's listening.

“Pitch and Rhythm”

- Always be encouraged to listen for the ensemble's internal pulse!
- Learn your parts as if they were a mastery of homework.
- Use sounds from the ensemble as a metronome.
- Imitation is the highest form of flattering.
- Sing your parts when you are not rehearsing.
- Instead of thinking “You're behind”, think about how to LEAD.
- Always listen for something that is the same as what you are playing.

“A Balancing Act”

- Get inside the sounds of other players around you.
- Always try to focus your ears to instruments which are leading (i.e. low voice, solo part, high voice, inner part, melody, etc.)
- Make students aware of what others are playing by asking and not telling.
- Always think of the person to the left and right as part of your “trio”.
- When something goes right, acknowledge it, then play it again so the ensemble gains the awareness of what it sounds like to be right.
- Play only wonderful recordings.

“Tuning it in”

- Always match to the left, then right, then behind or ahead.
- Listen down to the lowest pitch.
- Its simple; the “beats” get slower as intonation improves and faster as it gets further apart.
- Tune to your instrument family.
- Use a tuner as an aid (i.e. as a reference for A 440) but do not expect to use it as a definitive way of creating good pitch.
- Don't use your eyes for pitch.
- When it comes to pitch, “make your best guess”; searching for intonation is better than holding a note out of tune.
- Tune to different pitches.
- If you hear more than one pitch, it's out of tune.

“Don't tune out”

- Parts are always handed off from one person to another; stay focused in the rehearsal.
- Listen, sing, and make evaluative ideas on how a part is played in a particular section. Be mindful of all sounds around you.

Warm-up Exercises and Tuning Sequence – Orchestra

All members check individual intonation before tuning sequence begins.

Scales (G, D, A, E, etc.) [all major and variant minor/modal scales should be practiced]

1. *Interval Exercises (2nds, 3rds, 4ths)*
2. *Scales and Arpeggios (choose specifically regarding fingering patterns and clean tones)*
3. *Velocity Exercises using Major/Minor patterns, trills, and differing articulations.*

Chorale exercise

1. *Play chorale, with focus on phrasing and breath support*
2. *Sing chorale on a specified vowel (A, E, I, O, U) to promote aural awareness*
3. *Play chorale again with focus on pitch accuracy and tone production*

Suggestion: Sixteen Chorales (for Concert Band) by J.S. Bach, arr. Mayhew Lake - G. Schirmer, Inc.

Tuning pitch given by either tuner or best available player in ensemble (try to use students/performers as much as possible)

Tune the ensemble through intonation consorts, such as:

1. *Concert A given; enter Group 1 (winds)*
2. *Concert A given; enter Group 2 (strings)*

Note: Intonation is all about listening and adjustment. We never trust a single tuning pitch or tuning exercise as being absolute.

Appendix 1

TEGES Domains and Competencies

Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TEGES)

The Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for Orchestra link to the following TEGES domains and competencies necessary to become a music educator in the state of Texas:

Domain II- Music Theory and Composition

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| <p>Competency 004- The teacher knows how to read, write and interpret standard music notation.</p> | <p>D. Recognizes and describes melody, harmony and texture of a musical work (e.g., modal, tonal, atonal, ostinato, doublings, melody and counter melody).</p> <p>E. Analyzes chordal structures (e.g., major, minor, dominant seventh, diminished seventh), harmonic progressions, cadences (e.g., authentic, half, deceptive, plagal) and harmonic textures (e.g., polyphonic, homophonic, monophonic)</p> |
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Domain IV- Music Classroom Performance

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| <p>Competency 009- The teacher demonstrates knowledge of methods and techniques for playing musical instruments.</p> | <p>A. Understands performance skills and appropriate playing techniques (e.g., bowing, fingering, embouchure, rudiments) for a range of instruments (e.g., band, orchestral, classroom).</p> <p>B. Understands proper health techniques to use during instrumental rehearsals and performances (e.g., posture, hand position, instrument maintenance).</p> <p>C. Selects appropriate instrumental literature to enhance technical skills and provide musical challenges.</p> <p>D. Understands standard terminology used in communicating about students' musical skills and performances.</p> <p>E. Knows how to offer meaningful prescriptions for correcting performance problems and errors (e.g., intonation, vibrato, articulation, tone production) and understands the constructive use of criticism when evaluating musical skills or performances.</p> |
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Domain V- Music Education

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| <p>Competency 012- The teacher knows how to provide students with learning experiences that</p> | <p>A. Demonstrates awareness of the importance of helping students develop music skills that are relevant to their own lives and of providing students with a level of musical</p> |
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enhance their musical knowledge, skills and appreciation.

self-sufficiency that encourages lifelong enjoyment of music.

C. Demonstrates knowledge of various music and music-related career options and knows how to promote music as an integral element in students' lives, whether as a vocation or as an avocation.

E. Knows how to integrate music instruction with other subject areas and analyzes relationships among the content, concepts and processes of music, the other fine arts and other subjects.