

**MUCD 340: Choral Conducting I**

**Units: 2**

**Spring 2021:** Tuesday & Thursday 8:30-9:50 AM

**Location:** MUS 106

**Instructor:** Heeseong Lee

**Office:** MUS 104

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Contact Info:** [heeseonl@usc.edu](mailto:heeseonl@usc.edu), 323-610-1506 (cell)

**Course Description**

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to choral conducting, score study, and rehearsal techniques. Students will develop an understanding of physical gesture as it relates to leading choral rehearsals and performances using a variety of literature. The course is divided into six units, with each unit corresponding to a particular gestural challenge that get increasingly complex as the semester progresses.

**USC Thornton Classical Performance and Composition Program Objectives**

Students will create a distinctive musical voice by...

- Developing musical excellence
- Connecting scholarship to music making
- Integrating the relevance of music to a diverse and inclusive society
- Erasing performance boundaries between different genres of music

And create a fulfilling musical career by...

- Navigating their way into the music profession to monetize their skills
- Mastering skills to share music through digital platforms and non-traditional venues
- Building a lifelong, global professional network
- Leading a healthy life as a musician

**Prerequisite:** None

**Learning Objectives**

- Demonstrate knowledge of conducting patterns in simple, compound and mixed meters
- Demonstrate cuing with breath and gesture simultaneously in homophonic and polyphonic works
- Distinguish between macro and micro conducting patterns in compound meter
- Demonstrate gestural competence in conducting passages with *rubato*, *allargando*, and *ritardando* tempo changes
- Demonstrate understanding of different types of articulation in conducting gesture, including *fermata*, *staccato*, *marcato*, *accent*, *tenuto*, and *legato*
- Develop usage of left hand to show cuing, dynamics, and phrasing
- Demonstrate understanding and application of score analysis methods
- Demonstrate understanding of the functions or musical effects that conducting gestures have on singers that modify an ensemble's tone, blend, and affect.

**Course Notes**

This course is being offered in an in-person modality. Please be attentive to the class attendance policy found in this syllabus. Online alternatives will not be considered unless I am presented with a directive from the offices of Student Health or Student Affairs. However, if on any day you are ill or otherwise cannot complete Trojan Check to produce a valid Campus Day Pass, stay home. In that case, contact me to make up work or otherwise maintain contact with the class.

**USC technology rental program**

We realize that attending classes may require access to technology that not all students possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university's equipment rental program. To apply, please submit an application.

### **Other USC Technology Support Links**

Blackboard help for students

Software available to USC Campus

### **Required Materials**

1. Scores and articles printed out in Blackboard
2. Three-ring binder for scores and handouts, pencil (or iPad)
3. Personal smart phone to record video
4. **Optional:** Phillips, Kenneth. *Basic Techniques of Conducting*.

### **Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment**

USC prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment. Please do not share or otherwise distribute class materials, music scores or recordings produced by me or any students in the conduct of this course without expressed permission.

### **SCampus Section 11.12(B)**

Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).

### **Grading Scale**

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale.

A = 95-100%	C = 73-76%
A- = 90-94%	C- = 70-72%
B+ = 87-89%	D+ = 67-69%
B = 83-86%	D = 63-66%
B- = 80-82%	D- = 60-62%
C+ = 77-79%	F = 59% and below

### **Grading Breakdown**

In-class work	15 pts./day x 28	420
Conducting Unit Evaluations	40 pts/each x 5	200
Conducting Self-Assessments	20 pts/each x 5	100
Score Analysis assignments	20 pts/each x 5	100
Reading Responses	10 pts/each x 5	50
Rehearsal Observation	50 pts/each x 1	50
Final Exam	80 pts	80

**Total Possible Points: 1,000**

## Description of Assignments

1. **In-class Work.** Students receive 15 points for being in class and ready to begin promptly at 8:30 AM. Students' in-class work will be assessed based on *punctuality* and *preparedness*. The following system will be used to assess participation:

15 points – prepared and participating entire class  
10 points – prepared and participating part of class  
5 points - absent with documented excuse  
0 points - absent without documented excuse

Preparedness for class includes arriving to class with scores and handouts neatly arranged in a binder, with pitches and rhythms of your appropriate voice part learned for each of the compositions covered in the class. As each student in the class is a member of the class "lab choir," singing participation will be assessed based on your ability to sing the notes and rhythms accurately while you are not on the podium.

Students who need to miss a class are required to notify the instructor at least 12 hours prior to the class meeting time (by 8:30 pm the previous day). Please refer to the Attendance Policy below for details.

2. **Score Analysis Assignments.** Students will submit a score analysis at the end of each unit. Comprehensive analysis methods such as the Margaret Hillis Method are preferred. Students may develop their own method of analysis if they choose, as long as their scores are marked thoroughly and consistently. Please refer to the score analysis guidelines document found in the "Content" folder on Blackboard.
3. **Conducting Unit Evaluations.** At the end of each unit, students will conduct the Unit repertoire in class all the way through, simulating a performance. The instructor will evaluate the student's conducting and provide a grade for the Unit. The rubric for each evaluation will be provided to students before the evaluation.
4. **Conducting Self-Assessments.** After each unit, students must watch the video of their conducting and complete the self-assessment assignment on Blackboard. The goal of these assessments is to offer a chance for reflection on 1) the process of preparing choral music to conduct and 2) the effectiveness of the student's gesture in communicating musical ideas. The assessment should only be completed after viewing the video recording of their conducting. The assignment is due the next class after the conducting evaluation.
5. **Rehearsal/Conducting Class Observations.** Students are asked to attend 1 separate choral rehearsal and/or conducting class (instrumental or choral) and submit a written reflection using the Rehearsal Observation assignment on Blackboard. A contact list of conductors who have agreed to have students visit their rehearsals for observations will be posted on Blackboard. Please be sure to email the conductor at least 48 hours ahead of your visit to inform them that your will be coming.

## Late Work

For full credit, all assignments are due before class (by 8:30 am) on the date listed on the course schedule. Late assignments may still be turned in for half credit within 24 hours after the listed due date (by 8:30 am the following day). Exceptions and extensions may be requested and will be handled on an individual basis.

## Unit Descriptions

### Unit 1: Fundamentals of Conducting Gesture

Components of gesture, Simple meters and beat patterns, cueing/preparatory gestures

- Bach, *Jesu meine Freude*
- Vivaldi, *Laudate Dominum Omnes Gentes*

### Unit 2: Compound Meter

Macro and micro beat patterns for compound meters, including 6/8, 9/8, 6/4

- Mozart, “Lacrimosa” from *Requiem in D Minor*, K. 626
- Bairstow, *I sat down under His shadow*

### Unit 3: Left Hand Independence

Cueing, dynamics, syncopation, phrasing

- Tallis, *If Ye Love Me*
- Bruckner, *Os Justi*

### Unit 4: Articulation & Dynamics:

Modifying gestures to show dynamics and articulation. Gestures showing rhythmic articulations including staccato, marcato, tenuto, accent, legato, and fermatas; and variations of tempo including rubato, ritardando, and accelerando

- Strimple, *Praise the Lord*
- Poulenc, “Laudamus te” from *Gloria*

### Unit 5: Asymmetrical & Mixed Meters

Gestures that combine simple and compound subdivisions including 7/8, 5/8, and mixed groupings in 8/8; conducting scores that change meter

- R. Thompson, *Glory to God in the Highest*
- Lauridsen, *Sure On This Shining Night*

### Unit 6: Final Exam

- Whitacre, *With a Lily in Your Hand*

	<b>Topics/Daily In-Class Activities</b>	<b>Deliverables / Due Dates</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	<p>8/24: Welcome; Introduction to Unit 1 – <b>The Fundamentals of Conducting</b>: Components of gesture, Simple meters and beat patterns, cueing/preparatory gestures</p> <p>8/26: Unit 1 continued – Gestural Rudiments; introduction to score analysis and overview of Score Analysis Assignment</p>	<p>For 8/26: Review terms and practice simple gestures from <b>Fundamentals of Conducting</b> handout (also in “Content” on Blackboard)</p>
<b>Week 2</b>	<p>8/31: Unit 1 [cont.]</p> <p>9/2 Unit 1 [cont.]</p>	<p>For Week 2: Practice Unit 1 and Reading Response due 8/31 Margaret Hillis Interview, “Score Study”</p> <p>Due 9/2: Unit 1 Score Analysis</p>
<b>Week 3</b>	<p>9/7: <b>Unit 1 Evaluations</b></p> <p>9/9: Unit 2 – Compound Meter: macro and micro beat patterns for compound meters, including 6/8, 9/8, 6/4</p>	<p>Due 9/9: Unit 1 Self-Assessment</p>
<b>Week 4</b>	<p>9/14: Unit 2 [cont.]</p> <p>9/16: Unit 2 [cont.]</p>	<p>Due 9/14: Reading Response: Colin Durrant, “Less is More: Conducting Gesture</p> <p>Due 9/16: Unit 2 Score Analysis</p>
<b>Week 5</b>	<p>9/21: <b>Unit 2 Evaluations</b></p> <p>9/23: Unit 3 – Left Hand Independence: cueing, dynamics, syncopations</p>	<p>Due 9/23: Unit 2 Self-Assessment</p>
<b>Week 6</b>	<p>9/28: Unit 3 [cont.]</p> <p>9/30: Unit 3 [cont.]</p>	<p>Due 9/28: Reading Response: Alberto Grau, “Music</p> <p>Due 9/30: Unit 3 Score Analysis</p>
<b>Week 7</b>	<p>10/5: <b>Unit 3 Evaluations</b></p> <p>10/7: Unit 4 – Articulation: gestures showing rhythmic articulations including staccato, marcato, tenuto, accent, legato, and fermatas; and variations of tempo including rubato, ritardando, and accelerando</p>	<p>Due 10/7: Unit 3 Self-Assessment</p>

<b>Week 8</b>	10/12: Unit 4 [cont.]  10/14: <b>FALL RECESS</b>	Due 10/12: Reading Response: Aaron Copland, "From Composer to Interpreter to Listener"  Due 10/14: Unit 4 Score Analysis
<b>Week 9</b>	10/19: Unit 4 [cont.]  10/21: <b>Unit 4 Evaluations</b>	Due 10/21: Unit 4 Self-Assessment
<b>Week 10</b>	10/26: Mixed Meter Exercise  10/28: Unit 5 – Asymmetrical & Mixed Meters: Gestures that combine simple and compound subdivisions including 7/8, 5/8, and mixed groupings in 8/8; conducting scores that change meter often	
<b>Week 11</b>	11/2: Unit 5 [cont.]  11/4: Unit 5 [cont.]	Due 11/2: Reading Response: Daniel Barenboim, "Sound and Thought,"  Due 11/4: Unit 5 Score Analysis
<b>Week 12</b>	11/9: <b>Unit 5 Evaluations</b>  11/11: Special Topic	Due 11/11: Unit 5 Self-Assessment
<b>Week 13</b>	11/16: Conducting Challenge  11/18: Unit 6 – Review and Preparation for Final Exam	
<b>Week 14</b>	11/23: Private lesson for Final Exam  11/25: <b>THANKSGIVING</b>	11/23: Rehearsal Observation
<b>Week 15</b>	11/30: Unit 6 [cont.]  12/2: <b>FINAL EXAM</b>	