

Conducting 1 Syllabus

M-SK 0991/05, 06

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Section 05: Fridays	4:00pm – 4:50pm	Fenway 8, Room 007
Section 06: Fridays	5:00pm – 5:50pm	Fenway 8, Room 007

Course Description: This class is intended to be an introduction to the elementary technique of conducting applied to both choral and instrumental music. Subjects covered include principles of attack and release, setting and changing tempo, phrasing and interpretation; practice in score reading. The more you apply yourself inside and outside of class, the more you will be able to continue learning on your own after this introductory semester. This is a one-credit course.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, the students will be able to:

- Comfortably hold a conducting baton
- Conduct standard beat patterns, including clear subdivisions of the main beats.
- Successfully manage preparatory beats and cut-offs
- Show various musical articulations through their gesture
- Manage fermatas and caesuras
- Execute basic cueing techniques
- Use the left hand independently of the right hand in conducting
- Manage tempo changes
- Begin to add expression into your conducting with both the left and right hands.

Prerequisites: None

Class Materials

1. Textbook: “Basic Conducting Techniques”, 7th Edition (2018)
by Joseph A. Labuta and Wendy K. Matthews

<https://www.amazon.com/Basic-Conducting-Techniques-Joseph-Labuta/dp/1138656984>

Rental: \$34 for the semester (free return shipping at the end of the semester)

Purchase used: \$52

Purchase new: \$83

Once you purchase the book, access codes and supplements can be found [here](#) by filling out the form on the right hand side of the page. You will need these for class.

2. Conducting Baton. Purchase at any one of these stores:
 - o Amazon.com
 - o Berklee Bookstore
 - o Ebay.com

3. Your instrument - **Everyone** should have an instrument to play, as you are your own conducting ensemble! **Percussionists** may use any keyboard instrument; **Pianists** may use the one piano (4-hands to cover parts); **Composers** may share the piano or bring any melodic instrument, even if it means investing in a recorder! Just singing along is not helpful.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance: Attendance is required at all classes, although one unexcused absence is allowed each semester.

Choose the date wisely! A doctor’s note must be submitted for approval for any additional absence to be excused.

Other than a medical note, excused absences will rarely be given and will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the instructor.

If you miss a class or know that you will be missing a class, communicate that to your instructor, Professor Polyakov. Sometimes students need to attend our other Friday class (we meet at 4 and 5pm in 8TF / 007). You are welcome to attend the other session if a conflict comes up in your schedule. As an alternative, you might be able to attend one of the other sections offered by Professor Isaacson on Mondays (5-5:50pm, 8TF / 007) and Wednesdays (4-4:50pm, Hemenway 401) where they work on the same material. Make sure to include him on your email as well so that he knows to expect you and can confirm the correct material will be covered in his class. The dates don't always line up. (lisaacson@berklee.edu) If you are able to attend another class, the absence will be removed from your attendance record, and you won't fall behind. Sometimes when you attend another section, you won't have the opportunity to conduct as much or at all, but you will still be in attendance for the presentation of the material for that day.

There is much material to cover in a very limited time and short class periods. It is expected you will be on time and ready to go at the appointed time, just like an ensemble rehearsal. Tardiness will not be appreciated, as we have much to cover. Repetitive tardiness will affect your grade.

Preparation: It is expected that you'll be prepared for all activities in this class. There will be conducting assignments for each class which must be prepared and memorized in advance.

Participation: It is expected that you'll actively participate in each class by performing and also participating in conversations.

Quizzes: There will be three quizzes this semester. If you miss a class where there is a quiz, make sure to contact me about doing a makeup within a week. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, I won't be giving quizzes weeks after they have been taken by everyone else. For each quiz you do not complete, you'll lose 10 points on your grade for the class.

Final Exam: You'll conduct a string quartet at the last class meeting.

COURSE POLICIES

Students who have disabilities requiring special arrangements for class participation or test administration should notify the instructor of the need for such arrangements at the beginning of the semester.

Students in this course should be familiar with the Conservatory's Policies in the [Student Handbook](#). Violations of academic responsibility in this course will be handled as stipulated in that publication.

Grading:

Attendance	25%
Preparation	25%
Quizzes and assignments	30%
Final Exam (conducting)	20%

Conducting 1 Friday Classes

Class 1 - Class Introduction

September 8

Conducting Practice
Malko Conducting Exercises (Handout)

Class 2 - The Baton, Preparation, Downbeat, and Release

September 15 **READ & PREPARE:** CHAPTER 1. **CONDUCT:** 1-1 MEMORIZED

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate appropriate baton grip.
- Demonstrate preparatory position and beat for starting on the count of one in all meters.
- Demonstrate proper wrist action to define the exact point of the beat.
- Demonstrate basic release gesture.

Class 3 - Beat Patterns and Preparations in Tempo, Dynamic and Articulation

September 22 **READ & PREPARE:** CHAPTER 2. **CONDUCT:** 2-1(3), 2-2(3), 2-4(4), 2-5(2) OR 2-6(1) MEMORIZED

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the standard beat patterns, maintaining a steady tempo.
- Demonstrate the preparatory beat for the count of one that indicates the appropriate tempo, dynamic level, and articulation of the music being performed.

Class 4 - Preparations and releases for all counts, Fractional beat preparations

September 29 **READ & PREPARE:** CHAPTERS 3 AND 4 **CONDUCT:** 3-1, 3-4, 3-6, 3-7, 4-1, 4-4 OR 4-5 MEMORIZED

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the preparatory position and beat for starting on counts other than one.
- Demonstrate the release on all counts of all meters.
- Demonstrate the preparatory beat that indicates the appropriate tempo, dynamic level, and articulation for fractional pick-up notes.

Class 5 - Divided Meters

October 6 **READ & PREPARE:** CHAPTER 5 **CONDUCT:** 5-1, 5-2, 5-4 OR 5-6 MEMORIZED

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate beat divisions in simple and compound meters.

QUIZ #1: BASED ON YOUR READING OF CHAPTERS 1, 2, 3
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Class 6 - Conducting Musical Styles

October 13 **READ & PREPARE:** CHAPTER 9 **CONDUCT:** 9-1, 9-2, 9-4 OR 9-7 MEMORIZED

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate basic interpretive styles of conducting, including the legato, staccato, marcato, tenuto, and neutral (non-expressive) gestures.

Class 7 - The Fermata

October 20 **READ & PREPARE:** CHAPTER 7 **Conduct:** 7-1 Memorized

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the fermata with a release and caesura of appropriate length and a subsequent preparatory beat.
- Demonstrate the fermata with the release gesture used as a preparatory beat.
- Demonstrate the fermata without release but with a preparatory gesture to signal resumption.

QUIZ #2 BASED ON YOUR READING OF CHAPTERS 4, 5 AND 9
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Class 8 - The Cue

October 27 **READ & PREPARE:** CHAPTER 8 **CONDUCT:** 8-1 MEMORIZED

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate cuing gestures with the left hand, baton, and nod of the head with eye contact and preparation for each.

Class 9 - Expressive conducting and the left hand

November 3 **READ & PREPARE:** CHAPTER 10 **CONDUCT:** 10-3, 10-5, 10-6 OR 10-9 MEMORIZED

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate expressive conducting, using rhythmically independent and effective left-hand gestures, facial expressions and stance.

Class 10 - *Select a different excerpt to conduct this week from Chapter 10*

November 17 (No class on November 10) CONDUCT: 10-3, 10-5, 10-6 OR 10-9 MEMORIZED

PREPARE W.A. MOZART: EINE KLEINE NACHT MUSIK, MVT. 1

[HTTPS://IMSLP.ORG/WIKI/SPECIAL:IMAGEFROMINDEX/01776/HFZN](https://imslp.org/wiki/Special:ImagefromIndex/01776/HFZN)

QUIZ #3 BASED ON YOUR READING OF CHAPTERS 7, 8, AND 10
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ASSIGNMENT: ANALYZE THE FORM: W.A. MOZART: EINE KLEINE NACHT MUSIK, MVT. 1

Class 11 - TBD (Thanksgiving Break)

Class 12

December 1

PREPARE W.A. MOZART: EINE KLEINE NACHT MUSIK, MVT. 1

Class 13 – Final exam

December 8

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