

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

JAZZ CHOIR

MR. BRAD SENFFNER

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Course Description:**

This mixed choir is open to men and women in the Junior and Senior classes. An audition is required for the course. All members are required to perform for the spring concert and Organizational contest. Students are eligible to for the IHSA Solo & Ensemble contest in the spring. Members may also audition for New Impressions (show choir).

**Course Objectives:**

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

Students will be able to:

- Sing and understand the differences in the harmonies of the Jazz style as compared to traditional harmonies and pitches.
- Sing more complex harmonies and intervals with increasingly complex dissonances and harmonic progressions.
- Assess need to produce same vowel qualities to ensure proper blending of multiple tones produced by sections of the choir (each choral section).
- Understand and display a knowledge of the differences need to transition from a larger ensemble to chamber singing (fewer numbers)
- Engage in breathing exercises that encourage deep lung expansion, limited shoulder movement, open mouth air intake, and extended vocal phrases.
- Listen to a harmonic progression and provide an improvised line above that progression.
- Understand and analyze how improvisation is used in the jazz style.
- Recognize and vocally demonstrate more advanced signs of musical articulation
- Understand and analyze how articulation assists in the expression of the piece.
- Sing with robust energy to produce proper tonality, diction, articulation, and breathing that are necessary for public performance.
- Demonstrate proper posture, elevated rib cage, open mouth, and forward appearance stance
- Use proper diction, posture, breathing, and energy level to sing with amplified sound without the use of electronics.
- Use proper vocal placement utilizing a raised soft palette and registration within the mask of the face to provide accurate resonance and frequency to create a higher quality tone.
- Perform works of the Jazz, and a cappella styles designed for use in a jazz ensemble.

**Required Class Materials:**

**Choral Attire:**

Each student will be required to purchase an outfit for performances. The attire this year (due to the Disney trip) will be as follows:

Men

- Black Dress Shirt
- White Tie
- Black Pants

Women

- Black Dress or Black Top w/ pant
- White accents (earrings, belt, headband, etc.)
- Black pumps (closed toe-closed heel shoe)

- White Belt
- Black Dress Shoes
- Black Socks

Since this is a Jazz Choir, the overall effect we are going for is a more laid back and relaxed tone. To achieve this, please feel free to use different accents (i.e. maybe black and white dress shoes, fun white belt with different appropriate accents, etc.) to make your look fun and still appropriate. The idea is to be in the same color palette and look similar while still maintaining some independence.

**Text:**

All musical selections will be provided to each student. Each student will also be issued a folder and folder slot to keep their music intact and together. Folders and the music issued are the responsibilities of the student. If they are lost, charges will be assessed to the student and/or parents for the replacement of the materials.

**Course Outline:**

- Ear Training/Matching Pitches/Proper Octave Placement
- Choral Diction
- Sectional Balance and Blend
- Deep Breathing
- Improvisation
- Musical Articulation
- Performance Energy
- Proper Vocal Production
- Teamwork
- Choral Works

**Major Assignments:**

Date	Event	Time	Location
March 3	IHSA Solo and Ensemble Contest	TBA	TBA
March 17-18	H.S. Spring Play	TBA	Auditorium
April 14	IHSA Organizational Contest	TBA	Central H.S.
April 17	H.S. Band & Choral Concert	7:00 p.m.	Auditorium
May 11	High School music awards	TBA	TBA
May 25-26	Nite-On-The-Town	TBA	Auditorium

Highlighted events are mandatory participation. These events will have a grade connected to them. Failure to attend will result in a drop in the class grade as per the grading scale.

**Grading:**

- Positive Classroom Participation:
  - Each student is expected to participate each day in a positive manner. Students will be graded on their effort and ability. A sample page of my grading rubric is included in this pamphlet. Students can achieve 20 points per day. This is a performance based class, so classroom performance makes up a majority of the class grade.
- Rehearsal and Performance Attendance:

- Performance attendance is essential to our success. Included in this handbook is a calendar of events for the 2011-2012 school term. Please use this information when planning work schedules, family vacations and other outside commitments. Attendance at these performances is mandatory, unless otherwise noted. Absences from performances will only be excused if the student has an excused absence (not including pre-arranged) from school the day of the performance, hospital or doctor noted illnesses, death in the family or family emergencies. A make up project (written report, typed, six pages single-spaced on a subject presented by the director) may be given at the discretion of the director. Family emergencies or deaths in family will be fully excused and no makeup project will be expected. Absences will not be excused for parents' work, extra-curricular activities or other conflicts. A signed doctor and/or parental note stating the reason for a student missing a performance are required for all excused absences. When possible, please notify the director well in advance. Unexcused absences from concerts will have a negative impact on a student's grade and/or future participation in the program.
- Written Exams, Worksheets, Material Checks and/or Projects:
  - Each quarter written exams, material checks, group singing exams, worksheets and/or projects may be given to assess the students on concepts and skills learned in class.

### Grading Scale

Letter	GPA	Letter	%	Code	Description
A+, A	= 4.0	A+, A	= 94-100	7	Does not do make-up journals
A-	= 3.7	A-	= 92-93	8	Does not turn in journals
B+	= 3.3	B+	= 90-91	9	Does not participate
B	= 3.0	B	= 87-89	10	Finds work difficult
B-	= 2.7	B-	= 85-86	11	Poor Daily Preparation
C+	= 2.3	C+	= 83-84	12	Poor Test Work
C	= 2.0	C	= 79-82	13	Absent/Tardy Frequently
C-	= 1.7	C-	= 77-78	14	Is Disturbing Influence
D+	= 1.3	D+	= 75-76	15	Wastes Time
D	= 1.0	D	= 72-74	16	Too Many Activities
D-	= 0.7	D-	= 70-71	17	Parent/Teacher Conference
F	= 0	F	= 0-69	18	Working to Potential
				19	An asset to the Class
				20	Willingly Helps Others
				21	Very Cooperative
				22	Is Improving

### Class Policies & Procedures:

#### CHOIR EXPECTATIONS:

1. Daily evidence of dedication, hard work and a positive attitude is expected from all choir members.
2. Respect towards the teacher and other choir members.
3. Have music, folder, pencil and any other needed supplies and be prepared to begin rehearsal in your assigned seat *BEFORE THE BELL RINGS*.
4. No gum or food allowed.

Please note all school rules in the handbook will be enforced.

### **CONSEQUENCES:**

The following is a list of sequential consequences that will occur if the student chooses to disregard the expectations and rules discussed on this page. These consequences are at the discretion of the choir director.

**1<sup>st</sup> Offense:** Warning (Points taken off in grade)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Offense:** Detention (to be served with Teacher, loss of half points for day) or referral to the Office (Loss of all points for day). Parent may be contacted.

### **Continual Offenses (over the course of several classes):**

Instant Referral to the office (Loss of all points for the day), may request a parent conference, possible discussion of future in choir.

**Severe Offenses:** Students engaging in severe offenses such as severe disrespect, insubordination, violent behavior, etc. will be immediately sent to the office with a referral. Student will lose all points for the day. Parents will be notified.

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. Enter the room; throw all gum and food into the garbage can when you enter the room.
2. Fill any water bottles or clear containers for water that need to be filled.
3. Get your folder and sit in your assigned seat.
4. Review any music that you want to ask questions on and have the questions prepared. If an example or exercise is on the board, be working on it.
5. Be seated when the bell rings and be ready to warm-up.
6. Follow the directions set by the director or student officers.
7. Please refrain from taking bathroom breaks unless it is absolutely necessary.
8. Students are not dismissed from the classroom by the bell. The teacher dismisses students. You are to stay in your seat waiting for instructions even after the bell.

*Students who do not dress appropriately for performances will not be allowed to perform and will have their grade lowered. If there are financial difficulties, please let Mr. Senffner know and a solution can be worked out.*

### **Miscellaneous:**

- **CHOIR OFFICERS:**

- Student leadership is very important to our success. Therefore we need to elect students with motivation and initiative to lead our group. In each choir we will be electing a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Librarian. Students will be nominated from the floor and will then be brought to a vote by the entire choir. These students will be given various responsibilities throughout the semester so it is reminded that they should be qualified students with the ability to lead their peers.

- **CHOIR OFFICERS (DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES):**

- **President:** Leadership ability, willing to dedicate a lot of time. Is responsible for the physical warm-up of choir. Assists director at performances with ensuring that choir members are in their proper spots and ready to perform.
- **Vice-President:** Leadership ability, willing to dedicate a lot of time. Is responsible to take over in the absence of the President. Is in charge of set-up crews for concerts and performances. Will be in charge of ensuring that the room is clean and back in order after every rehearsal.
- **Secretary:** Leadership ability, willing to dedicate a lot of time. Is responsible to take attendance during rehearsals, performance or any time that attendance is required.
- **Librarian:** Leadership ability, willing to dedicate a lot of time. Is responsible to keep track of copies of music that is handed out, returned, filed, organized, etc.. Will be responsible to make sure that all music is put away in folders at the conclusion of every rehearsal.

**Instructor Contact:** (Days and times of availability, phone numbers, emails, etc.)

Prep Period (A & B days): 8:15 am to 9:45 am

Email: [bsenffner@cusd4.org](mailto:bsenffner@cusd4.org)

Phone: 815-694-2321 ext. 2124

Website: [www.cusd4.org](http://www.cusd4.org)

**PARENT/STUDENT SIGN-OFF SHEET:**

***TEACHER'S COPY***

By affixing our signatures at the bottom, we agree that we have read, understand, and will follow all the expectations as stated in this syllabus.

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT PRINTED NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT/GUARDIAN PRINTED NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**Please return this portion to Mr. Senffner.**