



Middle School Chorus

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Location: RM 194 Chorus Room

Office: RM 174

Credit: Middle School

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NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change throughout the year.

Course Description

Focused on The Founders Academy's mission, the Chorus Program is designed to facilitate a performance-based music curriculum. This includes delving into the lives of historical musical figures, exploring musical traditions, and gaining insight into the evolution of music within our national history and its relationship to the world. Through classroom activities, research, rehearsals, and performances, students will cultivate musical skills, performance techniques, proper vocal methods, fundamental musical knowledge, and a profound appreciation for music in its entirety.

Course Objectives

- Sing with passion, projection, and vitality.
- Perform music in unison and 2-part vocal parts.
- Engage with musical basics such as musical symbols, timing, sight-reading, and musical expression.
- Examine and respect the historical context of the music covered in class.

- Explore music written in languages other than English.
- Critique, analyze, and articulate opinions on music and musical presentations.
- Fulfill musical proficiency assessments.
- Take part in all public musical presentations.
- Attain mastery of the subject matter before advancement (refer to section 2.1 of the Student Handbook).
- Exemplify The Founders Academy Leadership Code of Conduct.

Prerequisites

This is an entry-level class. No Prerequisites are required.

How this Class Supports Founders' Mission and Themes

The Chorus program develops leadership skills in students through a combination of individual performances and collaborative activities. This course promotes creative thinking, performance readiness, and effective communication. Each class invites students to demonstrate their musical talents and personal strengths, contributing to a well-rounded and informed educational experience. Additionally, the program interweaves knowledge from various subjects and examines the historical and cultural significance of music both in Western society and globally. Furthermore, the TFA Leadership Code of Conduct is consistently emphasized and reinforced through classroom activities.

Mission Statement:

The Founders Academy is a public charter school encompassing grades 6-12 that is free and open to all New Hampshire students. The academy develops citizens and leaders who understand and apply the lessons of the past, demonstrate exceptional character, participate knowledgeably in community activities, and lead by example. The Academy recognizes the importance of balance in the development of each person and respects each student's individual journey.

Principled leadership and good citizenship are fostered by means of a curriculum of classical studies that includes analyzing the lives of great men and women of history, mining the rich classical ideals of the Western tradition, and tracing the evolution of the precious and costly idea of liberty.

The Vision:

The Founders Academy prepares wise, principled leaders by offering a classical education and providing a wide array of opportunities to lead.

Leadership Code of Conduct:

The students at The Founders Academy created and adopted the following "Leadership Code of Conduct" in January 2015:

1. Be responsible
2. Be respectful
3. Be honest
4. Be fair
5. Be determined
6. Be polite
7. Be open-minded
8. Be courageous
9. Be confident
10. Be helpful

Class Materials:

Pencil

Notebook

Music for the concert and class folders will be provided

Method:

We'll start each class with some physical and vocal warm-ups, followed by lessons in musical theory and practicing our concert repertoire. Afterward, we will engage in ear training exercises, aural dictation, and musical identification. In addition, we will regularly explore the structure of the music we sing and its historical derivation, as well as listen to and analyze vocal music from different cultures around the world and be tested on the vocabulary and literacy of written music.

Class Rules:

Please remember the following guidelines for Chorus class:

- For every time a student interrupts rehearsal or class, there will be a **10% reduction in their participation grade for the week for each interruption.** *(So if the student interrupts the class or rehearsal 3 times, that would equal 30% off of the grade for the week.)*

- There may be specific instances when we use technology for research and theoretical purposes. During these times, we will review the guidelines for technology use in class.
- Please remember that gum, food, or drinks other than water are not permitted, as per school rules. Ensure that you are ready to start warm-ups on time with a pencil and your music at hand.
- Respect is paramount. I conduct my classes with the utmost professionalism and integrity. I will respect you and expect the same in return. We will kindly leave personal issues outside the classroom, as we are all working together towards a common goal.
- Seating may or may not be assigned, and I expect everyone to sit at a desk when doing classwork and stand on the risers when rehearsing music. I may change seating for musical reasons. It would be unfortunate to necessitate seating changes due to behavior or lack of participation.
- At the end of each class, please return your music folders to the designated place in the classroom.
- Always strive to do your best and work with integrity. I would rather hear a mistake than nothing at all. Remember, this is your chorus. Take pride in yourself and your work!

Grading

Students will be graded on the following:

Concert and Concert-Related Material 30%

Exams 10%

Proficiency and Execution 20%

Weekly Participation 40%

Below are the important points to remember:

- Your grades will be based on improvement as a singer, attitude and behavior in class, ability to take suggestions constructively, application of musical concepts, and literacy of music itself.
- Participation in all chorus performances, both at school and in public, is mandatory and a crucial part of the curriculum.

- Concert attendance, participation in class, and overall preparation carry significant weight for the course.
- Evaluation criteria for performances include preparedness, attire, attendance, cooperation with the conductor, and conduct during the event.
- Missing a performance without a valid reason will result in a zero-point score unless accompanied by a parental note.
- Engagements such as lessons, classes, and most sporting events are not valid reasons for missing a concert.
- Upcoming concert dates will be emailed out after the start of school.
- Regarding homework, written assignments are rare, but students are expected to review music and practice daily.
- If a class is missed, students are responsible for checking for any assignments and informing the instructor in advance.
- Concert attire is important and will be discussed during the first semester.

Expectations:

At the end of each term, successful students at all levels will have advanced in their abilities to do the following:

1. Apply choral techniques and musicianship to their singing.
2. Demonstrate the ability to read basic music notation. (*learn the language of music*)
3. Demonstrate proper posture and breathing techniques to support vocal production. (*learn to use your voice as an instrument.*)
4. Identify the symbols and markings commonly used in choral music.
5. Demonstrate an awareness of the collaborative nature of music. (*learn the skills needed to participate in an ensemble or group*)

Musical Skills Assessment

As important as the concert is at the end of each semester, students will also have an exam that has literacy, reflective, and listening components. These exams will allow students to demonstrate their mastery of music at their level. All students are required to participate in both assessments. There are no exemptions.

Concerts

At the end of each semester, we hold a concert to celebrate what we've accomplished together. Everyone is required to attend, and your participation counts toward your quarterly grade. Please plan to stay for the whole concert. Each performance is worth 100 points, based on how well you prepare, your attire, attendance, how you respond to the conductor, and your behavior. If you miss a performance, you will get zero points unless you have a note from a parent. In that case, you can complete a make-up assignment for credit. Please remember that weekly activities like karate, dance, sports, or clubs should not be reasons to miss a concert. If you have a conflict, let everyone know as soon as possible so we can try to work something out. Missing a concert without an excuse may mean you can't take part in optional performances for the rest of the year.

Concert Etiquette

Concerts are a chance for the entire community to celebrate the talent and artistry of our staff and students. We intentionally make this concert "donation only" to encourage family participation and generosity for the arts. That being said, this is not a drop-off event; an adult needs to accompany any middle school students who are present at the concert.

- Any behavior that distracts, such as yelling, laughing, shouting, waving, etc, at the performers is unacceptable in a concert setting and will not be tolerated. This is a great opportunity to practice respect and politeness as members of our school community. Please save conversations with performers for after the concert.
- Flash photography and any other forms of photography that distract the performers are not allowed. Video recording of the concert should only be done with prior approval and arrangement made with the chorus or band teachers. Please respect individuals' privacy and adhere to copyright laws.

Performing for peers and the broader school community requires courage, and we appreciate your support as we encourage our student performers. Together, we can create an environment that fosters and inspires our students to express their artistic talents fully!

Written Work/Homework

While there may not be a lot of conventional written homework. All the music theory will be done together collaboratively. All great skills come from consistency and hard work over time.

Film, Radio, and Audio/Video Streaming

Parents and students should anticipate that students will be exposed to videos, films, and music as part of their coursework. These multimedia materials typically provide authentic, accurate information on the lives of great artists or aid in learning music.

Please refer to the attached waiver for signing.

Video study can also extend lessons and support research: Occasionally, students will be provided links to carefully selected videos that extend or reinforce skills taught in Chorus. Parents are asked to contact me if they do not want their child to receive or view internet links. All media is vetted, carefully selected, and reviewed by me.

**** Students will need to use their tfnh.org email addresses to log in to this site.***

Benchmarks and goals to work for.

- Continue work with musical literacy of music fundamentals
- Perfect singing vocal music in 2 – 3 part harmonies, accurately and expressively
- Begin understanding time and key signatures
- Continue the study of Western Music and begin basic ethnographic studies of music outside of the Western tradition and notation.
- Start singing in foreign languages.
- Continue critical thinking to evaluate, analyze, and describe music & musical performances.

Mastery Grading:

Definition of Mastery at The Founders Academy:

The underlying claim of mastery is that it is a process of educating students, by which all students can learn, comprehend information, and utilize ideas for practical purposes when they are provided with clear expectations of what mastery means in a specific subject area and for specific topics.

Why “mastery?”

Mastery ensures that the goal of a rigorous curriculum and high expectations are maintained at The Founders Academy. We do not simply require that students “pass” a course, but that they “master” the content of each course. Additionally, the process allows students whose mastery is in question at the end of a quarter or course to continue to work towards mastering the content and to demonstrate their mastery for the purpose of moving forward to the next level of instruction in a particular subject area.

What is the “process?”

- The process includes benchmarks for assessment. This includes an assessment of mastery at the end of each quarter before the 4th quarter. Students who earn grades of 80% or higher (B- through A+) are considered masters of the content automatically. Students who earn grades below 80% (C+ through F) on the quarterly report card may still demonstrate mastery by completing additional work, at the teacher’s discretion. The additional work and ultimate decision concerning mastery must be completed within the first 3 weeks following the issuance of the report card for the quarter in which the student is working.
- The process includes both teacher and student reflection. Quarterly benchmarks allow students, parents, and teachers to address any deficiencies in progress as the school year progresses. All should work to monitor student progress towards final course mastery through the school year.
- The process also includes supplementary instruction. Students who do not demonstrate mastery with a semester or course grade of 80% or higher (B- through A+) may have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery at the end of each quarter or at the end of the course, if the student believes he or she has indeed mastered the content. This demonstration may include supplemental instruction and/or assignments.

Quarterly Mastery: (Quarters 1-3):

Students who earn grades of 80% or higher (B- through A+) are considered masters of the content automatically. Students who earn grades below 80% (C+ through F) on the quarterly report card may still demonstrate mastery by completing additional work, at the teacher’s discretion. The additional work, and ultimate decision concerning mastery must be completed within the first 3 weeks following the issuance of the report card for the quarter in which the student is working.

Course Mastery:

At the end of the school year, students who earn a score of 80% or higher (B- through A+) will be considered masters of the content and automatically be promoted to the next level within that course's subject area. Students who earn a grade of 70% - 79% (C- through C+) will receive credit for the class but will not be allowed to proceed to the next level (if there is one.) However, those students may attempt a mastery assignment in order to be allowed to move to the next level. All attempts for mastery by these students must be completed by June 30th.

Music Mastery and Promotion Note: *Achieving Mastery in a Chorus level does NOT guarantee promotion. Promotion to the next level will be decided by several factors including, but not limited to: Singing Ability, Classroom Behavior, Evidence of Practice, Balance of the Ensembles, Concert Dependability, and the student's schedule. While uncommon, it is also possible for a student to be moved down to a lower level if he/she does not meet the standards and expectations of their current level or if they would be a better "fit" at the lower level.*

Necessary Steps to Success of the Mastery Process:

- For all students who earn below 80% (C+ through F) in quarters 1-3, a demonstration of mastery is available to all students. At the end of the course, only students who have earned a grade of 70 - 79% (C- through C+) may complete additional work to demonstrate mastery.
- Students must initiate the request to do extra work to demonstrate mastery by emailing their teachers within one week of receiving their report cards. Student initiation demonstrates student responsibility and commitment to the mastery process in order for it to work.
- By the end of the third week, after report cards are issued in the first three quarters and by June 30th for the course, teachers will determine if mastery has been achieved through extra work. If the student demonstrates mastery, it will be indicated with the notation "MP" for "mastery passed" on the next quarterly report card. The quarterly grade will not be changed.

The letter grade "I" (Incomplete) may be assigned to a student who has been absent due to extenuating circumstances and has not had enough time to complete the necessary work in that marking period. Students are responsible for making up all incomplete work within two weeks of the end of the marking period. If the work is not completed, the grade may be calculated with zero credit given for the missing

assignments. Written requests for extensions may be submitted by parents/guardians stating the reason for the request (for example, severe illness). Approval of extensions is not automatic.”

See The Founders Academy Student Handbook, Section 2

Google Classroom for Students

Students must refer to our Google Classroom daily. All assignments stem from prior in-class activities. Any class assignment with complete instructional details will be posted here. To ensure credit, students must click “Done” when a particular assignment has been completed by the due date. Note: Parents and students will have access to the school Portal.

**** Students will need to use their tfanh.org email addresses to log in to this site.***