

Course Syllabus: Symphonic Orchestra / Chamber Orchestra

Credit: 1 credit

Instructor: Karen Thomson, Music Department

Phone: (425) 670-7311, ex. 6230

E-mail: thomsonk@edmonds.wednet.edu

Office hours: by appointment

I. COURSE OBJECTIVES (Enduring Understandings)

Students in orchestra are viewed as both performers and educated consumers of music. Throughout their course of study, students will:

- Increase playing skills as they relate to the technical demands of the music.
- Improve intonation, knowledge of finger patterns, and shifting skills by learning and practicing scales in different keys.
- Learn to identify and appreciate various styles of classical music, including *Baroque*, *Classical*, *Romantic*, and *20th Century*.
- Study basic concepts of music theory.
- Continue to improve all aspects of musicianship, including *tone*, *intonation*, *ensemble skills*, *expressiveness*, and *technique*.
- Improve music reading skills through regular ensemble practice.
- Exercise leadership and problem-solving skills through participation in sectionals and a chamber ensemble.
- Show a high level of self-discipline and personal responsibility, as demonstrated by diligence in home practice, proper care of equipment, and attendance at required events.
- Learn and follow protocol for rehearsals and sectionals.

II. COURSE CONTENT SYMPHONIC ORCHESTRA

First Semester:

- A variety of concerts will be performed featuring music appropriate for each occasion as well as traditional classical literature
- There will be a study of the composers, their place in history, and an understanding of all musical symbols and terms introduced in the literature.
- Students will exercise perceptive listening and evaluation skills through journal writing.
- Two-octave major scales will be studied. Shifting practice will be emphasized to prepare students for advancing scale work.
- Each student will participate in a chamber ensemble.

Second Semester:

- There will be a continuation of the learning from first semester, which will also include a wider variety of literature. Performances will be more frequent.
- As in the first semester, a discussion of terms, composers, and music history will be included.
- Two-octave minor scales will be studied. Further position work will take place.

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

First Semester:

- A variety of concerts and festivals will be performed. The literature will be more complex than the music performed by the Symphonic Orchestra.
- Major and minor scales will be learned and performed with a variety of rhythms and bowing patterns.
- Students will be expected to maintain a high level of focus in rehearsals, and a heightened commitment to practicing away from class.
- Each student will participate in a chamber ensemble.
- Students will exercise perceptive listening and evaluation skills through journal writing.

Second Semester:

- There will be a continuation of the learning from first semester, which will also include a wider variety of literature.
- Performances will be more frequent and may include competitions, musical theater pit orchestra, Masterworks concert, and run-out performances.

III. ATTENDANCE

Classroom: Students are expected to be in their seats when the bell rings. Tardiness will be excused only when a student brings a pass from another teacher or the attendance office. School attendance and tardy policies will be followed. More than 3 unexcused absences in one semester will result in automatic loss of credit. Students more than 10 minutes late to class will be marked absent.

Concerts: Unless otherwise indicated, participation in all scheduled performances is mandatory. Any exception must be due to a serious, unavoidable conflict and must be documented in writing by the student's parent or guardian as early as possible. Students are expected to keep track of upcoming orchestra events and make necessary arrangements with parents, employers, and teachers to ensure that they are able to attend.

Activities: From time to time, students will be required to attend additional rehearsals outside of class time. Every effort is made to schedule these rehearsals at convenient times for students, and to give sufficient notice of when they will be. Students are expected to record these dates in their planners, and adjust their schedules so that they can participate. Conflicts will be handled on a case-by-case basis; it is always necessary for an orchestra member to give prior notice if a rehearsal or activity will be missed. In addition, some opportunities will be offered which are optional. Such activities will not impact a student's grade, but students are expected to inform the director in a timely manner whether or not they will participate, and when appropriate give sufficient reason if they will not be participating. *Please note that additional fees are charged for many activities, both optional and mandatory, that occur away from school. Students who are not able to cover field trip fees in full due to financial constraints should contact Ms. Thomson in a timely manner regarding financial assistance and waivers.*

IV. CLASSROOM RULES

- Be in your seat on time, with your instrument, music, and a pencil.
- Keep the rehearsal room and the storage room tidy.
- Show respect for all people and equipment.
- Do not talk or play out of turn during a rehearsal.
- No gum, food, or beverages into the music department.
- No personal music or communication devices in class.
- No sunglasses, hats, or anything that prevents eye contact.
- Stay in your seat unless you have been granted permission to leave.
- Follow proper protocol in rehearsals and sectionals.

CONSEQUENCES

Students who violate rules will lose participation points. Serious or repeated infractions may result in detention and/or suspension.

V. REQUIRED MATERIALS

All students are required to possess the following materials:

- A properly maintained and playable instrument
- A folding music stand for home practice and performances away from school
- A composition book for journal entries
- Complete orchestra concert uniform
- Orchestra t-shirt and khaki pants, shorts, or skirt for casual performances and events

VI. GRADING POLICY

CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (40%)

Five participation points will be awarded for each class period. Points will be deducted if a student is absent, tardy, inattentive, unprepared, or violates a rule or protocol. The following is a general guideline of how points will be deducted according to the severity of the infraction:

NATURE OF INFRACTION	points lost
Absence, failure to bring instrument to class	5
Insubordination, disruptiveness, refusal to participate as required	3-5
More than 3 minutes tardy, frequent inattention, slothfulness during sectional	2
Less than 3 minutes tardy, restroom break, rule reminder, no pencil or music, etc.	1

PERFORMANCES AND ACTIVITIES (30%)

Performances are mandatory, grade-bearing activities. It is up to the director's discretion to determine if a student has a valid reason for missing a performance. Absences may be considered unexcused even if authorized by the student's parents if the reason does not meet the criteria set by the director.

Excused absences are rare, and students must complete an independent project to make up the credit. From time to time, students will be expected to attend rehearsals and sectionals that take place outside of the regular class time. Points are given for activities that occur outside of class, and are weighted according to the importance of the activity. When students must be excused from afterschool rehearsals, half credit will be given if they properly notify the director prior to the missed event.

TESTS / PREPARATION (15%)

Students' musical progress will be assessed by their performance on taped playing tests. Tests will include assigned scales, excerpts from orchestra music, prepared exercises, and sight-reading. The sight-reading portion of the test is for diagnostic purposes only, and will not affect the overall score. There will also be written tests covering theory and vocabulary.

JOURNAL (15%)

Students are required to keep an orchestra journal. Written activities will be assigned throughout the term, which will be completed both in and out of class. Journal activities will include listening, analysis, evaluation, and self-assessment. Journals will be reviewed and assessed once per grading period.

VII. MAKE-UP POLICY

- An unexcused absence from a concert cannot be made up.
- Playing tests missed due to an excused absence can be taken after all other students have been tested. Tests cannot be retaken.

VIII. UNIFORM

GIRLS: Long black skirt (provided by school), black orchestra blouse (purchase from school for \$30), black dress shoes, black or natural colored stockings.

BOYS: Black tuxedo (available from school, rent \$30/year or purchase for \$100), black dress shoes and socks.

CASUAL PERFORMANCES: Orchestra t-shirt (purchase for \$15), khaki pants, shorts, or skirt.

PARTICIPATION CONTRACT
Symphonic Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra

This document will be kept on file as a record that both the student and the parent have read the preceding information. Please also make sure that your current contact information is correct in Skyward.

Student Name (please print) _____

Parents Names _____

Parents' e-mail _____

Student's e-mail _____

"I have read and understand the 2004-2005 Orchestra Syllabus, and I agree to abide by the policies stated therein."

Student Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

Beginning of the year forms and fees:

- Music booster volunteer form (on back)
- Blouse purchase \$30 (incoming girls)
- Tux rental \$30 (ALL boys using school-owned tux)
- Tux purchase \$100 (optional)
- Re-size formerly purchased tux \$25
- T-shirt \$15 size: S / M / L / X / 2X / 3X

Total uniform fees: _____

*Make checks payable to **Edmonds School District / EWHS***