

WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL
INDEPENDENT MUSIC STUDY

Maureen Hatch
mhatch@alpinedistrict.org

Course Description:

Independent music study is a self-directed class where each student will develop a curriculum pertaining to their musical interests through specific goals and refining the art of musical practice. Students who are enrolled in the class should be enrolled in a WHS music ensemble and/or be studying with a private teacher.

Course Objective:

Students will develop the art of meaningful musical practice as it applies to their specific musical interest.

REQUIREMENTS:

Journals

Students will be given a packet that will serve as their practice journal. Each student will develop a curriculum with specific long and short-term goals and write daily journal entries about what and how they are practicing during their class time. Journals will be turned in to the instructor at the end of each week.

If a student is absent when they turn are supposed to turn in their journal, he or she must turn it in the next time they have the class to receive full-credit. Students who do not turn in their journals on time will be docked one point for each week it is late. Since this is a student directed curriculum, students **MUST** be responsible for turning in their work on time.

For your first assignment, please refer to the online readings on the Independent Music Study page on the choral website www.westlakechoirs.org. Your first journal entry should be a detailed (at least one full page) reflection of your thoughts on these readings and how you will structure your practice time.

Journal entries are expected to include your goal for your practice session, your detailed practice, (not simply a list of things you will do) and a thoughtful reflection of your practice time. Your entry should use the space provided. Please see sample journal entry to see the expected structure and length of journal entries.

In order to ensure the journals from which you receive your grade are being filled out in an timely and honest manner, there may be “pop” quizzes during the term where the instructor will come unannounced to your practice room during your practice time and see that your journal is up-to-date and being filled out each day. Each “pop” quiz will be worth 10 points. You will receive a zero if you do not have your journal with you or if it is not up-to-date. These points cannot be made-up. You should have no problem if you’re doing what the class requires you to do. ☺

Repertoire

Students may work with their private teachers to select appropriate level literature for their course of study. It is suggested that vocalists select 6 pieces/semester and instrumentalists select 4-6 pieces/semester. These need to be solo pieces in addition to what you choose to practice for your ensemble. Repertoire should cover different musical periods and encompass a variety of styles.

Video Performance

Each student will video one of the pieces they are working on during the first term of the semester—a due date will be included in the journal. Students will analyze their video and submit both (video and analysis) as part of their journal during the first term.

Recital

Each student will perform during the 2nd term of the semester in a public recital. Students will receive those performance dates at least 3 weeks in advance. The recital will be worth 40 points.

Class Procedures:

There are roll sheets on the choir room office. Students will need to sign-in each class for roll before the tardy bell rings. Students are expected to mark their attendance with a “T” if they haven’t signed in by the bell. Students will be assigned a specific practice room and it is expected that the student remains in the practice room the entire period work on their music or journals the entire class time. This is not the time to do homework for other classes. You will be marked with an unexcused absence if the instructor can’t find you in the practice room unless you have received permission to be somewhere else. If you are a pianist, you will need to pay a class fee of \$25 (like an instrument rental) for the use and maintenance of the school pianos.

Grading

Each journal entry will be worth 5 points. If you are absent the day you have independent music study, you are expected to make-up that practice time at home or in one of the practice rooms and show the make-up with a journal entry. Make-up is due by the time you turn in your journal on Fridays. Remember if you do not turn in your journals on time, you will be docked one point for each class period it is late.

Attendance

The purpose of this class is to have time in your school schedule for practicing. Each student will earn 2 points/class period, which will be weighted as 10% of the grade. If you are absent, these points CANNOT be made-up. This will have no effect on students who only miss a few times a term. However, if a student has excessive absences in this class, the highest grade he/she will be able to earn will be an A-, provided that all other required work is complete.

Attendance: 2 points/class (Weighted 10% of grade and can’t be made-up if absent)

Individual curriculum plan through journal entries (5 points each)

Due the end of each week

End of semester recital (40 points)

Grade Scale:

94%-100% A

90%-93% A-

87%-89% B+

84%-86% B

80%-83% B-

77%-79% C+

74%-76% C

70%-73% Cetc.

Sample Practice Plan

Short-Term Goal:

I would like to play all three forms of the minor scale in for C minor, G minor, and F minor 2 octaves (eighth notes) with the metronome at quarter note=60.

(Or what you are doing for technique—be specific with what scales you are doing, or what exercises you are working on in your technique book—and what you tempo is.)

Sample Practice Plan: (For a full class period—remember Mondays will be shorter)

5 min—check-in, set-up

10 min—technique work to warm-up (But give me specifics. If you are a vocalist, what specific vocal exercises are you using—how high and how low are you going? Instrumentalists—what breath exercises do you do, what scales do you play, how fast are you practicing them, etc)

20 min—short-term goal practice. (In this case—minor scales in all three forms)

15 min—Piece #1—list piece and which section you may be working on.

10 min—Piece #2—same as above

10 min—Piece #3—same as above

15 min—Journal reflection-- did you accomplish your short-term goal? How did the other things go? Be specific in your reflection, rather than that was hard, good, long, etc. Why was it hard, good, long, etc. Just be detailed and specific.