

JUNIOR HIGH CHOIR HANDBOOK

Teacher: Ms. Cinnamon Kleeman

Choir Website: <https://durantchoirs.weebly.com/>

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Please take time to read this syllabus and keep it in your choir folder to refer back to it when you need information. It will serve as a contract that helps to remind you - the student, parents/guardians – and me that we have elected to be a member of a Durant choir. By signing on the final page and returning this portion to me, you accept the responsibilities that go along with being a part of our choral team.

WHY DOES CHORAL MUSIC MATTER?

There are many benefits to learning choral music, but at the core of it lies the uniqueness to human connection and what that connection can foster in our humanity. The way and depth to which we as a species connect and understand music is one-of-a-kind, and therefore this phenomenon merits study. Choral music helps us connect to the aesthetics of sound with the added context of words and language in a way that can help us understand music as an art form and its expressive nature. Entwined with this value are the benefits that choral music affords us through participation, some of which are that: (1) Understanding the contextual nature deepens our understanding of societal issues of justice and the nature of being human, (2) Teamwork and trust is promoted when interpreting another creator's work, and (3) Joining one's voice with another fosters communication and empathy in order to become one unified voice that is somehow more than the sum of its part. *In short, we should study choral music because it connects us to the inestimable value of music through the most direct instrument, and at the same time, makes us better humans.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

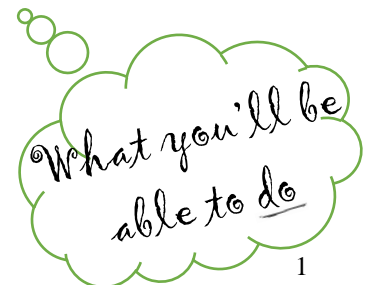
Junior High Choir is a non-auditioned mixed choir that meets every other day all year. This class teaches a variety of chamber and concert music from all genres. The primary objective for this ensemble is to gain a deeper connection to choral music primarily through classroom learning and community performances. In order to enrich this connection, JH Choir also focuses on fostering life skills like teamwork, problem-solving, responsibility, and leadership mentioned above which are engrained in choral music.

STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS: Upon successful completion of this course, students will...

- Demonstrate **beginning** level knowledge and skills within the following areas: music theory, music literacy, ear training, music technology, musical terms and symbols, vocal pedagogy, music history, and performing, creating and responding to music
- Develop knowledge of and appreciation for music of contrasting cultures, styles, and languages
- Establish a growth mindset

For a more comprehensive list of specific standards, please visit:

<https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>



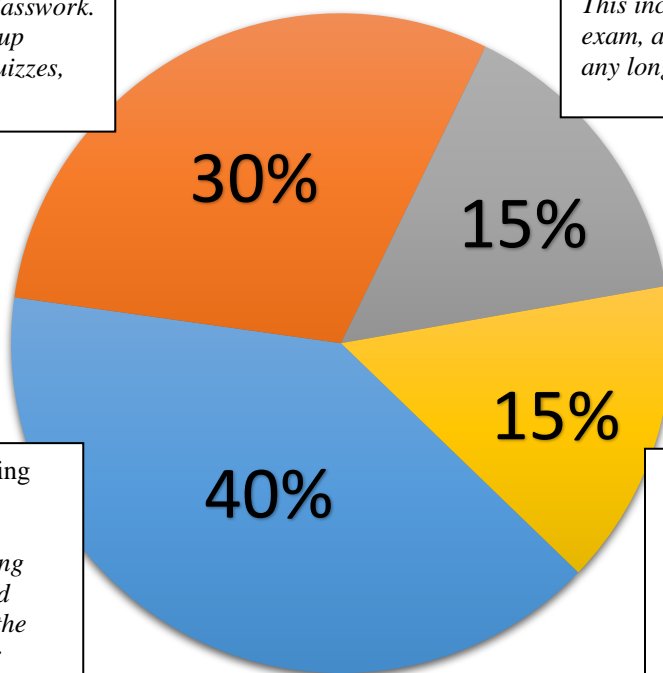
Grading

Formative Assignments – 30%

This includes any required classwork. Ex: marked music, small group testing, worksheets, verbal quizzes, surveys, or discussion.

Summative Assessments/Projects – 15%

This includes the semester midterm, final exam, and concert reflections, as well as any long-term projects.



Performance Event Recording Submission– 40%

For the time being, recording your voice part at home and submitting the final file by the deadline will constitute our performances. You will also need to watch the final project in order to complete your concert reflection. The effort needed to make the best possible recording will make up for the effort typically used for voice lessons.

Daily Performance – 15%

You are given 1 daily point for academic performance. You are expected to contribute to class learning through actions such as:

- *Adding to discussion*
- *Asking questions and offering answers*
- *Listening actively to further the lesson*
- *Participating thoughtfully in activities (warm-ups/rehearsal, etc.)*

In the rare case of a co-curricular rehearsal outside the school day, these are worth 5 points each.

EXPECTATIONS

My expectations for class are fairly simple: RESPECT AND RISK. Respect for the director, respect for the classroom, respect for your audiences, respect for what we're studying, respect for our time, respect for other students, and respect for yourself. This is the foundation of a good team and that includes me; I will mirror your respect back to you. Choir is not just an academic class; it is a social class. As a social class, it is incredibly important that you take the risks as an individual and as a group to enhance your learning and support your growth. Choir is a brave space; you may feel uncomfortable taking risks but this is a place where we support each other and encourage giving your all; trial and error will produce some of the most meaningful learning here. See the "Daily Performance" grading category below for specifics on what this looks like.

DAILY ATTENDANCE

Attendance will be taken by putting your cell phone in your assigned attendance slot. This saves us time, and you can see your cell phone at all times. Phones are expected to be on silent during choir in order to avoid distractions. If you have an emergency and are waiting for a call, parents/guardians are instructed to call the office and someone will come to get you to take the call in the office. If you do not possess a cell phone, parents/guardians will be contacted to confirm that this is the case and we will make an alternate plan for you.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

- RVC Festival – a day-long honor choir at a regional school, the first Monday of October (selected)
- Small Ensembles – learn a separate a cappella-style piece for 8-12 elite singers to perform at a concert (auditioned)
- Showcase Show Choir – **NEW** Short performance with choreography, vocals, and costuming (auditioned)
- Showcase Acts – solos, duets, group acts perform at the final 2-night Showcase Event (auditioned)
- *All of these are TBD, and the presumed format for performance at this time is virtual

CLASS PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

MISSED RECORDINGS

Deadlines are based on the amount of time it takes to assemble all of the recordings and edit them into a final product so it is **INCREDIBLY** important to submit them in a timely manner. For every day after the deadline a recording is submitted, you will get 15% off your grade. After 7 days late, it will be incredibly difficult or potentially impossible to add your recording to the final product so you are no longer able to submit for any points. For this reason, I suggest you start making recordings as soon as you are able.

CONCERT ATTIRE

In the event that we are able to do pictures or video with our performance product, students are expected to wear nice attire that follows the school dress code. Try to represent choir in a way that makes you feel proud! Avoid bulky jewelry and try to have hair/facial hair well-groomed as to avoid any distraction to the audience. *If you are not able to purchase the necessary items for the concert attire due to a personal situation please tell Ms. Kleeman as soon as possible so arrangements may be made.

TARDIES

If I notice a pattern of tardiness in your daily points, I will discuss an improvement plan with you so that it doesn't continue. This includes having your phone in your slot! Ask Ms. Kleeman before leaving the Choir Room for any reason; you'll be allowed to use the restroom freely unless this is continually abused.

CLASS MATERIALS: The school-provided music, folders and other materials are for careful use by the student. If any material is severely damaged or lost, the student *may* be financially responsible.

TRAVEL/TRIPS

There may be some events that require us to travel to either another school or another city. If permission forms are required for such events, this will be addressed at that time. We intend on joining the band this May for their annual trip to Chicago to see the Blue Man Group. The cost is around \$100 per student.

FINE ARTS BOOSTERS

For friends and family of our choir students we offer a growing Fine Arts Boosters organization. For more information on this group, please call Colleen Krebs at 563-210-4764 or email her at cntkrebs3@yahoo.com. We consistently need parent volunteers for our events. Optional meetings are once a month.

CALENDAR

All Music Department events are listed on the last page of this syllabus and on the choir website: <https://durantchoirs.weebly.com/>. There may be updates or changes to these dates as the year progresses. (We should be able to give at least 2 weeks' notice for any new event.) Please try take family vacations into account when considering deadlines, especially recording deadlines (as you will need reliable internet to submit your files). Your attendance is part of your grade, but more importantly **WE WILL MISS YOU and NEED YOUR TALENT!**

CHOIR OFFICERS

In order to foster leadership as well as give students a voice in the choir program, an election will be held for ~1 student choir officer per 7 students. Choir Officers' duties are:

- Contributing to Officer meetings to discuss the program
- Acting as a teacher liaison (if something that's going on in class or with the choir program as a whole that I should know but might be missing -- let me know).
- Acting as a Historian, compiling pictures or info related to relevant choir activity.
 - This could be compiling the quotes on the quote board, making a scrapbook, sharing a Google Doc with memories, or taking pictures throughout the year, etc.
- Organizing any new events and delegate necessary task to other choir members/officer
 - Ex: We want to do a party at the end of the year, one person needs to find a movie, one needs to bring some snacks one needs to bring music, etc.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Durant High School Choir uses our choir website <https://durantchoirs.weebly.com>, /Remind, email, and the occasional text message for communication about upcoming or important events. Emails or phone calls may be used to contact parents and guardians for reminders, updates, questions, concerns and celebrations throughout the year.

COVID-19 AND FLEXIBILITY PLAN

It should come as no surprise that what a day at school looks like during the Covid-19 pandemic is vastly different from what we're used to, and choir is no exception. Regardless, we're here to sing because we love it, so we're going to do what is necessary to keep us as safe as possible while doing so. Covid-19 is thought to be transmitted primarily through microdroplets and aerosols, and current evidence suggests that singing emits significantly higher levels of these particles. On top of that, the nature of choral singing technique encourages deep breathing, vocal projection, steady air flow, and a highly asymmetrical inhalation/exhalation cycle. These concerns have prompted the NFHS/CBDNA Coalition Covid-19 Study on which the Iowa High School Music Association bases its Return to Learn Guidance for the Music Classroom with recommended safety precautions for performing ensembles. In adherence to these guidelines, you should expect to do the following in choir:

1. **Wear a mask at all times** within the choir room: when singing, speaking, sitting idly, gesturing, or any activity. I recognize that sometimes it will get uncomfortable, or you may need to remove your mask to use a tissue/etc. If such a situation arises, **let me know** and I will excuse you to the nurse's office to get a replacement mask, or to the bathroom to use a tissue. While inconvenient, such precautions will help immensely in preserving the safety of all staff and students.
2. Understand that we'll be spaced much farther apart in the classroom; as close to 6 ft as possible.
3. Be seated in straight lines, rather than curving with the room.
4. Understand that we should only sing (even masked) for up to 30 minutes in the same location.
5. Avoid touching anything in the classroom that is not your own materials, and be prepared to sanitize items. Touching anyone or anything can leave fomites (another form of transmission).
6. Understand that with our limitations, there will be a lot less singing and a lot more choir-related non-performing topics and projects. Potential topics include but are not limited to: Pronunciation symbols (IPA), music theory, ear training, modern music genres, Musical Theatre, Garageband, composition/music technology, terms and symbols, Music and Respect (ethical and moral issues in music), and classical music history. These concepts lend themselves well to online-learning and will provide us an opportunity to become more well-rounded in a way that is dependable.
7. Make video and/or audio recordings at home with the knowledge that they will be used to assemble them to create a virtual choir performance, and submit them by the deadline. Because we will need the full song in a single file, you need to be able to sing it from start to finish. I will create practice tracks where you can hear the full song, but mostly your part. Then you can listen to these tracks with earbuds, while you sing along to make your recording. A conducting video to watch while singing along may also be necessary; we will address that if it happens.

JUNIOR HIGH CHOIR
(Important dates)*

 *Keep this page
for your records*

Monday, October 5 th	Fall Recording Submission Deadline
Wednesday, October 21 st	Small Group Testing Due (done in class)
Tuesday, October 20th	Fall Choir Concert: Grades 7-12: Virtual Event
Wednesday, November 25 th	Winter Recording Submission Deadline
Wednesday, December 9th	Winter Choir Concert: Grades 7-12: Virtual Event
December TBD	Caroling at Leland Smith*
Thursday, January 15 th	Small Group Testing Due (done in class) Semester Midterm Due (done in class)
Friday, March 19 th	3 rd Voice Lesson Due (if moving to in-person concerts) Small Group Testing due (done in class)
Tuesday, May 11th & Wednesday, May 12th	7-12 Showcase Event: 6:30pm – Auditorium (TBD)
Thursday, May 13 th	Music Marking for 2 nd Semester due
Friday, May 21 st	4 th Voice Lesson Due (if moving to in-person concerts) Year Final Exam Due (done in class)

*All dates are subject to change and you will be informed at last 2 weeks in advance. Use the password **5e3xs5r** to go to this course's Google Classroom for updated assignments and deadlines.

SIGNATURES

Parents and Guardians:

Please go to the google form using the QR code provided and click that you and your students have:

✓Read, understood and agree to all of the content and policies presented in this syllabus.

SCAN ME

