

Course: **MU1400–Choral Ensemble I**

Session: **Full Year 2009-2010**

Credit/Hours: **3(0-0-4)120 Hours** Delivery Mode: Lab

Transfer: UA, UC, UL*, AU, AF, KUC*

Pre/corequisite: Consent of department based on audition.

Instructor: John Murray BMus (Hon), MMus. Office: L114. Phone: 539-2812 (office)
E-mail: murray@gprc.ab.ca Office Hours: Friday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Calendar Description: Students will gain experience performing choral literature from a variety of periods and genres.

Course Content: This course involves the study of choral technique and choral music through performance. Those involved in this course will perform choral repertoire from the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and/or Twentieth Century periods. Choral arrangements of some popular music styles are also explored. It is a 3.0 credit course offered over the full year. The Choral Ensemble I is a part of the Grande Prairie Regional College Concert Choir that rehearses every Tuesday evening from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. in room L106.

Evaluation:	Weekly exams, midterm exam, final exam, department	60%	<i>30% weekly 15% midterm 15% final</i>
	Performances and concerts.	30%	
	Fulfillment of course assignments and criteria and participation in choir responsibilities and projects.	10%	

Course Criteria

Vocal Technique:

- You must develop excellent vocal technique if you want to become a good ensemble vocalist. Consider taking private voice lessons or a voice course at the college if you are not already studying voice.
- The possession of a solid vocal technique will greatly enhance your ability to reduce vocal fatigue during long rehearsal periods, perform all choral repertoire without hurting the voice, and produce a vibrant, well-supported, and focused tone.
- Each student's vocal technique and vocal development will be taken into consideration when determining final marks.

Attendance:

- Each student is required to attend all scheduled rehearsals and performances. Only in the case of an extreme family emergency or personal illness will an absence from a rehearsal or performance be excused. If you have an extreme family emergency, you must let the choir director know the reason for your absence no later than three (3) days after the missed rehearsal or performance. In the event of a personal illness, you must provide the choir director with a medical certificate within one (1) week of your missed rehearsal or performance or you will not receive an excused absence for your missed rehearsal or performance.
- **If a student misses more than 2 rehearsals (unexcused absences) that student will be asked to leave the course, or will receive a failing grade (DB - debared) for this course.**
- Those who come ten (10) minutes late to more than two rehearsals will receive a deduction of 5% from their final grade. Students should let the choir director know of any special instances where they may have to be late for a rehearsal. Students who come more than ten (15) minutes late to a rehearsal will be given an unexcused absence for

that rehearsal .

- Students who leave a rehearsal early will be deducted 10% for that rehearsal if a medical slip is not submitted to the choir director within one week of the early leave.
- An unexcused absence from a Fall or Spring Concert will mean an automatic failing grade for the student.
- 25% (per performance) will be deducted from your final grade for any other missed (unexcused absence) choral performance (i.e. Festival of Trees, Festival of Carols, etc.).
- If you have a mild throat infection or other voice-related illness and do not feel that it is wise to sing in a rehearsal, you are advised to attend the rehearsal anyway and let the conductor know that you will not be singing during that rehearsal. Even though you are unable to sing, you should use the rehearsal as an opportunity to secure the notes to each piece being rehearsed, record in your scores any phrasing, diction, or other instructions the conductor indicates to the choir during the rehearsal, etc. With such a limited amount of rehearsal time before all the performances, it is imperative that you plan on attending every rehearsal.
- Each student is responsible to make sure their attendance at each rehearsal is recorded on the "attendance sheet." This sheet is located at the front of the rehearsal room, near the conductor's podium. If you forgot to write your name on the attendance sheet for a rehearsal, you have until the next rehearsal only to correct the problem. Please indicate on that rehearsal sheet that you forgot to sign your name on the previous attendance sheet. Indications of missed signatures will not be accepted after one weeks time and the student will receive an "unexcused absence" for that rehearsal.
- Each student is responsible to make sure their attendance at each performance is recorded on the "attendance sheet." Please see the conductor for the attendance sheet at each performance.
- Be on time. This shows respect for your colleagues in the ensemble.
- The vocal health of each ensemble member is a crucial factor in determining the final outcome of each performance. It is expected, therefore, that as an ensemble member, you will do everything possible to maintain proper vocal and physical health (i.e. rest, balanced diet, exercise, etc.).

Part Preparation

- Do not sight read your parts -- know your parts.
- You need to practice your parts every day.
- Practice your parts in sectionals, outside of choir rehearsals, at least once a week. Attendance at all sectionals should be recorded and mentioned in your year-end self report (see "Self Report").
- Music for all rehearsals must be learned quickly. Proper vocal technique, musicality, and expressive singing must be demonstrated during all rehearsals.

Weekly Choir Exams:

- All students who are taking choir as credit and/or as a lab requirement for a college voice course must participate in weekly choir exams.
- Your weekly mark will be based on your vocal technique (vocal mechanics, choral tone, blend, etc.), security of your part (pitch accuracy, pronunciation, diction, etc.), and artistic performance (interpretation, dynamics, expression, etc.).
- A make-up weekly choir exam is not possible. If you miss a weekly choir exam for any reason you will receive a "0" for that exam.

Midterm and Final Choir Exams:

- All students who are taking choir as credit and/or as a lab requirement for a college voice course must participate in both the midterm and final exam. These exams normally occur on the first Tuesday evening after the choir's final performance for each term.
- Both your midterm and final exam mark will be based on your vocal technique (vocal mechanics, choral tone, blend, etc.), security of your part (pitch accuracy, pronunciation, diction, etc.), and artistic performance (interpretation, dynamics, expression, etc.).

- If you miss either a midterm or a final exam for medical reasons (excused absence) a doctor's certificate must be shown to the choir director before a make-up exam will be arranged. Any student who misses a midterm or a final exam for personal reasons (unexcused absence) will receive a mark of zero (0) for that exam. A make-up exam will not be provided in the case of an unexcused absence.
- In the event of a rescheduled exam, it is the responsibility of each student to arrange the time and place for the make-up exam. As well, the student must make arrangements to have at least two voices in each section (SATB) participate with them in the exam. The student must cover the cost of hiring the accompanist for a rescheduled exam.

Music Sorting:

- All students who are taking choir as a credit or as a lab requirement for their voice course must assist in sorting and reshelving the choir music after the final performance of each term.
- A day will be designated for the completion of this task. Usually, this event takes place on the first Tuesday evening after the final choir performance of each term (following the midterm and final exam). **Those who fail to help sort choir music will be deducted ten (10) percent from their final grade, per missed sorting session.**
- All score markings must be erased from any music that is borrowed from another choir or choral lending library before handing these pieces in. **Those who fail to erase their score markings from all borrowed music will be deducted ten (10) percent from their final grade.**
- Any student who writes on their choir music in pen will be required to purchase that piece of music for a minimum cost of \$7.00.
- Students will be expected to pay for any music they have lost, damaged, or defaced. A minimum charge of \$7.00 per piece will be billed to that student. The student will pay a minimum charge of \$70.00 (per term) if the music and choir folio is not returned at the end of each term.

Participation In Choir Responsibilities:

- Students are expected to participate regularly in any and all choir responsibilities or projects. These responsibilities include set up and take down of rehearsal and performance space, weekly refreshments, fund raising ideas, publicity and marketing projects, etc.

Concerts:

- Attendance at all professional-level choral concerts that come to Grande Prairie is mandatory.
- Attendance at one amateur-level choral concert of considerable caliber is mandatory (i.e. Festival of Carols, Composite High School Choir, Grande Prairie Singers, etc.).
- Students must hand in their ticket stubs or concert programs by the end of the school year as proof of their attendance at the concert(s). The student must sign each ticket stub or program before it is handed in.
- Those who fail to hand in their signed ticket stub(s) or program (s) will have five (5) percent deducted from their final mark per missed performance.

Other Requirements:

- Students may be asked to hand in written assignments or participate in various kinds of projects, activities, or assignments as part of this course.
- Involvement in these projects, activities, or assignments will be taken into consideration when assigning final marks.

Self Report:

- Each student must hand in a type-written self report at the end of the school year. The

self report should include a brief summary of how well you did at fulfilling all criteria presented in the course outline and course criteria above.

Please Note:

- Late assignments of any kind will not be accepted. Late arrivals at any choir test will forfeit the part of the exam you missed by arriving late.
- This course outline and course criteria will serve as the arbiter between any verbal or written discrepancies.
- Marks will not be released until all accounts (money or material owed to the college, department, or accompanist) have been settled.

Timeline:	Students will receive a failing grade for any weekly exams, midterm exams or final exam they miss without a medical certificate or excused absence from the instructor.
Required Materials:	Appropriate attire for concert performances. Each semester, students will sign out a copy of the music they will be performing for that term. Water bottle, pencil, and music.
Additional Costs:	Writing on choir music with anything other than a pencil is considered defacement of that music. Students will be expected to pay for any music they have lost, damaged, or defaced. A minimum charge of \$7.00 per piece will be billed to that student. The student will pay a minimum charge of \$70.00 (per term) if the music and choir folio is not returned at the end of each term. A student's final marks may be withheld until their choir music and choir folder is returned to the choir director.
Attendance:	If a student misses more than 2 rehearsals (unexcused absences) that student may be asked to leave the course, or may receive a failing grade (DB - debarred) for this course. Students are expected to sign an attendance sheet at each rehearsal and performance.
Plagiarism:	Plagiarism is cheating. The instructor reserves the right to use electronic plagiarism detection services. See P. 40-50 of the Calendar for more details, and for explanation of many other policies and regulations.
Release:	For the purpose of promoting the achievements of Grande Prairie Regional College and the success of students, staff, faculty and the College community, each student should be prepared to grant the college the right to use: his/her name, his/her projects (scores, digital files, artwork, recordings, videos, etc.) his/her statements, photos and/or testimonials.
Reviewed:	August, 2009