

MUSI 3231 Syllabus

Chamber Choir, Section 1, 1 credit
Fall 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor: Joshua Palkki, Ph.D. (he/him)

Email: josh.palkki@gatech.edu

General Course Information

Description

An auditioned mixed ensemble focused upon the rehearsal, study, and performance of choral music. **PREREQUISITE:** Significant choral music experience and a private, vocal audition are required. Permit to Register will be issued based upon a successful audition.

Course Learning Outcomes

The purpose of the class is to develop:

1. An understanding of vocal technique in theory and practice
2. The application of harmonic, structural and aural skills in relation to choral performance practice
3. An experience with and knowledge of various choral repertoire, including accompanied & unaccompanied works from major style eras and genres
4. The ability to present polished performances throughout the semester

Upon completion of the course, each student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate and utilize healthy choral vocal technique
2. Read and understand musical notation
3. Discern, discuss, and contextualize major genres of choral music
4. Describe the socio-cultural context surrounding choral pieces (text and music)

Required Course Materials

Except for large works, music will be provided by GA Tech, distributed during the first few weeks of rehearsal, and supplemented throughout the semester. Students are responsible for returning ALL original music by the end of the term. Each student must provide a black, three-ring binder and bring a pencil to each rehearsal. Showing up for a dress rehearsal or concert without music will result in a grade deduction.

Grading Policy:

- 75% Attendance (including Performances)
- 25% Part Checks and Singing Assessments

Description of Graded Components

- **Attendance:** See below
- **Performances:** Concert performances will be announced well in advance and will serve as exams. Unexcused absences from performances will result in a failing grade.
- **Part Checks and Singing Assessments:** You will be given a memorization and learning calendar which will give assignments (sections to be learned and/or memorized). Occasionally, students will be asked to record themselves on their phones while singing with the entire choir. These recordings are used in various ways to assess progress, music learning, and memorization. More details in class.

Course Policies

Attendance and/or Participation

Our work (and this class) is unique in that choir is a collective effort which requires, whenever possible, perfect attendance for all members. The absence of even one or two singers can influence the rehearsal process for the entire ensemble. That said,

- **All students are required to attend all rehearsals**
- If you need to be absent, tardy, or leave early from class, please fill out the Absence Request Form. I will use this form to collect the following documentation (Dr. Palkki is the only one who has access to the data collected from this form)
 - If you have an exam block that directly conflicts with our class time, please upload a screenshot showing the conflict.
 - If you have a conflict with a required event (see calendar below)

- Documentation from a medical professional verifying absence due to illness.
- Unexpected life events that may arise causing you to be tardy or absent from class.

Filling out the form does not guarantee an excused absence. These circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

- Generally speaking, absences more than three will result in letter grade reduction (see below). Three (3) tardies will count as one unexcused absence. A concert absence results in an 'F' for the course.
- Leaving class early is a *privilege*, not a *right*. If you need to leave class early, please fill out the form (link above) and politely remind Dr. Palkki when you arrive in class. When you leave early, please use the main door (toward the dining hall) not the side door (going out to the street).
- To be successful, you should:
 - be in your seat and ready to go when class starts (that means your music/pencil is out and that you're settled and ready to learn at 5:00 pm)
 - stay in class until 6:15 without breaks
 - attend every class meeting barring illness or unforeseen life circumstances.
- All students receive three "free" absences for the semester and anything beyond these three absences will begin to influence the attendance portion of your grade. Grading scale below:
 - Within the three "free" absences= A
 - 1 absence beyond the three "free" absences= B
 - 2 absences beyond the three "free" absences= C
 - 3 absences beyond the three "free" absences= D
 - 4+ absences beyond the three "free" absences= F
- Each rehearsal is a laboratory setting. Singers will be regularly assessed on an individual basis for attitude, effort, cooperation, and preparation. Periodic announced and unannounced part checks will also serve as an assessment of progress.

- If you have a consistent reason to be tardy, such as a concurrent course or you are coming from a course far away from the West Village, please let me know, as I am happy to accommodate you.

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review [Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the student [Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

STUDENT WELL-BEING: At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A comprehensive list of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being and can be found here: <https://students.gatech.edu/student-resource-guide>

STATEMENT REGARDING INCLUSION: The School of Music community of faculty, staff, and students aspires to create and nurture an environment that is supportive of all backgrounds where different views and ideas are respected and encouraged. In all our pursuits, we commit to justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion about race, national origin, language, age, sexual orientation, gender, religion, and ability. Moreover, we will

encourage intellectual inquiry and respectful exchange that cements our dedication to these principles.

STATEMENT REGARDING GRIEVANCES and CONCERNS: The Office of the Provost is committed to assisting students who have questions, concerns, or grievances regarding the academic policies and regulations outlined in the Georgia Tech Catalog. In general, the Catalog governs all academic policies at Georgia Tech. You may consult this page for general regulations: <https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/>

STATEMENT REGARDING CHANGES IN COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Since all classes do not progress at the same rate, it may be necessary to modify the syllabus requirements or their timing as circumstances dictate. e.g., the number and frequency of rehearsals and performances may change, or the number & sequence of assignments may be altered. Adequate notification will be given in writing and in class.

CELL PHONE POLICY: Because rehearsal time is limited, you are asked to refrain from using a cell phone, tablet, or electronic device during rehearsal barring a family or medical emergency.

Instructor Teaching Philosophy Statement

The heart of my philosophy centers on equity and a constant awareness of social justice issues in the music classroom. As a choral conductor-teacher, I believe in questioning the many outdated traditions that often go unquestioned in music spaces. I am constantly aiming to become more process-oriented and student-centered. I aim to craft programs of choral repertoire with themes relevant to the complex world in which we live while highlighting compositions and arrangements by persons from historically marginalized populations. Because I believe that music education can be transformative as a personal inspiration and as a force for equity and justice, I take great pride in my teaching. I care for and support my students.