

# Westminster Choir College of Rider University Department of Music Education



## ***ME 582: Praxis in Secondary Music Education*** **Fall, 2009**

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# *The Context*

The challenges of teaching music to children in grades 6 – 12 are many and complex. Since there is no national curriculum and National Standards are voluntary, teachers can decide to consider them or not. While many music teachers have a school curriculum guide, the guide is often outdated and sits on the shelf. Integrating YouTube videos, group assignments using goggle docs and teleconferencing with iCHAT or SKYPE are absent from many music classrooms. While many children have an MP3 player, many of their teachers do not connect what students are listening to on their own, with school music. *American Idol* judges set the standard for quality performance and the habits of mind that children and their teachers bring into the music classroom.

Some music teachers try to make all children professional musicians. They aspire for all children to read musical notation, to compose melodies and accompaniments and to know and love the great classics of our European tradition. Others use a unit approach that is topical. For example, they teach a unit on the American Musical Theatre, a unit on form, or a unit on the music of a particular culture. Many middle school classes are scheduled in cycles where children may have music every day for 6 weeks or so, and then not again until the next year. The same may be true in high schools that are scheduled in blocks. Continuity from one year to the next does not exist.

In most places, music is still required through the end of middle school. While a significant number of high schools have an arts requirement for graduation, students may meet that requirement in a variety of ways that sometimes do not include music study.

Acknowledging the context of secondary school music programs in this way presents a challenge for students in secondary methods classes. What should they be prepared to do? Critical Pedagogy for Music Education is one intervention. It advocates empowering students to be musicians and engages them in experiences that are transformational

by helping them to connect “word” or more aptly “music” to “world.” Integrated or connected learning is another. Teaching from a music text or basal series is yet a third. Enacting a method like Kodály or Orff is a fourth. Connecting to language literacy is still another.

## ***What you may expect from this course***

The first part of this course will be devoted to the exploration of strategies used in teaching general music and choral classes in the middle school and high school. You may expect to write lesson plans and rehearsal plans based on the materials in the required texts and on topics you will encounter in your practicum experience. All lessons honor the 4MAT sequence as well as the tenets of Critical Pedagogy for Music Education. Peer teaching will be a significant component of the in-class experience.

The second part of this course consists of an off-campus practicum experience. Students will travel in teams and assist in-service teachers as appropriate. Faculty from the college, including the course instructor will observe periodically.

Practicum assignments are as follows (as of September 1, 2009 and are subject to change):

Group I - with PJ Heckman at Witherspoon Middle School (Princeton)  
Tom Cunningham and Celeste Hanlon.

Group II - with Grant Mech at Pond Road Middle School (Robbinsville)  
Jaclyn Beardsley, Josh Hemmings and Jonathan Normoyle.

Group II - with Keith Watlington at Crossroads Middle School North (South Brunswick)  
Margaret Hudson, Laura Jurgrau, Caitlin Murach.



# *Prerequisites*

Students must complete two semesters of piano study and TH 142: Musicianship II as well as hold a 2.75 minimum, cumulative grade point average (GPA).

## *What You Will Need*

### *Required Texts:*

DeGraffenreid, George, et al. *Music! It's Role and Importance in Our Lives*  
Teachers Annotated Edition. Glencoe, 2006.

Allen, Richard Howell. *High-Impact Teaching Strategies for the 'XYZ' Era of  
Education*. Allyn & Bacon, 2010.

### *Required Technology:*

You will need a laptop with webcam and mic to record each time you teach in class and at practicum. If you do not own a laptop, you must make arrangements to borrow a colleague's in class. In addition, you must have access to GarageBand on the MAC for class. Students are expected to conquer the challenges of technology.

## *Grades*

On Campus Classes	40 %
Practicum Teaching	60 %

Lesson plans, videos, contributions to class, peer teaching and practicum teaching, professionalism (attendance, punctuality, dress), teacher disposition, growth over time are all considered when computing the grade.

# *Important Caveat*

Students, who intend to teach at the practicum site **WITHOUT AN APPROPRIATE LESSON OR REHEARSAL PLAN**, may expect to repeat the course.

Students who are absent from the practicum site without calling **BOTH** the cooperating teacher **AND** Dr. Abrahams **IN ADVANCE** may expect to be removed from the practicum and required to repeat the course. Unfortunately, there are no excused absences allowed for practicum. Absences will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Students are required to video record every lesson they teach in the on campus course or the off-campus practicum. Videos are to be submitted on a DVD in MPEG4 format. DVDs are due at each Friday seminar meeting. Students will also submit all lesson and rehearsal plans for the week at the Friday seminar.

# *What I expect from you*

Since this is a course within a professional sequence of music education courses, I expect that you will commit to the course expectations and master the course content with a professional attitude. I expect prompt and regular attendance at all classes and at your practicum site and I will lower grades when you are absent, late or leave early. I expect that you will be prepared for class and that the work you submit will be your very best effort. I expect that work will be submitted on time. I expect that work will represent your own original ideas. When it does not, I expect that you will appropriately and properly cite the source. In the unfortunate instance of plagiarism, I will follow the procedures in *The Source*. I expect that you will not use cell phones or that you will not multi-task by texting or surfing the web on your laptop during class and that you will not make or receive telephone calls during class. In the event that you wish to record the class, you must obtain permission from the instructor and each member of the class. I expect that you will

dress professionally at your practicum site and that you will represent yourself, this department and your college in the best possible light. I expect that you will arrive at your practicum site 20 minutes before the start of school and will leave at the last possible time in order to be back for symphonic choir (except Thursday). I expect that you will support the professional teaching associations for music education and that you will attend appropriate conferences, meetings and seminars, as you are able. MENC membership is recommended for this course. You may be excused from one day of practicum to attend the NJMEA, ACDA or MENC conferences.



# *What you may expect from me*

You may expect that we will also approach the course with the commitment of a professional. In that regard, you may expect that each class will be thoughtfully prepared; that the materials selected for your purchase were selected with care and are important to your success in this course and beyond; and that your individual and collective learning needs will be addressed as appropriate. You may expect that each class will begin and will end on time. You may also expect that the course content will be thoroughly covered and that your work in class and outside of class, i.e., assignments, will be assessed fairly.

Class begins on Tuesday, September 15 and meets Tuesday, Thursday and Friday until October 9. The first day of practicum will be Monday, October 12 and will meet Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday until December 10. Students will attend an on-campus seminar each Friday from October 16 – December 11.

# *Learning Goals*

*Learning goals for this course are embedded in the following focusing questions.*

- 1. To what extent do lesson plans that are grounded in the principles of constructivism (Vygotsky), connectivism (Siemens) experiential learning (McCarthy) and Critical Pedagogy for Music Education empower student learning in general music classes and ensembles?*
- 2. To what extent do well-paced, thoughtfully planned, and developmentally appropriate lessons and rehearsals that are free of colloquialisms, gender bias or stereotyping impact a positive classroom climate?*
- 3. To what extent can students demonstrate good classroom management techniques?*
- 4. To what extent do the course and practicum experiences foster the development of habits of mind that are appropriate for pre-service music teachers?*
- 5. To what extent does participate in a practicum experience foster the development of a teaching disposition?*
- 6. To what extent can pre-service music teachers evoke developmental psychology and research to make appropriate decisions regarding what to teach, how and when to teach?*
- 7. To what extent can students demonstrate an understanding of what it means to accept the professional, ethical and moral responsibilities for teaching music to children in middle and high school?*
- 8. To what extent can pre-service teachers model professional behavior at the practicum site?*

# *Course Calendar*

All classes and seminars meet at John Witherspoon Middle School Room B 201 from 9:10 AM – 11:10 AM on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday except as noted.

Week 1                    September 15, 17, 18

Week 2                    September 22, 24, 25

Week 3                    September 29, October 1, 2

Week 4                    October 5 (Monday), 8, 9

Friday Seminars:

October 16, 23 (with Mr. Dill to begin at 8 AM and end at 10) 30

November 6, 13, 20

December 4, 11

This course meets the Standards of the NJ State Licensing Code as follows:

Standard One: 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3

Standard Two: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 3.0

Standard Three: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4

Standard Four: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7

Standard Five: 2.0, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4

Standard Six: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6

Standard Seven: 1.1, 1.2, 2.0, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5

Standard Eight 1.0, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4

Standard Nine: 1.3, 2.1

Standard Ten: 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

Once practicum begins observations will be scheduled throughout the semester. At the weekly Friday seminars, students will submit all lesson and rehearsal plans from the previous week and a DVD with all teaching. DVDs are to be formatted in MPEG 4 format.