

SYLLABUS FOR CHAMBER MUSIC
MUS 4223
Fall 2014

Instructor: Joseph Skillen (tel. 225-578-2646, E-mail: jskill@lsu.edu)

Meeting times:

Tuesdays from 1:30 – 3:00 pm in the Band Hall during the Fall Semester. Unless otherwise stated, students should always bring their instruments and ensemble music to class. Successful performances will require rehearsals outside of class.

Objective:

This is a class that is both a performance course and a series of lectures/demonstrations/masterclasses throughout the semester. The students will become more proficient at performing in ensemble, chamber, and solo situations.

This is also a Service-Learning course. Service-Learning is defined as a “credit-bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility” (Bingle and Hatcher, 1995).

While learning to program, rehearse, and perform throughout the semester, students will perform in the community where there are great areas of unmet need. The performances are meant to enhance the quality of life for our recipients of each concert while also demonstrating, to all participants, the powerful role that music has in the common expression of our humanity. To that end, I have set up a community partnership with Baton Rouge General Hospital. Our performances will take place on either the Bluebonnet or Mid-City Campus of Baton Rouge General Hospital. For more information about Service Learning courses on LSU’s campus, go to www.lsu.edu/ccell.

Community Partner:

As mentioned, our community partner for this course is Baton Rouge General Hospital. We will be working in their division of Arts in Medicine, which is coordinated by Kimberly Henderson, Arts in Medicine Coordinator (kimberly.henderson@brgeneral.org)

Throughout the semester you should coordinate your performances with Ms. Henderson and arrange for all travel to the concert location. Before traveling, you should also register with the LSU Individual Trip Insurance Program.

<https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/riskmgmt/triptravelservice> This insurance comes at no cost to you and is required for your participation in this course.

Learning Outcomes and Objectives:

1. Understand the process of planning, preparation and execution of a successful musical performance. This includes programming for specific types of audiences.
2. Learn through reflection that artistic performance is more than a vocation. It is a calling. We have a responsibility to offer our voice in places of great need. We can be a source of healing in the community.
3. Understand the unique voice that performers have to reach the souls of listeners stirring emotions, thoughts and healing through their performance. We don't perform solely for ourselves and paying audiences, we give our art to the world that created it.
4. Assess the successes and weakness of a performance.

Service Learning Rationale and Benefits to Community Partner

Music has power beyond its ability to express the human condition. Many studies are verifying the healing role that music and the arts can play for medical patients in their recovery phase. The greater Baton Rouge community is full of opportunities to hear music, but one must choose to seek them out. There are also persons who may not seek these opportunities who might benefit greatly. Our community is also filled with sick, injured, and hurting people who could be greatly helped by music and the arts coming to them. We have the unique power to humanize and heal in places that are desperately in need of our abilities to change the tone of any situation. Through this course, we will use our rehearsal and performing resources to bring some healing and wholeness in the lives of people who don't (or aren't able to) seek us out. We'll seek them out and, in so doing, show the community that our voice as artists is a crucial one. In doing this we also elevate the importance of music in the minds and lives of all participants.

Baton Rouge General will be the recipient of our concerts. In combination with (and successful completion of) the learning outcomes (above), our audiences will come understand that music performance is more than a vocation – it is a healing art. The patients and staff will receive the gift of our music that will take their healing to remarkable places. Places that they couldn't imagine. We, as performers, will receive knowledge that our efforts (and the resultant art) meant a great deal to our audiences. We will hopefully find pride in knowing that our work helped to serve as a catalyst in allowing all of us to pause and consider our roles in the shared human experience.

To assist in the learning outcomes for this course, Baton Rouge General Hospital (BRG) agrees to provide essential items to the success of each performance. Based on your performance contract (completed early in the course), BRG will provide a reasonable

setting for your performance. The performances will likely take place in a lobby or cafeteria area. For each performance, BRG will also do their best to help with in-house advertising of your concert (provided they receive the information from you in a timely manner). Finally, I will be asking Kimberly Henderson for feedback on each of your performances. This feedback will provide me with information about the successfulness and professionalism of your efforts at BRG.

Grading:

Each student will perform at least twice throughout semester, either in a solo or chamber music format. Each of these one-hour performances will take place at Baton Rouge General Hospital. We will also employ a masterclass format where you will also perform in front of the class for observations and critiques by the professor and class participants.

These performances will be graded in a subjective manner based on a combination of programming, preparedness, comportment, and effectiveness of communication. Each hospital performance constitutes 35% of the grade for the class. You will be responsible for scheduling these performances with our community partner. Please adhere to the deadlines posted below. Any missed required concert date for an unexcused absence will lower the student's final grade by TWO letter grades.

The remaining 30% of the course comes from reflective writing assignments and the submission of a video blog with an artifact from each of your concerts.

Percentage breakdown:

Completion of Perf. Contract	15%
Performance 1	25%
Performance 2	25%
Reflective Writing 1	10%
Reflective Writing 2	10%
Video Blog with artifact	15%

Performance Contract:

You will be responsible for securing a date and location for your performances with Kimberly Henderson. The contract should be signed and completed by the date listed in the course calendar. Sample contracts are provided upon request. Be sure to include information about transportation, equipment needs, repertoire you will perform, publicity materials, and contact information of all performers.

Performance Evaluations:

The performances will be evaluated by a combination of evaluations from a committee of observers (community partner, a peer assessment, and faculty review – either live or based on a video recording). I will have heard a number of the pieces that you are choosing to perform in our weekly master classes, but just as any artist experiences – you

will be evaluated by your audience. At the conclusion of each performance the community partner or her designee, a peer from our class, and I will complete an evaluation of the quality of their experience with you. You will be graded on professionalism (25%), appearance (25%), quality of performance (25%), and appropriateness of your repertoire (25%).

You are required to video-record this performance and provide it to me for evaluation if I am not able to attend the actual concert. The video recording will also help in the VLOG reflection project listed below.

Reflective Writing:

Each performance will be followed by a submission of an essay on the experience. This 5-page essay should reflect upon the following prompts:

- What unexpected event did you experience with this performance?
- Were there any interactions with audience members at the venue?
- How do you feel that the performances were received?
- Were you pleased with your own level of participation in the performance?
- What would you change for the next performance?
- What level of awareness have these performances brought to you?
- How have these experiences changed you as a person and performer?

Grading of these essays will be based upon your ability to reflect upon the experience, your role in it, the benefits received for both you and the community partner, and any choices you would make to improve your next community interaction.

Video Blog Assignment (VLOG):

Communication is central to what we do as artists. We ceaselessly hone this skill throughout our lives as artists. Additional modes of communication that we may employ include technology and writing. In order for us to explore these additionally critical skills, we will have a semester-long video blog (VLOG) project. Each student will add their videos to a class VLOG throughout the course of this semester. The VLOG must contain a minimum of three video clips from each student of performances that are leading up to, or part of, one of the hospital performances during the semester. While the piece of music doesn't have to be the same, each of you will need to create 3 distinct performance postings with written self-reflection. After that, every member of the studio must offer some constructive commentary on the video posts of each student. I will provide an additional tip sheet for how this will work with specific guidelines for postings.

VLOG Grading:

Personal Video Postings (quality and depth of self-reflection) – 10%
Written Comments on each of your colleagues' video postings – 5%

Course Calendar:

January 20 – Kimberly Henderson visit to class

February 1 – completion of concert contract with Kimberly Henderson

February 28 – VLOG postings 1/3 completed

March 15 – completion of first concert at Baton Rouge General Hospital with submission of reflective writing

April 15 – VLOG submissions 2/3 completed

April 30 – completion of second concert at Baton Rouge General Hospital with submission of second reflective writing

May 5 – VLOG submission with concert artifacts completed

Finals week – Group gathering at BRG for impact assessment