

Course Description for String Orchestra (Music 2020)
Mr. Robert Johnston, and Mr. Joseph Higgins, Directors
Academic Year 2018-2019

String Orchestra is a performance course open to students who have limited or minimal experience playing an orchestral string instrument. Many freshmen also begin in this ensemble. Classroom instruction will include rehearsal of concert literature, sight-reading, rehearsal and performance technique as well as etiquette, discipline, and the listening to and viewing of concert repertoire and relative works. The String Orchestra performs at the school's annual Christmas, Beginners, and Spring Concerts. It should be noted that the String Program has become an integral part not only of the Music Department but also, of the entire school and its community. The string orchestra rehearses on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday during H period. Exemplary attendance and punctuality are mandatory. Grades will be determined primarily on participation as well as any exams and written/performance assignments. Students involved in the String Orchestra are highly encouraged to enroll in the music lesson program.

Requirements:

1. Dates/Attendance/Lateness.

Attendance and punctuality are required at all rehearsals during H period as well as at after-school rehearsals in the week(s) prior to the Christmas and Spring Concerts. This year's performance schedule is as follows:

***Christmas Concert I, Friday, December 7th, 2018, 7:45 P.M.** Students are required to arrive no later than 6:45 P.M.

*Students are **required** to attend after school rehearsals Monday and Wednesday Dec.3rd. and 5th.*

***Beginners Concert, Friday, January 25th, 2019, 7:30 P.M.** Students are required to arrive no later than 6:45 P.M.

*Students are **required** to attend after school rehearsals Wednesday and Thursday the 23rd, and 24th.*

***Spring Concert I, Friday, May 3rd, 2019, 7:45 P.M.** Students are required to arrive no later than 6:45 P.M..

*Students are **required** to attend after school rehearsals on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, April 30th, May 1st, and 2nd.*

Please take special note of the dates listed above. They are a required and integral portion of this course. In the event of an unforeseen conflict Mr. Johnston and Mr. Higgins must be made aware of said conflict in advance.

Students are required to arrive promptly and be in their seats, ready to play by the beginning of each service.

*****A rotating room set-up/breakdown chore will be a mandatory for each student in the string orchestra this means that at times throughout the year you will need to set-up and put away all chairs and stands to their respected places, failure to do so will result in a points deduction from one's participation grade*****

2. Preparation.

Students will be provided with individual practice parts for all music that will be performed. The minimum expectation is to be prepared, through daily at home practice, for a polished public performance. Although no student is expected to exceed his or her abilities, there is the understanding that, through, diligent and daily at home practice, their level of ability, confidence and pride in their work will match, if not exceed their individual potential as well as the potential of the ensemble as a whole.

3. Respect.

Students will be expected, through their work, to show different levels of musical and professional respect. This includes but is not limited to, respecting the work accomplished by the composers of the pieces we play, respecting the conductor and any guest artists, respecting the hard work and efforts of their peers and colleagues and most importantly, having the self-respect and pride in their own accomplishments and the work put forth. Students will be expected to adhere to the St. Francis Preparatory School Honor Code. In other words, student must display proper respect at all times to their teachers, their classmates, and most importantly, display self-respect in their attitude and their work.

4. What you need.

Each student must bring a pencil to thoroughly mark parts during rehearsals. All marked parts must subsequently be used for each rehearsal.

Students are required obtain a pocket folder for the keeping of music parts.

Violin and viola students generally bring their own instruments and bows. If instruments are needed, please make arrangements with Mr. Higgins. Only one instrument will be supplied. Due to size and quantity limitations, Cello and bass students will be supplied with instruments for at home practice, *only if available*. If the school cannot provide instruments, students are encouraged, and should arrange to rent instruments for in home use.

Other necessities, such as rosin, rock-stops and string are available through the music office for a minimal charge.

5. Goals.

To increase the level of technical skill through ensemble rehearsal and at home practice. To increase musicianship (i.e. – ensemble playing, listening skills and stylistic understanding.) To heighten the level of responsibility and respect (including self-respect, sense of accomplishment and pride) through team-oriented ensemble playing. To develop a strong work ethic. To give polished public performances. To thoroughly enjoy making music with the ensemble.

Grading Policy:

1. Attendance and lateness.

Repeated absence and lateness will not be tolerated and will result in the following consequences:

- *Please refer the school calendar for school policy on attendance/lateness.
- *Chronic lateness will result in a lower quarter/semester grade.
- *Students will be advised verbally if a pattern occurs that will lead to a lower and/or failing grade.
- *Each lateness, after the first one, will result in 7 points being deducted from the participation grade.
- *Each absence after the first two will result in 2 points being deducted from the participation grade.
- *There will be two participation grades, one at mid-quarter, one at the end of the quarter, 30% each, and a performance grade (40%).

2. Performance.

Students, as discussed above, will be expected to individually practice on a daily basis, just as they would do their written homework for another class. If there is no obvious progress in the student's work, this will result in a lower, if not a failing grade. As discussed above, students will not be judged on their ability or experience, but first and foremost, on the work ethic they put forth. This will be determined by the instructor through the course of rehearsal. As above, students will be advised verbally if a pattern occurs that will lead to a lower and/or failing grade and will be given the opportunity to make necessary adjustments.

3. Respect.

Students that show a basic lack of respect as discussed above will receive a lower, if not a failing grade. As above, students will be advised verbally if a negative pattern occurs and will be given the opportunity to make necessary adjustments.

Students will be expected to adhere to the St. Francis Preparatory School Honor Code. Student must display proper respect at all times to their

teachers, their classmates, and most importantly, display self-respect in their attitude and their work.

4. Formulas.

Quarterly grades will be weighted as follows:

*Participation 30% for mid-quarter and end of quarter

*40% for performance

Deductions will be made for attendance and lateness, as outlined above.

The final grade will be an average of the quarterly grades and, if applicable, a final exam (20% each).

5. Notification.

If a student has been advised verbally of any problems and there is no improvement, or there is a danger of failing, academic deficiency reports will be sent home to the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Conferences:

Students are encouraged to see Mr. Johnston and/or Mr. Higgins if they feel they are having any difficulty in regard to the class. If students that are in jeopardy of failing the class will be notified by Mr. Johnston and/or Mr. Higgins as well as have an academic deficiency report sent home.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) who are concerned about their child's performance are encouraged to speak to Mr. Johnston and/or Mr. Higgins at Parent/Teacher interviews or by phone at (718) 423-8810 x255, or email at rjohnston@sfponline.org or jhiggins@SFPOne.org.

Dear Mr. Johnston and Mr. Higgins:

I have read the course description for Strings Orchestra (Music 2020) with my child and understand the requirements and policies for the class, including the dates and times of all performances and rehearsals. Therefore, I understand the consequences of missing a performance. I also understand that my child will be held accountable for all aspects of the St. Francis Preparatory School Honor Code as described on page four of the school calendar.

If I have any questions, I am aware that I can reach you at the school at (718) 423-8810 x255 or see you during parent/teacher conferences. I also understand that you are available at mutually agreeable times to meet with my child if s/he has any questions or difficulties.

Students and parents should note that this course is a yearlong commitment that involves diligent and thorough study. Music offers many important tools to the student. Aside from the intrinsic value of playing an instrument in an ensemble, students will be exposed to the arts, develop a strong work ethic, and a concept of long and short term goal setting. Students will also develop problem identification and solving skills and time management skills. Finally, students will develop socio-musical skills.

The String Program has become one of the premier facets of St. Francis Preparatory School and is continually in the public eye. It is hoped that students recognize and respect this and gauge their work accordingly.

Parent/Guardian _____

Student _____

Date _____