

Syllabus: MEN 3333 – Woodwind Ensemble

Clarinet Consort, Spring 2010

INSTRUCTOR: David Brooke Wetzel, DMA
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Office: Butler G7 (M/W 11:30-12:30; T 11-12; W 1:30-2:30; F 12-1)
Rehearsal Times: Thursday 10:00– 10:50 am; additional times TBA
Credits: 1; **Pre-requisites:** permission of the instructor

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Ensemble study and performance of clarinet choir literature. Students in the ensemble will prepare at least one public performance. Works from the existing literature will be paired with arrangements or original compositions by members of the ensemble. Students will have opportunities to play a variety of roles in the ensemble, from principal parts to auxiliary instruments. Particular attention will be paid to tonal balance among all the parts of the group. Students may have the opportunity to conduct the ensemble as well.

OBJECTIVES

Students will gain confidence in performance and rehearsal settings, and will gain experience in performing as part of a cohesive group. Ensemble members will broaden their musical knowledge through encounters with works from the musical literature in arrangement and transcription. Students will develop listening skills related to playing within a homogeneous instrumental grouping. These skills will better prepare the students for subsequent performing situations with heterogeneous instrumental groups such as wind ensemble or symphony orchestra.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance

Attendance at weekly rehearsals is absolutely essential.

Unexcused absences from ensemble rehearsals will have severe grade consequences: one (1) unexcused absences = final grade lowered one level; two (2) unexcused absences = final grade lowered two levels; three (3) unexcused absences = failing final grade. Furthermore, missed rehearsals may require the removal of a player from a concert, further limiting the student's grade prospects, at the instructor's discretion. All members of the ensemble are expected to arrive for rehearsals on time and prepared to play. As in the professional music world, showing up on time and prepared is of the utmost importance.

Required Materials

Students enrolled in clarinet choir and consort must provide their own instruments and accessories (reeds, swabs, mouthpiece, etc.). In cases where an instrument must be in the shop for an extended period, a loaner instrument may be available (see your instructor for details and arrangements). Auxiliary instruments (E-flat, alto, bass, contra, etc. clarinets) may be borrowed from the instrument library if you are assigned to play an auxiliary part.

Practice Requirements

It is assumed that students involved in clarinet choir and clarinet consort will take time to adequately prepare for rehearsals by practicing their parts beforehand. Difficult passages may be better addressed in the practice room or in a private lesson than in a rehearsal setting. The purpose

of rehearsal is to develop a cohesive and balanced ensemble sound and to develop expressive nuance through active listening and inter-ensemble communication. This is only possible when all the members of the group arrive highly prepared.

Performances

The clarinet choir and clarinet consort will perform on at least one public concert per semester. This may include concerts on campus (such as the weekly Promenade concert) or off campus at a variety of venues. Some possibilities include:

- Arnot Mall, Big Flats, NY (annual holiday concert)
- Gmeiner Cultural and Arts Center, Wellsboro, PA
- Corning Community College, Corning, NY
- Area middle and high schools
- Area churches, libraries, and other community centers

As with most professional ensembles, performance opportunities only become successful concerts when the group is highly motivated and prepared. I expect the MU Clarinet Consort and Clarinet Choir to continue to live up to the high standard that has been established in the last several years.

Grading

Grades will be determined based on the weekly preparation and progress shown by each student throughout the semester. A student does not have to be the best player in the ensemble to receive an 'A' in the course. In general, a grade of 'A' will be awarded to students who show a high level of effort and diligence in weekly preparation, progress as a developing ensemble player, and display a constructive attitude towards the ensemble and its members. A grade of 'B' will be awarded to students who meet the basic requirements of the ensemble, but display a less-than-exemplary level of preparation or progress. A grade of 'C' or lower will be awarded to students who's lack of preparation or professionalism detracts from the ensemble's ability to prepare for public performance or to function successfully as a group. As outlined above, lack of attendance at rehearsals can have an additional negative impact on a student's grade. In order to make the determination of final grades more clear, individual letter grades will be given for the semester in the following categories (with associated grade weights): preparation (30%), performance (30%), professionalism (30%), and attendance (10%).

Exceptionalities

Any students with documented psychological or learning disorders or other significant medical conditions that may affect their learning should work through Mr. William Chabala in our Counseling Center (662-4798 or wchabala@mnsfld.edu) to provide me with the appropriate letter so that I may serve their particular needs more effectively. If you have an exceptionality that requires class or testing accommodations, Mr. Chabala will work with us to identify and implement appropriate interventions.