

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
MUSC 248/550 Winter 2005

Conductor: Prof. Kevin Miller, 104 Alexander  
*kmiller@emich.edu*

Graduate Assistant: Lu Qiu, 106A Alexander

Manager/Librarian: Nichole Vasu, 104A Alexander  
Secretary: Jessica Taylor, 104A Alexander  
Equipment Manager: Jason Blanchard, 104A Alexander

**EMUSO Office Phone: 734-487-2448**  
**K. Miller's Home Phone: 734-429-8446**

**Mission Statement:** *The Symphony Orchestra at Eastern Michigan University is an ensemble of musicians who come together to learn great music and share it with others.* The goals within this mission are: 1) to provide for the best possible learning and performing of important orchestral repertoire in a setting of mutual respect and common effort; 2) to provide for the enhancement and synthesis of musical skills, concepts, and ideas in a creative learning environment; 3) to provide for the opportunity for all to experience the joy of good musical accomplishments; 4) to develop professional and lifelong learning through music; and 5) to contribute to the cultural life of the music department, the university, and the community.

**Rehearsals:** The Symphony Orchestra rehearses Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 to 2:50 p.m.; in addition, the orchestra strings rehearse on Wednesdays from 3:00 to 3:50 p.m. The schedule for each day's rehearsal will be posted weekly on the orchestra bulletin board in the hall outside Rm. 106. We'll start on time, end on time, and, we hope, have a good time.

**Seating and part assignments:** Seating and part assignments will be based on auditions held at the beginning of the semester and prior to performances. Part assignments will rotate at the discretion of the conductor.

**Music and Folders:** All music is the property of the Symphony Orchestra and is to be returned upon demand in original condition. Loss or damage of any part(s) or folder, and the subsequent cost of its replacement, will be the sole responsibility of the person(s) to whom it was originally assigned. The Orchestra Manager/Librarian has broad discretionary authority to enforce this policy.

**Duties of Orchestra Members: (this is the fine print.)**

- a) Musicians shall be in their seats by the scheduled starting time of each rehearsal. Tuning shall occur one minute after the scheduled starting time. The clock in the rehearsal room will keep official time for rehearsals.
- b) If a musician is tardy for a rehearsal, the musician must notify the conductor after the rehearsal of the reason for being late. The conductor will determine whether the tardiness is excused or unexcused. Students are tardy if not in position to tune when the first tuning note is sounded or by the first announcement, whichever is first.
- c) Musicians shall be present at all rehearsals for which their services are expected. Absences shall be identified as excused or unexcused as follows:
  - 1) Excused absences shall include the following, provided that proper notice is given to the conductor as soon as reasonably possible under the circumstances: illness, death in the family, religious observances, and university approved events.
  - 2) Unexcused absences shall be those for which the musician fails to give proper notice, or is absent without suitable explanation.
- d) Students who leave early from a rehearsal or sectional may be marked absent or the equivalent of half of an absence.
- e) *Proper notice of absence or tardy includes filling out an attendance form located on the bulletin board outside the Orchestra Staff office (104A).*

- f) All parts must be covered at every rehearsal. *If you are the only person who plays your part, and you know you are going to be absent from a rehearsal, it is your responsibility to find a substitute for that rehearsal.* Exceptions to this may be made only by the conductor.
- g) Any member of the orchestra who is absent from an excessive number of rehearsals, whether excused or unexcused, may be denied the right to perform that concert at the discretion of the conductor.
- h) An unexcused absence from a *performance* will automatically lower the student's grade two full letter grades, i.e. "A" to a "C."
- i) When it is possible to distribute music in sufficient time before the first rehearsal, it is the player's responsibility to have his or her part learned before the first rehearsal.
- j) If you have a question about your part during a rehearsal and you are not the principal player, direct your question to the principal, not to the conductor.
- k) Principal players have additional responsibilities such as leading sectional rehearsals, putting bowings in parts (strings), making part assignments (in some cases), being responsible for the performance of the section, and other duties that may be assigned by the conductor.
- l) An unexcused absence from a required audition equals an unexcused absence from a rehearsal.
- m) A student may be removed from the orchestra for cause if, in the judgment of the conductor, in consultation with the department head, it is in the best interests of the orchestra and the Department of Music and Dance.

**Grading Policy:** Grades for Symphony Orchestra are based on attendance. After one unexcused absence (or its equivalent) a student's grade will be lowered by one third of a grade. Two unexcused tardies equal one unexcused absence, and two excused absences equal one unexcused absence.

|                        |   |    |
|------------------------|---|----|
| 0-1 unexcused absences | = | A  |
| 2 unexcused absence    | = | A- |
| 3 unexcused absences   | = | B+ |
| 4 unexcused absences   | = | B  |
| 5 unexcused absences   | = | B- |
| 6 unexcused absences   | = | C  |
| 7 unexcused absences   | = | D  |
| 8+ unexcused absences  | = | E  |

At the end of the semester an attendance record and grades will be posted on the orchestra bulletin board. *It is your responsibility to check this to see if our records agree with yours.*

**Extra Credit:** You may earn extra credit to remove absences or tardies from your attendance record. Credit may be earned through ~~slave labor~~ service to the orchestra, and such opportunities will be announced during the semester.

**Concert Attire**

All musicians shall be properly attired at all concerts. Except as otherwise specified by the conductor, proper concert attire shall be as follows:

WOMEN: Floor length black formal attire including the following: long black skirt or black formal slacks; black long-sleeved top or white long-sleeved top with long-sleeved black jacket or sweater; no low-cut necklines in front or back; black hose, black shoes, and no excessive ornaments or jewelry.

MEN: Black tuxedo jacket, black pants, white shirt, black bow tie, black shoes and black socks.

Any man not able to provide a tuxedo should contact the University Bands Uniform Chairperson as soon as possible. You are not guaranteed a tuxedo, because students in the University Bands will be served first. If you are able to check out a tuxedo, you first must go to 201 Pierce Hall, pay the cashier \$25 and tell them it is for a uniform deposit.

**Office Hours:** Posted on bulletin board outside Prof. Miller's office.

**Repetitive Stress Injuries (RSI):** Your participation in orchestra, and in fact your career as a musician, depends on taking good care of yourself. Many musicians have experienced painful and career-threatening muscular injuries due, in part, to the repetitive nature of instrumental playing. In fact, 75% of all professional string players have had a muscular injury serious enough to affect their playing at some point in their career. There are certain things you can do to prevent repetitive stress injuries.

- Begin by thinking of yourself as an athlete. You are demanding that the smaller muscles of your body do work that is just as punishing as what an athlete demands of larger muscles. Furthermore, smaller muscles are less resilient than large ones.
- Warm-up muscles and tendons with gentle stretching exercises before playing. Warm up properly on your instrument before playing demanding passages and difficult techniques. Stretch after playing as well.
- Take frequent breaks. Spread out your practicing and playing during the day.
- Use proper technique. Poor technique and poor posture lead to improper use of muscles and tendons.
- Keep muscles warm as much as possible. If the muscles are cold, allow them to warm up before stretching and playing.
- Keep muscles strong and balanced by working with weight machines (such as Nautilus equipment). Three times a week is good.
- Good circulation in the cardio-vascular system is important for healthy tissues. Try exercise aerobically for at least 30 minutes, three or four times a week. If you enjoy playing racquetball, please inform the conductor.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Avoid caffeine. Caffeine constricts blood vessels and decreases blood circulation. If you do drink a cup of coffee or a can of pop, drink an equal amount of water to help flush the caffeine out of your muscles.

If you do experience RSI, do not ignore it and hope that it will go away. See a doctor right away, and let your conductor and applied teacher know about it.

### **Insurance**

Eastern Michigan University does not insure musical instruments or any other personal property belonging to students (or faculty). If your instrument is damaged or stolen on campus or while on the Orchestra Tour, the University is not liable and you will not be able to get any kind of financial settlement from EMU. Be sure your instrument is covered on your, or your parents', homeowners insurance policy.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

*What do I do if I know I have to be absent or tardy to a rehearsal?*

Fill out an absence form located on the bulletin board outside the Orchestra Staff Office. If you are not able to do that before the rehearsal, call the Orchestra Office at (313) 487-2448. (Do not call the Department of Music office.) You must still fill out an absence form upon your return. If you are the only person who plays your part, it is your responsibility to find a substitute.

*What do I do if I am unexpectedly late for a rehearsal?*

Enter the rehearsal room as quietly as you can. After the rehearsal tell the conductor why you were late so he can decide whether the tardy is excused or unexcused.

*What if a professor routinely runs late in a class or a lesson causing me to be late on a regular basis?*

It is your responsibility and the responsibility of professors (including conductors!) to keep track of time, so that you are not late for other commitments. The professor has the right to expect students to be on time for the beginning of a class or rehearsal; *you* have the right to leave a class or rehearsal at the end of the scheduled time. In the case of "hour"-long applied lessons that time is 50 minutes after the scheduled starting time. **Punctuality is respect for the time of others.** I will be happy to talk to any professor about this.

*Am I expected to be at rehearsal if the orchestra is rehearsing a piece or movement that I don't play in?*

No. And you will not be marked absent.

*What if I have an unavoidable conflict with a performance?*

Notify the conductor before part assignments are made for that performance.

*Is it possible to earn extra credit in orchestra?*

Yes. See "Extra Credit" above.

*I'm a guy (last time I checked), but I don't own a tuxedo. What do I wear for performances?*

Men needing a tuxedo should see the EMU Bands Uniform Manager for instructions on how to check out a tuxedo. Do it now; do not wait until the week of the first concert.

*What does "Call Time" for a performance mean?*

This is the time at which you are expected to arrive before a performance. It is normally 30 minutes before the start of the concert. It is a time for individual warm-up and preparation.

*May I warm up on stage before a concert?*

Yes. But you are expected to do so in a dignified and professional manner. All members of the orchestra (except the concertmaster) who perform on the first number must be on stage by five minutes before the schedule starting time of the concert.

*Should I remain on stage if I don't play in a particular piece?*

Unless told otherwise, you may leave the stage when you are not performing.

*What should I do with my music after a concert?*

Unless otherwise instructed, **leave your music and folder on the stand** so that they can be collected by the orchestra staff. This is especially important in the case of rental music, which must be returned immediately after a performance or a large fine will be assessed to the orchestra. When in doubt leave the music and folder on the stand.

*I'm a string player and I share music with my stand partner. Who is responsible for the music?*

The outside player (odd numbered chair).