

## MUSC 2201 LeTourneau Singers

Fall 2017

EDUC 117

Dr. Jim Taylor, Director

Office Location: Spiritual Life Office in the Classroom Hallway, Belcher Center

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### Course Description

Study and performance of varied choral repertoire. The mixed voice, traveling group represents LeTourneau University at various off-campus venues and also serves on campus. Membership is by audition only. Membership is typically for one complete academic year. May be repeated for credit.

### Course Student Learning Outcomes

Participation in the LeTourneau Singers will be, for the music-loving student, a rich experience of growing in the technical skills necessary for quality vocal and choral performance, and of encountering the rich aesthetic and emotional content that the arts can convey. These skills include healthy vocal technique in the areas of posture, breathing, tone placement, diction, and expression; the reading of music notation and its aspects of pitch, rhythm, symbols, and vocabulary; the ability to sing independently and cooperatively within a group; and an understanding of historic musical styles and their proper interpretation.

Members of the LeTourneau Singers will develop their God-given musical gifts while ministering as representatives of LETU, both in recruiting and in making the world a more beautiful and God-redolent place. Singers will perform a wide variety of styles of choral music, and experience the excitement of being part of a team striving for excellence in rehearsal and performance. Furthermore, they will develop competency in being constructively critical and self-evaluative about personal and group performances.

In a performance choir, the repertoire sung is the curriculum, and performances are the "exams," as it were. As each student masters the challenges in each piece, new skills and perceptions are acquired, which translate to future performance. Through this process singers enjoy greater mastery, which is the process in which musicians are born and developed.

The university's mission statement reads, "LeTourneau University is a comprehensive institution of Christian higher education where educators engage learners to nurture Christian virtue, to develop competency and ingenuity in their professional fields, to integrate faith and work, and to serve the local and global community." This course shares in that mission in the following ways:

- By being steeped in a humanities course such as this one, students broaden their perspective of what it means to be human. To grow in one's appreciation for aesthetics is to grow in the perception of an important aspect of God's nature, and to glorify him for the beauty he has put in the world. LeTourneau students who are gifted in technical areas will richly benefit from exposure to this other more subjective and non-measurable side of creation. Aristotle felt that a full-orbed education involves Academics, Arts, and Athletics, a viewpoint that set the course of liberal arts education in Western Civilization.
- Participation in a performing choral group in a Christian university affords the opportunity to verbalize and share in the messages of many Christian poets and composers. Not every choral piece performed will be of a religious nature, but many will be, and these texts, after being rehearsed many times, will have a tendency to stay in the heart and mind for years. Like the memorization of Scripture, these words can have a profound effect on the life of the singer, especially when wedded to moving and memorable melodies.
- Unlike most classes at LeTourneau University, the LeTourneau Singers produces a product that is observable and able to be experienced (the performance). Rehearsal is working together, coordinating disparate voice parts to achieve a beautiful goal, growing in competency together in an effort to serve the listening audience by presenting an item of loveliness that is a blessing to all who hear. The fact that choir members are singing in real harmony is, as composer John Rutter says, "an emblem for what we need in this world, when so much of the world is at odds with itself...Just to express in symbolic terms what it's like when human beings are in harmony – that's a lesson for our time, for all times." (YouTube: John Rutter, The Importance of Choir: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81SQOUL1piM>)

### Description of Required Assignments

Homework is not always given, but when it is it comes in two forms: 1) music theory/sight-reading exercises, and 2) the study of choral parts for particularly difficult music or masterworks on Cyberbass.com or through some other medium. In this situation the director may test the students' knowledge of the material by having them sing in quartets.

## **Grading Scale**

Singers with good participation and good attendance will automatically receive the grade of A. Students with two (2) unexcused absences at the end of the semester will receive a B, three (3) absences a C, four (4) a D, and below four an F. In the rare occasion of poor participation or attitude, a grade may be lowered according to the situation. For a definition of good choral participation, see below under "Classroom Policies."

## **Course Resources**

### *LETU e-mail*

Your LeTourneau University email account is an official avenue for communication. You should check your email daily for course updates and other helpful information.

## **Online/Canvas**

This course has a supplementary page at <http://courses.letu.edu>. This allows greater access through email and provides additional information. The syllabus and other course documents are posted on Canvas. The course gradebook is also posted and updated periodically. If you do not know your password to access Canvas, contact [CDT@letu.edu](mailto:CDT@letu.edu).

## **Achievement Center Services**

The Achievement Center exists to promote student success by providing supportive resources for students at no additional cost. The center offers a number of services for all undergraduate students who would like to improve their learning skills and academic success at LETU. Services include Supplemental Instruction (SI), Writing Center, Tutoring, Math Lab, Study Skills Coaches, Peer Advisors (PA), and the AIM (Academic Intervention and Mentoring) Program. For more information, visit the Achievement Center at [www.letu.edu/AchievementCenter](http://www.letu.edu/AchievementCenter) or contact the Director of Student Achievement, at [AchievementCenter@letu.edu](mailto: AchievementCenter@letu.edu), (903) 233-4470. The Achievement Center is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Allen Family Student Center.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students enrolled in an institution of higher education are required to self-identify if they would like to request academic support services on the basis of a disability. LeTourneau University encourages a student with a disability to self-identify after admission and to provide required documentation to the Director of Student Achievement who is located in the Achievement Center on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Allen Family Student Center. The contact number is (903) 233-471. Students needing facility adjustments must also contact the Director of Student Achievement at (903) 233-4471.

## **Classroom Policies**

### *Engagement and quality of participation*

Being a member of a choral ensemble is the equivalent of being a member of a sports team. Each member of the ensemble is critical to the success of the entire team. A positive attitude, teach-ability, punctuality, dependability, and a strong work ethic are essential as we work together in our weekly rehearsals, culminating in successful public performances. This is accomplished by being focused, singing with heart, having good posture, always noting breath marks and other markings given by the director, and being a force for harmony within the ensemble. As campus and public representatives of LeTourneau University, members of the LETU Singers must maintain the highest standards of musicianship, scholarship, and personal excellence.

### *Excused absences, sickness, other attendance issues*

Always try to notify the Director before an absence, whether excused or unexcused. Excused absences include: 1) those that involve activities in which you represent the institution, or field trips for other classes, and must be accompanied by a letter from the faculty supervisor of the official school event; 2) illness as attested by a doctor's or nurse's or parent's note upon return to class; and 3) funerals with a funeral program.

### *Electronic devices*

Cell phones are to be put away during rehearsal, and unavailable for texting or vibrating. Students who violate this policy will be counted absent for that day. In the rare situation that you are expecting an emergency phone call, let the Director know before class. Have your phone on vibrate and when the call comes, go out in the hall to receive it.

### *Promptness, leaving early*

Rehearsals start on time. Two tardies equal an absence. Leaving a rehearsal early or temporarily (to go to the restroom or any other reason) is considered disrespectful to the conductor and to fellow musicians, and will result in a tardy for that rehearsal. If there is a chronic medical condition that necessitates leaving class, let the conductor know at the beginning of the semester.

### *Inability to sing on a particular day*

If a singer has laryngitis or for some other reason other than a communicable disease cannot sing on a particular day, he/she is to attend rehearsal and sit on the side and listen, following along in the score (no phone or other homework).

### *Attendance at final rehearsals and concerts*

All final rehearsals, concerts, performance events, and choir activities are mandatory. Any student who misses these without prior notification or the occasion of a serious emergency will have his/her final grade reduced by one letter. Employers must be notified well ahead of time so that attendance at these rehearsals and performances will not be a problem.

### *Academic Honesty*

A foundation of mutual trust is essential to the learning community. That trust is broken when the standards of right and wrong that all students and faculty are expected to uphold are violated. Academic dishonesty is a serious breach of trust within the LeTourneau University community because it violates the regard for truth essential to genuine learning and Christian consistency. From a broader perspective, it hurts all students and their peers who try to do their work with integrity and therefore should not be tolerated among peers. Given the serious nature of academic dishonesty, a student experiencing particular difficulties in a course is encouraged to discuss the problem with the instructor rather than succumb to the pressure to commit academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresentation in an attempt to deceive. In an academic setting, this may take any number of forms such as: Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations or laboratory reports. Plagiarism, the submission of work created by someone else as if it were one's own. Use of files, tests, problems, or lab reports from previous classes other than allowed by the faculty member. Looking at an examination paper or answer sheet of another student. Obtaining, before or during the administration of a test, unauthorized information regarding the test. Possessing or distributing a test or other assignment material before or during its administration. Cooperating or aiding in any of the above.

Plagiarizing or cheating on an assignment or test will result in a 0 for that assignment. Additional cheating could result in a failure of the course. In the event of plagiarism or cheating your advisor and the VP of Student Affairs will be notified in writing. See the *Student Handbook* for the complete LeTourneau University policy on Academic Honesty.

### *Grievance Policy*

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly or if you have any questions or concerns, please talk to me. I will do everything in my power to resolve any disagreements or misunderstandings. If you still feel that your rights as a student have been violated, you can take your grievance to my immediate supervisor, Dr. Larry Frazier, Dean of Education, Arts & Sciences. The *LeTourneau University Student Handbook* contains instructions for Academic Appeals and also for general Student Complaints.

### **Textbooks and Other Resources**

Choral folders, music, and pencils are provided by the university, and remain the property of LETU. Students must return the folders and music in good condition at the end of the semester or will incur the charge of \$5 per piece of music and \$10 for each folder.

### **Performance Schedule**

The LeTourneau Singers usually sing twice in chapels each semester, and perform in a significant concert at the end of the semester. There may be recruiting or ambassadorial concerts during the year as well. Performance dates are given verbally and in writing as far ahead of time as possible. Singers are to clear any obstacles to their participation well ahead of time (notify employers, etc.) so that all singers are able to participate. Changes to the schedule of events are given both verbally and in writing, at which time all students will be required to participate in newly-scheduled activities. There is no final exam, *per se*.

### **Performance Attire**

Each student is responsible for obtaining:

#### *Formal concert wear*

- Men: Black or near-black suit, white Oxford shirt, black bow tie, black socks, dress shoes
- Ladies: Solid black long dress (below the knee, shoulders covered, may be above or below elbow) or black pants suit; black, closed-toe or open-toed shoes

#### *Casual concert wear*

- Royal blue LeTourneau polo shirt (available in the bookstore), blue jeans in good condition and casual shoes (sandals for women are acceptable)