

Wind Ensemble

Course Description, Spring 2006 – St. Cloud State University

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I. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

The Wind Ensemble is a select group of the most outstanding undergraduate and graduate wind and percussion musicians on campus. The ensemble is devoted to the preparation and performance of the richest and most varied traditional and contemporary music written for wind band. This ensemble is a listening-focused, process-oriented group that provides opportunities for students to gain interactive musical skills in various large ensemble settings. This course is designed to advance students' growth in musicianship and leadership. The ensemble experience promotes lifelong engagement in music. The goal of this organization in rehearsal and performance is to achieve a high degree of learning and performance excellence. It is the responsibility of the players and conductor to be prepared for each rehearsal; it is only through careful preparation that the goals and objectives of this organization can be achieved.

II. OBJECTIVES

The Wind Ensemble seeks to:

1. Provide varied, balanced and meaningful musical experiences that promote creativity, flexibility, and versatility in each musician.
2. Confirm the lessons learned in theory, composition, music history and music education in living performance.
3. Create a positive music-making environment that allows knowledge gained in the private studio to be applied to ensemble performance.
4. Increase awareness of the diverse artistic and historical significance of music for winds and percussion.
5. Expand the technical, intellectual, psychological, and spiritual horizons of musicians that result in soul-to-soul music making.
6. Prepare music and musicians of the future by exploring music of the present and preserving music of the past.
7. Preserve the repertoire of the medium that has become an uniquely American art form and promote the newly emerging global repertoire.
8. Broaden concepts of teaching and performance by encouraging creative thought and artistic interaction.
9. Develop future musical leaders of vision and passion.

III. GOALS

1. Individual Musical Skills- A primary goal of this course is to increase individual musical skills in:

- * Tone production: appropriate and characteristic with flexible colorations
- * Breathing: quality and control
- * Body framework awareness (most efficient playing positions)
- * Intonation: horizontal and vertical
- * Audiation: developing the "inner" ear
- * Phrasing: shape and note grouping
- * Articulation: suitability, variety, and consistency
- * Rhythm: accuracy and clarity
- * Pulse: internal and external
- * Technique: in the service of music
- * Sight-reading: building and reinforcing effective habits

2. Musical Concepts will be provided by:

- * Recognizing what to listen for in music
- * Increasing music imagery and creativity
- * Developing sensitivity to non-verbal communication
- * Cultivating an understanding of verbal communication
- * Promoting confidence in performance
- * Recognizing morphology (life-spans, shapes, structures) of musical notes, ideas, and compositions
- * Achieving clarity in performance (allowing the music to speak in its full expression)

3. Ensemble Playing Skills will be fostered by:

- * Being prepared and dependable
- * Recognizing primary and secondary roles
- * Working as a team
- * Developing a sensitivity to the whole musical process
- * Silent communication through breath with fellow musicians and conductor
- * Physical communication through movement with fellow players and conductor
- * Visual communication through eye contact with fellow players and conductor
- * Encouraging flexibility
- * Knowing compositional elements
- * Exploring stylistic and interpretive elements

4. Musical Literacy will improve by:

- * Investigating appropriate performance practices
- * Increasing knowledge of repertoire
- * Developing comprehensive musicianship
- * Expanding perceptions of the music
- * Describing historical, cultural, creative contexts and perspectives
- * Refining rehearsal skills
- * Revealing formal and structural elements
- * Learning established and new notational concepts

5. Student Leadership Skills will be developed through faculty advice, student forums, and participation in:

- * Band Advisory Board
- * Section Leader Guidance
- * Chamber Music Performance
- * Committee Work: festival, tour, publicity, management, and planning
- * Mentorship Programs
- * Hosting of Guests and Guest Artists

IV. ADVANCED LEADERSHIP LEVEL

Students may take Wind Ensemble at an advanced 300-level with the permission of the director by assuming leadership roles in one of the above-stated categories. Students must have been a fully participating member of the ensemble for at least one year and reached a 200-level of applied instruction to qualify for the Leadership Level of Wind Ensemble.

V. REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Rehearsals are Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00-4:00 in PAC 113. Sectional rehearsals will convene 3 times per semester on an arranged basis in assigned rooms. One dress rehearsal for each performance will be called. These rehearsals are not optional.

VI. MUSIC

Practice is to learn your individual parts. Rehearsal is to learn everyone else's parts. Students are required to have their individual parts prepared prior to rehearsals. Full rehearsals address issues of musical structure, energy, style, pacing, impact, balance, intonation, feeling, performance psychology and readiness—not "chasing notes." Each member will be assigned a folder of music and will be responsible for the folder and its contents. Fees will be assessed for lost folders, lost or damaged music, due to excessive marking or mishandling. A grade of "Incomplete" will be given to students for unreturned folders or music and a financial hold will be placed on the student's account.

VII. ASSIGNMENTS

Intone Charts: Wind musicians may be assigned individual and partnership intone charts to demonstrate their intonation tendencies. Accuracy (within 5 cents of center) and marked improvement in accuracy (centered) must be demonstrated on successive exercises. Percussion musicians must consult with the conductor on selection of mallets, instruments and methods of stroke for their demonstration of intonation.

Listening: Recorded examples and related listening are available to students in LRS. Students may be assigned to complete critical listening assignments for a more comprehensive preparation.

VIII. GRADING POLICY

Students earn grades based upon: 1) musical performance, 2) timely and successful completion of assignments and 3) level of involvement and preparation. A consistent lack of musical preparation is not acceptable professional behavior and will result in a less than optimum grade for the course or dismissal from the ensemble. Failure to complete an assignment on time will result in the lowering of the grade by one letter. Attendance at all rehearsals and concerts is required of all personnel. Absences from dress rehearsals are not permitted under any circumstances. An absence from a dress rehearsal may result in dismissal from the ensemble and a failing grade. Any absence not reported in advance is considered to be an unexcused absence. An unexcused absence results in the course grade being lowered by one letter grade. Each student's overall contribution to the ensemble will be considered in the final grade.

IX. INVOLVEMENT

It is necessary to arrive early for rehearsals so you are ready (room set, music in order, instrument and playing muscles ready to perform on time). Attendance is taken at the beginning of each rehearsal. Anyone not ready to play at the beginning of the rehearsal will be marked absent. Students who arrive after rehearsal has begun must consult with the conductor immediately following the rehearsal.

Potential conflicts with rehearsals or concerts must be submitted in writing to the conductor and approved no later than Friday of the first full week of rehearsals. The nature and frequency of conflicts will be evaluated to determine a student's participation in the ensemble. Reasons for excused absences are recitals, illness or death in the family. You must call the conductor, 308-3022 no later than 10:00 a.m. of the rehearsal day you are sick in order to be excused.

Students must check their respective e-mails and the band communication boards daily to know pertinent information on the ensemble, including practice approaches, work assignments, sectional assignments, seating charts, part assignments and call times. Musicians are expected to give the conductor feedback via e-mail or in person.

X. CONCERT ATTIRE

Women: Long black concert dress, black shoes or black dance slippers, black hose. Petite gold jewelry is optional.

Men: Black tuxedo, black bow tie and black cummerbund, white shirt, black shoes and black socks.

Ensemble: Black SCSU Wind Ensemble "mock-ts" and black slacks, shoes, and socks should be worn during concert tour and festival preparations.