Sarton Singers **FA26/SP27**

Instructor: Mr. Sean Gower
Classroom: Music Room, FA3
Email: sgower@spxkc.org
Phone: 816-453-3450 ext. 415

I am available to meet with students: 7:30 am (Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri), 8:20am (Thurs), after school, and during study halls.

"Singing is the highest expression of the human heart and there is no higher service to the human community than singing." - Fr. Luigi Giussani

"I prepare myself for rehearsals like I would for marriage." - Maria Callas

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Course Description

The Sarton Singers aspire to an elite, professional standard of performance that will bring beauty and art to our community. We learn repertoire that is difficult for a high-school-level choir and each student learns musicianship skills such as sight-singing. We perform at school masses, feeder school events, and end-of-semester concerts, and we compete in district and regional events. Each member is required to practice, participate in all performances, and purchase the Sarton dress attire.

Essential Materials (Bring to all classes)

1" or 1.5" black binder in undamaged condition
Pencil
Red Pen

Book to Buy

Sing at First Sight, Bk 2: Foundations in Choral Sight-Singing. Available from Amazon. (Make sure book shows Level 2 in the picture and reads "Bk 2" in the title. (8.99)

Choir Rehearsal Expectations

1. Ready at the bell: Students must be in their assigned seats when the bell rings, with their choir binder open to the assigned music and a pencil ready. Warm-ups begin immediately.
2. Rehearsal focus: Side conversations are not permitted while the director is speaking, giving a starting pitch, conducting, or working with any section. Students who are not currently singing must follow along in the music, mark instructions, and be ready to enter.

3. Participation and outside work: Choir is an active performance class. Students must sing, follow directions, and maintain appropriate rehearsal posture unless excused by the director. Work for other classes and other unrelated materials may not be used during rehearsal.
4. Food and drinks: Water only. Food, gum, candy, and other drinks are not permitted in the choir area.
5. Restroom breaks: Students should use the restroom during passing time whenever possible. Except in an emergency or for an approved accommodation, students may leave only with permission during a natural break in rehearsal—not during warm-ups, instruction, or active singing.
6. Materials, room, and dismissal: Students must keep their binders and music organized and in good condition. When directed, return all materials to their proper places, leave the choir area clean, and remain in the assigned area until dismissed. Lost or damaged materials must be repaired or replaced as directed.

Grades/Assignments in this class

Assessment Type	**Frequency**	**Points each**	**Semester points**	**% of grade**
Rehearsal Musicianship Grade	Weekly	10	180	~27%
Musicianship Quiz	Weekly	10	180	~27%
Quartet/Section Checks	Every 2-3 weeks	30	180	~27%
Binder / Required Materials Checks	Occasional	5	20	~3%
Midterm Quartet and Self-Eval	1	50	50	~7%
Final Quartet and Self-Eval	1	50	50	~7%

Homework will consist of practicing musicianship skills and repertoire, with skills tested in class.

Total Semester Points (Approximate): 660

*Students who are late to a call-time for a performance will receive a 25-point deduction from their total grade. An unexcused absence from a performance will bring a 75-point deduction.

*All personal and outside conflicts with a performance **must be communicated to me outside of class time at least one month in advance of the performance.** I will treat conflicts on a case-by-case basis. Please keep in mind that Sarton Singers is both an academic class and a varsity-level extracurricular. Your classmates count on your commitment and participation.

Concert Attire

- Men: black button up, black dress pants, black socks and dress shoes, vest (https://sepapparel.com/vangard-satin-vest-men-concert-choir.html) and tie (https://sepapparel.com/vangard-long-tie-choir.html) in royal blue
- Women: dress (https://sepapparel.com/ford-dress-ladies-concert-choir.html) in royal blue, black dress shoes (flats preferred)

Rubrics for Success in this Class

Rehearsal Musicianship Grade (weekly)

Score	Level	Description
10	Excellent	• Consistently prepared and fully engaged. Ready at the bell. Has binder, music, and required materials. • Follows the score when another section is rehearsing; marks music; listens actively; responds immediately to directions and transitions. • Requires no reminders about talking or focus. • Mass participation is reverent and engaged.
9	Proficient	• Prepared and engaged throughout nearly all rehearsals. • Sings consistently, follows the score, listens appropriately, and responds to instruction. • May have an occasional minor lapse in attention, but corrects it independently or immediately. • Mass participation is reverent and engaged.
8	Good	• Usually prepared and participating, but focus or participation is somewhat inconsistent. • Needs several reminders in a week to stop talking, follow the score, sing, mark music, or stay engaged while another section rehearses. • May have minor lapses in attention or reverence during Mass
7	Developing	• Participation is noticeably inconsistent. • Needs repeated reminders about talking, attention, singing, score-following, materials, or transitions. • Needs reminder(s) during Mass about attention or reverence
6 and below	Needs Improvement	• Frequently disengaged or unprepared. • Often talks while others rehearse, does not consistently sing or follow the score, misses directions, or lacks needed music/materials. Requires frequent redirection. • Behavior during Mass is irreverent.

Please note: Students in the choir for Mass are expected to participate reverently at all times.

- Absolutely no talking while the choir is seated or participating in Mass.
- Each student should have their binder (if necessary) and their own Mass hymnal
- Students who do not meet Mass expectations will not receive a 9 or 10 for Rehearsal Musicianship and will receive further disciplinary consequences.

Quartet / Section Performance Rubric

Score: ____ / 10 × 3 = ____ / 30

Score	Level	Description
10	Excellent	• **Pitch & Rhythm:** Notes, rhythms, entrances, and releases are consistently accurate; any minor error is immediately recovered. • **Independence & Preparation:** Clearly knows the part and maintains it confidently without relying on stronger singers, piano, or director assistance. • **Individual Musicianship:** Demonstrates excellent tone, diction, dynamics, phrasing, breath, and attention to score markings; listens and adjusts appropriately within the ensemble.
9	Proficient	• **Pitch & Rhythm:** Very accurate overall, with only minor pitch, rhythm, entrance, or release errors. • **Independence & Preparation:** Clearly prepared and generally independent; may show a brief moment of hesitation but recovers without assistance • **Individual Musicianship:** Consistently demonstrates good tone, diction, phrasing, dynamics, and ensemble awareness, with only minor refinements needed.
8	Good	• **Pitch & Rhythm:** Mostly accurate, but several noticeable errors or moments of hesitation occur. • **Independence & Preparation:** Generally knows the part but occasionally depends on nearby singers or becomes uncertain when other voice parts are prominent. • **Individual Musicianship:** Demonstrates appropriate tone, diction, and musical expression, but these are not yet consistent throughout the passage.
7	Developing	• **Pitch & Rhythm:** Repeated pitch, rhythm, entrance, or release errors occur, although substantial portions of the passage are correct. • **Independence & Preparation:** Preparation is incomplete; student sometimes loses the part, follows stronger singers, or needs prompting to continue. • **Individual Musicianship:** Some attention to tone, diction, dynamics, and phrasing is evident, but the primary focus remains simply getting through the notes.

6	Needs Improvement	• **Pitch & Rhythm:** Frequent errors significantly affect the accuracy and continuity of the performance. • **Independence & Preparation:** Student demonstrates only partial knowledge of the part and frequently depends on other singers, piano, or teacher assistance. • **Individual Musicianship:** Limited evidence of applying rehearsed expectations for tone, diction, dynamics, phrasing, entrances, releases, or other score markings.
5	Poor / Insufficient Preparation	• **Pitch & Rhythm:** Music is substantially unlearned; frequent errors prevent a secure performance. • **Independence & Preparation:** Student cannot reliably maintain the assigned part and shows inadequate preparation. • **Individual Musicianship:** Little evidence that rehearsal instruction or musical markings have been prepared or applied.

Self-Assessment Directions

Following your Quartet Performance, score yourself using the rubric above and then write a thoughtful paragraph (around 7-10 sentences) evaluating your performance.

My self-score: _____ / 10

In your paragraph, **you must mention strengths, difficulties/weaknesses, connection to challenge(s) in other repertoire, and plan for improvements.** You may consider the questions below (but you do not need to respond to them in order or to all of them).

1. What did you do particularly well? Identify at least one specific strength in your performance.

2. What was the most difficult part of the performance for you? Be specific about the musical skill, passage, or problem.

3. Why do you think that part was difficult? Consider pitch/rhythm accuracy, independence, preparation, or individual musicianship.

4. Is this a challenge you have noticed elsewhere in our repertoire or rehearsals? If so, explain.

5. What do you most need to improve before the next performance assessment?

6. What specific action will you take to improve it? Describe how you will practice or approach rehearsal differently.

7. Why did you give yourself the score above? Use evidence from your performance and the Quartet Rubric.

Self-Assessment Paragraph Rubric (10 pts)

Area	**2 points**	**1 point**
Accurate Self-Evaluation	Self-score is thoughtful, realistic, and supported by the performance and Quartet Rubric.	Self-score shows noticeable over- or underestimation.
Identification of Strengths	Identifies a specific, accurate musical strength and explains it with evidence.	Identifies a strength, but explanation is vague or lacks evidence.
Identification of Difficulties	Specifically and accurately identifies a musical difficulty and demonstrates insight into why it occurred.	Identifies a difficulty, but explanation is vague or superficial.
Musical Insight & Connection	Connects the performance to broader skills, rehearsal experiences, or challenges elsewhere in the repertoire.	Makes a limited or general connection.
Improvement Plan	Gives a specific, realistic strategy for improving before the next assessment.	Identifies what needs improvement but gives a vague plan such as “practice more.”