

CHORAL STUDIES

General Remarks

The reputation of Westminster Choir College rests in large part upon the excellence of the choirs and the success of its graduates. The nation's leading critics and orchestra conductors continue to find the choirs worthy of the highest praise. Choral music is therefore the focus of all curricula. Westminster alumni are employed by schools, universities, churches, professional choruses and orchestras and opera houses throughout the world. Opportunities for choral performance on a professional level are unparalleled, and students acquire a strong foundation in conducting technique and knowledge of choral literature.

Ensemble Grading Policy

A. Attendance

- Two absences are allowed per semester. No absences are allowed for dress rehearsals or performances.
- All events on the syllabus are required.
- Any absences over two will result in a lowered letter grade.
- Extenuating circumstances should be discussed with the director before they occur.
- Be on time. Two tardies will count as one absence.
- Missing a dress rehearsal or concert will result in a failing grade for the semester.

B. Participation/General Information

- Positive participation factors into your grade.
- Music and pencil are required at each rehearsal.
- Memorization, written translations and other analytical study may be required.

Required Ensembles

Required ensembles are the essence of Westminster Choir College. These experiences enrich the entire student body and create the opportunity to form a creative musical core.

Chapel Choir and Schola Cantorum are designed to meet the needs of freshmen and sophomores. Each ensemble provides a dynamic and focused experience to build a strong foundation of rehearsal skills, choral tone, language and musicianship. Both ensembles use a variety of repertoire to build a strong foundation for each student.

The Symphonic Choir is at the heart of the college choral community. The ensemble appears with symphony orchestras of the United States and Europe. Students above the lower division sing in the Symphonic Choir, preparing choral/orchestral repertoire for performance at major venues along with local and regional concerts.

Elective Ensembles

Elective ensembles are open to students by audition only. Auditions are held in the fall semester, and students perform in that ensemble for the academic year. The elective ensembles are Westminster Choir, Williamson Voices, Kantorei, Jubilee Singers and Concert Handbell Choir I.

Conducting Major: Graduate

The graduate choral conducting program, generally a two-year program, trains conductors to be marketable and effective musicians. Westminster

offers a balance of academic and performance opportunities. Graduate conducting majors take a core of research, literature, conducting, pedagogy and ensemble. Applied study and ensemble conducting offer each candidate the opportunity to work with the conducting faculty. Candidates must successfully complete a comprehensive oral exam before a degree is conferred. Graduate Conducting majors are admitted by audition in order to assure quality conducting experiences and contact with the graduate faculty.

Conducting Concentration: Graduate

Graduate students majoring in Sacred Music and those Master of Music Education majors admitted with conducting as the performance field participate in Symphonic Choir for two semesters and in Master Singers for two to three semesters. A half recital in conducting is presented at the culmination of study. For Sacred Music majors, the conducting recital is a requirement in addition to the solo recital.

Faculty

James Jordan • Professor, Conducting, 1991. B.M., Susquehanna University; M.M., Ph.D., Temple University; D.Mus., University of Aberdeen, Scotland.

Steve Pilkington • Associate Professor, Sacred Music, and Director of Chapel, 1992. B.A., St. Olaf College; M.M., University of Illinois; Ph.D., Drew University.

Tom T. Shelton, Jr. • Associate Professor and Chair, Sacred Music, 2012. B.M., M.M., University of North Carolina at Greensboro.