PLEASE NOTE:
All students and parents must read and know the policies herein. All students must turn in the signature sheet proving that it was read. Students will not participate in any performances until the signature sheet is turned in, which will be reflected in the grades.
Omaha North High School  
Women’s Choir  
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Colten McCauley  
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Office Phone Number: 332-8704  
Plan Periods: A7 & B8  
Office Hours: Mondays and Tuesdays, 330-5p  
Classroom: Room 124

Course Description:
Women’s Choir or Treble Choir is a performing ensemble that rehearses in preparation for various performances and events throughout the school year. The group performs renaissance, baroque, classical, romantic, modern, and popular/Broadway/film music at five performances a year, as well as continuing to develop an understanding of and ability to execute higher levels of musicianship, professionalism, and participation. Successful completion of Women’s Choir fulfills the prerequisites for auditioning for Concert Choir in May for the following year. Some exceptions may apply.

Instructional Philosophy
We strive to create a positive environment of respect, accountability, and creativity. All levels of musician should feel comfortable to learn and grow at their own pace, using the resources provided, including the services of Mr. McCauley and more experienced musicians. Such an experience can only be achieved through relaxation, focus, self-improvement, and cooperation. As a group, we rely on each other to fulfill our responsibilities of commitment, individual preparation, and group awareness and participation. Students are encouraged to assist those around them in order to ensure a successful learning process and a spirit of serious performance.

Course Standards:
Topic: Performing  
Standard: FA 12.4.2: Students will sing and/or play, independently and/or with others, a variety of music genres and styles using technical accuracy and expression, and synthesize feedback from various sources to evaluate a performance.  
Strand: Students will sing a variety of repertoire as part of an ensemble using appropriate technique.  
Indicators:

• Use correct singing posture. (i.e. Stretching, warm-ups, vocal flexing, whole body readiness).  
• Develop appropriate vocal tone and technique using proper breath support.  
• Sing diatonic and non-diatonic songs with pitch accuracy.  
• Demonstrate appropriate diction and vowel formation in a variety of languages and musical styles.
• Demonstrate healthy vocal development and maturation through performance of varied repertoire
• Sing three-part, four-part, and higher level divisi music for men’s, women’s, and mixed voices.
• Interpret and demonstrate elements of musical expression.
• Demonstrate performance material and convey intent using music vocabulary
• Demonstrate musical independence and individual accountability in rehearsal.
• Demonstrate proper rehearsal technique. (i.e. discipline, focus, in-tune singing).
• Demonstrate appropriate concert etiquette.

**Topic: Literacy**

**Standard:** FA 12.4.1: Students will compose, arrange, improvise, read, and perform music with an analytical understanding of the language of music.

**Strand:** Students will be able to analyze musical elements aurally and visually, interpret musical scores, and improvise and compose short melodies.

**Indicators:**

• Identify and demonstrate rhythmic literacy in duple and triple and simple, compound, and uneven meters.
• Demonstrate a working knowledge and application of moveable do solfege.
• Demonstrate and apply knowledge of melodic direction, intervals, and pitch relationships.
• Identify and apply knowledge of musical terms and symbols.
• Compose 4 measure phrases using known rhythms and pitches using teacher guidelines.
• Identify and demonstrate use of solfege hand signs.
• Identify and notate absolute pitch names on the grand staff.
• Demonstrate how to read an octavo. (i.e. page numbers, systems, measure numbers, alto soprano, baritone, tenor, musical notation, text)
• Identify musical form visually and aurally.

**Topic: Cultural Connections (Responding)**

**Standard:** FA. 12.4.1: Students will analyze and evaluate how music elicits intended responses (personal response to music).

**Strand:** Students will be able to interpret and respond to words of music and live and recorded performances.

**Indicators:**

• Perform, analyze, and describe music and the ideas and mood it conveys.
• Analyze text to inform and enhance musical performance.
• Evaluate music and musical performances.
• Justify relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
• Contextualize repertoire in relation to history and culture.

**Course Expectations**
All students are expected to attend all performances (listed below; dates subject to change). Any absences must be discussed with Mr. McCauley and reported in writing 48 hours prior to the performance to determine excused or unexcused status. Lack of written notice 48 hours in advance will automatically result in an unexcused absence, but written notice 48 hours in advance does not guarantee an excused absence. Considerable reasons for excused absences include illness, death in the family, or emergency. Inexcusable reasons include (but are not limited to) work, lack of a ride, homework, sporting event, family or community functions (extracurricular events, such as athletic practices or competitions, cheerleading practices or performances, Robotics practices or competitions, and other similar events do not supersede Choir performances, which are graded). Tardies for any reason that fall between call-time and performance time will result in 0.5 points removed from the total performance grade (3.5 out of 4). Tardies for any reason that fall during or after performance time will be considered an absence.

- October, 24th @ 7pm- Vocal Fall Concert
- December, 14th @4pm- Omaha North Winter Concert
- April, 16th @ 6pm- Solo and Small Ensemble Showcase
- April, 24th @ TBA- District Music Contest @ Papillion La Vista South
- May, 5th @ 7:30pm- Vocal Spring Concert

Class Rules and Expectations
- To achieve a spirit of cooperation, focus, and respect, students and instructors should ...
  - strive to maintain all rehearsal concepts (found at the back of this syllabus);
  - strive to behave within all points of rehearsal etiquette (found at the back of this syllabus);
  - strive to maintain energy level and focus needed for the rehearsal level required (found at the back of this syllabus);
  - be in their seats with their instruments and supplies out and ready for use within five minutes of the start bell;
    - Students who are tardy within the first ten minutes of class will be marked tardy;
    - Six tardies will result in a lunch detention;
    - Eight tardies will result in a Late School;
    - Ten tardies will result in an office referral;
    - Students who are tardy beyond the first ten minutes will be marked absent and will receive a an office referral;
  - keep all distracting items out of sight, including homework, books, cell phones, and other similar materials;
  - participate in warm-ups and rehearsals with either their own or a school-owned instrument;
  - maintain voice in good working order, using good technique and talking to the instructor if there is a vocal health issue.
  - participate in preparing the rehearsal room for the next period, including cleaning any trash;
  - remain in the classroom until Mr. McCauley dismisses them;
...behave at public events in such a way as to bring honor and pride to the North High Choir Program, to North High School, and to the North Omaha community;

- All students are allowed **three (3) 15-minute bathroom breaks per quarter**, to be recorded on the blue hall-pass. Once the three breaks are used or the 15-minute time limit is violated, the student will **not have access to the bathroom breaks** until the start of the next quarter;
- Passes to see other teachers or to leave the school must be **delivered to Mr. McCauley prior to the start of rehearsal**, and such visits will be **subject to rehearsal schedule and needs**;
- **Only water** is allowed for students in the rehearsal room. **No other food or drink** will be allowed into the rehearsal room by students at any time.

**Texts**
- Various sheet music for performance

**Assessment**
- **Each rehearsal will be graded** (formative). Students will be graded according to execution of the expectations laid out in the **rehearsal concepts, etiquette, and levels** section of this syllabus. Grades will be recorded according to the **rubric attached**.
- **Each performance is graded** (summative with an added weight of x2, 3, or 4, dependent on type of performance; see below). Each performance will include a **participation aspect and a musical aspect**. Students with an excused absence from a performance will be allowed two weeks to make up the musical aspect-- but not the participation aspect-- of the grade by performing the music for Mr. Haupt after school. Students are expected to approach Mr. Haupt about making up performance grades. Students with an unexcused absence will not be allowed to make up any part of the grade.
  - **School Concert Choir concerts** will be weighted x3.
  - **Choir Adjudication** will be weighted x3.
  - **District Music Contest** will be weighted x4.
  - **Commencement** will be weighted x2.
- **Memorization checks and singing tests will occur frequently** (formative with an added weight of x2) to determine progress and proficiency. All students will be required to achieve a 3 or higher on singing tests (graded according to the attached rubric). If a 3 or higher is not achieved, students have one week to prepare and retake the singing test. The playing test must be retaken until a score of 3 or above is achieved or until the week of the concert, whichever comes first. If a 3 or a 4 is not achieved by the week of the performance, students will not be permitted to perform at the performance, which will be reflected in the musical aspect of the performance grade (although attendance is still expected and will be graded as the participation aspect).
- **Quizzes will occur frequently** (formative with an added weight of x2).
- **Written finals will occur at the end of each semester** (summative with an added weight of x3). These finals will cover everything learned up to that point in the year, including musical terms and symbols, rhythms, marching techniques, drill setting, and more.
OPS Secondary Grading Practices*
All coursework and assessments are judged based on the level of student learning from “below basic” to “advanced.” This course will provide multiple opportunities to achieve at the “proficient” to “advanced” levels. Students are evaluated based on a proficiency scale or project rubric. Proficiency scales for this course are available upon request (teacher will identify location such as portal, teacher website, attached, etc.).

There are three types of coursework*
- **Practice**: Assignments are brief and done at the beginning of learning to gain initial content (e.g., student responses in discussion or in written form, a valid sampling of ability on performance repertoire, technique exercises, etc.). Practice assignments are not generally graded for accuracy (descriptive feedback will be provided in class) and are not part of the grade. Teachers may keep track of practice work to check for completion, and students could also track their practice work. Practice work is at the student’s instructional level and may only include “Basic” (level 2) questions.
- **Formative (35% of grade)**: Assessments/assignments occur during learning to inform and improve instruction. They are minor assignments (playing tests, pop-quizzes both written and performed). Formative assignments are graded for accuracy and descriptive feedback is provided. Formative work may be at the students’ instructional levels or at the level of the content standard. Formative assessments/assignments will have all levels of learning: Basic (2), Proficient (3), and Advanced (4), which means that for every formative assessment/assignment, students will be able to earn an Advanced (4) grade. Teachers will require students to redo work that is not of high quality to ensure rigor and high expectations. The students’ scores on assessment that was redone will be their final score.
- **Summative (65% of the final grade)**: Assessments/assignments are major end-of-learning unit tests, projects, and performances used to determine mastery of content or skill. Summative assignments are graded on accuracy. Summative assignments assess the students’ progress on grade level standards and may not be written at the students’ instructional levels. Summative assessments/assignments will have all levels of learning: Basic (2), Proficient (3), and Advanced (4), which means that for every formative assessment/assignment, students will be able to earn an Advanced (4) grade.

To maintain alignment of coursework to content standards, which is a key best practice for standards-based grading, teachers will utilize a standardized naming convention for each of the standards within a course. The content standard will be marked on each assignment, entered into Infinite Campus (District Grading Program) using all capital letters followed by a colon. At the end of the grading period, scores are converted to a letter grade using the following grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>3.26 – 4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2.61 – 3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1.76 – 2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.01 – 1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.00 – 1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Redoing/Revising Student Coursework*
1. Students are responsible for completing all coursework and assessments as assigned.
2. Students will be allowed redos and revisions of coursework for full credit as long as they are turned in during that unit of study while a student still has an opportunity to benefit from the learning. When time permits, teachers should allow the redoing and revising of summative assessments.
3. Students are expected to complete assessments when given to the class, or if a student was justifiably absent, at a time designated by the teacher.
4. Redoing, retaking, or revising will be done at teacher discretion in consultation with the students and parents/guardian. Teachers may schedule students before, during, and after school to address needed areas of improvement if not convenient during class. The time and location for redoing, retaking, or revising will be done at the teacher’s discretion in consultation with the student and parents/guardian.

*Indicates standardized language
Revised July 2013

Equipment and Uniforms

- All sheet music and materials handed out by Mr. McCauley must be taken care of by students and returned at the end of the unit. Any piece of sheet music lost or returned damaged (markings other than pencil, rips, folds, etc.) or without a student name will result in a $2 fine for each item. Any concert folder lost or returned damaged will result in a $15 fine.

- Women’s Choir members will wear: off-black pantyhose, black skirt or dress and black formal shoes. Please, no boots, tennis shoes, or flip flops. Closed-toe style flat shoes are preferred for safety on stage.

- Any student wearing improper performance attire will be required to find, purchase or borrow the correct attire before the concert begins. If proper attire cannot be acquired, the student will not be allowed to perform and as such, cannot complete associated assignments.

Varsity Letters

A Varsity Letter can be achieved for North High Singers only by going beyond expectations listed above through meeting the following criteria:

- Attendance to and participation in all concerts and competitions;
- Attendance to and participation in all classroom and extracurricular rehearsals;
- Meeting practice and performance expectations and with a positive attitude and willingness to learn and help the band progress;
- Audition and participation in any Honor Band, including but not limited to Nebraska All-State Band, OPS All-City Honor Band, or local college honor bands;
- Participation in private voice lessons in or outside of Omaha North
- Performance of a solo or audition at the District Music Contest and at a school event.
Extracurricular Opportunities

- **Honors Concert Choir**: For students looking for more involved learning and participation for Honors credit, the Honors Concert Choir is available for enrollment for the second semester. This group meets the same period as and participates in the same events and within the same capacity as the Concert Choir.
  
  o Pre-requisites include the following (to be completed before the end of the first semester):
    
    - Audition for and participation in **All-State or All-City**;
    - Possible participation in a North High Show Choir.
  
  o Second semester requirements for Honors Concert Choir include the following (these will be graded assignments in addition to the Concert Choir graded assignments):
    
    - Participation as a soloist or small ensemble member in **District Solo and Ensemble Contest**;
    - **Assessments** of the Choir Adjudication and District Music Contest performances using the DMC Judges’ rubric;
    - Possible participation in a North High Show Choir;
    - One short **in-class presentation and hallway display** of information on a composer or style of music.

- Students are encouraged to audition for and participate in **Honor Choirs** to strengthen their skills, learn from a new instructor, and perform different music in a different setting.
  
  o **All-State Choir** (Nebraska Music Educators-run with auditions)
    
    - **August, 19th-September 9th** - Registrations for auditions ($20)
    - **September, 10th-16th** - Late registration ($40)
    - **September, 28th** - UNO All-State FREE Choral Help Session
    - **October, 4th @ 6am** - Choir Auditions Open
    - **October, 5th @ 11:59pm** - Choir Auditions Close
    - **October, 16th @ 8am** - Announcement of selected ensembles
    - **November 23rd-25th** - NMEA Conference
  
  o **All-City Choir** (OPS-run)
    
    - **February 6th-8th**
  
  o Various **College Honors Choirs** (see Mr. McCauley)

- Students are encouraged to participate in **extracurricular musical activities** that will strengthen and enrich their growth and performance level.
  
  o **Private lessons** that provide more focus on individual instrument technique. A **private instructor folder** with names and contact info will be maintained and updated at the front of the room
  
  o **Sing Omaha** - A local non-profit organization that offers a variety of ensembles and private lessons.
Vocal Music Parents & Students Organization (VMPS)

- To better help **promote, encourage, support, and provide for** the vocal music students, the VMPS organization encourages students to participate in **monthly meetings** to share ideas and concerns.

- All students are expected to **participate in fundraising** opportunities set up by the Vocal Music Parents & Students (VMPS) organization. Fundraising is necessary to help provide music, equipment, travel and participation in choir trips. **Please sign the fundraiser permission form found at the end of this syllabus.**
YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PERFORM ANY GRADED EVENTS UNTIL THIS SIGNATURE SHEET IS TURNED IN, SIGNED, TO MR. MCCAULEY (your grades will reflect this).

I have read, understand, and agree to meet expectations and policies listed above.

Name: ____________________________________________

Signature: __________________________________________

Parents Signature: __________________________________

I give permission to allow my student to participate in all Choir events happening at school and at other locations:

Student Name: _____________________________________

Parent Signature: __________________________________

I give permission to allow my student to participate in all fundraising activities.

Student Name: _____________________________________

Parent Signature: __________________________________