

**Course Description for String Orchestra *Honors* (Music 2030)
H period (Monday - Friday)**

Mr. Joseph Higgins, Director

2018-2019 Academic Year

String Orchestra, Honors is a performance course open to students who have had significant experience playing an orchestral string instrument. Classroom instruction will include rehearsal of concert literature and advanced performance practice. Specific attention will be paid to characteristic sound concept, stylistic interpretation, right-hand technique, and rhythm and pitch discipline (including singing). Classroom time might also include listening to and viewing of concert repertoire and relative works.

The String Orchestra, Honors performs at the school's annual Christmas and Spring Concerts. Exemplary attendance, punctuality and participation in all performances are mandatory. Grades will be primarily determined on participation as well as musical growth and performance. Students are required to enroll in the music lesson program, if their schedule allows. Being an honors course, the goals that students set for themselves should be quite high.

Time Requirements:

Exemplary attendance and punctuality are necessary for all rehearsals during H period, as well as after school rehearsals in the weeks prior to the Christmas and Spring Concerts. This ensures collegial and optimum rehearsal time in a relaxed and productive atmosphere. This year's performance schedule is as follows:

***Christmas Concert I, Friday, December 7th, 2018, 7:45 P.M.**

Students should arrive no later than 6:30 P.M.

****Students are required to attend after school rehearsals the week preceding the concert***
*** Dress Rehearsal schedules will be posted as we approach the performance****

***Spring Concert I, Friday, May 3rd, 2019, 7:45 P.M.**

Students should arrive no later than 6:45 P.M.

****Students are required to attend after school rehearsals the week preceding the concert***
*** Dress Rehearsal schedules will be posted as we approach the performance****

Please note this information in all your calendars at the beginning of the school year to avoid any confusion or conflicts.

Any conflicts must be reported to Mr. Higgins IMMEDIATELY so that they can be addressed in a mutually respectful manner!!!

Basic Environment:

All members of the Honors Orchestra Community must be young musicians of integrity who practice respect of the following:

- ❑ The composers of the works we perform. This select group of people is immensely talented.
- ❑ The conductor or guest clinicians. We have worked very hard to attain a level to direct your ensemble musically, educationally and logistically.
- ❑ Each other. Be sure to treat the rest of the Orchestra community just as you would wish to be treated.
- ❑ Yourself. Respect the fact that each of us will grow as musicians, performers, people and human beings this year.
- ❑ We are a Franciscan Community. Music, perhaps more than other subjects, gives the students aspects of all four Golden Links of Franciscan education; ***Spiritual***, in the performance and enjoyment of the aesthetic of Music, ***Intellectual*** in the preparation and execution of the works we play, ***Social*** in the community approach we take and present, ***Physical***, again in the preparation and execution of our repertoire.

Rehearsals:

Rehearsals must be disciplined, focused and start on time. Acknowledgement of the following rules is critical to ensure a polished performance at the end of each semester:

- ❑ Be on time. If we start late, we accomplish less and usually end in a harried manner for that particular day.
- ❑ Do not speak out of turn. If you have a question, raise your hand.
- ❑ Listen to:
 - ❑ Your conductor or guest clinician.
 - ❑ Each other, both in your questions and comments as well as your playing. We all contribute to helping each other.
 - ❑ Yourself. Be sensitive to how both your questions and your playing contribute to the whole.

Musicianship:

All members must exercise the fundamental tenets of musicianship.

- ❑ Practice parts will be provided to everyone.

- ❑ Each member must practice with both a short and long term goal-oriented approach on a daily basis.
- ❑ An hour a day is strongly urged.
- ❑ Remember it is better to break up your practice time throughout the day.
- ❑ The bulk of a student's practice time should be earlier in the day rather than later, as practicing an instrument is a physical activity.
- ❑ Students should schedule regular practice times.
- ❑ Practicing is a good habit to have!
- ❑ Students should note that the school has individual practice rooms available to them for use during the school day.
- ❑ Daily practice is vital to the student's success.
- ❑ Practicing cannot be accomplished by "cramming."
- ❑ Practicing is equivalent to daily homework in any other class.
- ❑ Each member must bring their own music to each and every rehearsal. Valuable time is wasted if music needs to be retrieved.
 - ❑ Each member must treat their sheet music with respect. Folders or binders are recommended to keep music.
- ❑ Each member must bring a pencil to thoroughly mark parts during rehearsal. These markings can be for your own recollection or comments from the conductor or principal players.
- ❑ No student will ever be expected to unrealistically exceed their current ability, yet each student is expected to reach, if not exceed their potential.

Goals:

- ❑ To further develop a strong work ethic.
- ❑ To further increase our level of technical skill through rehearsal and individual practice.
- ❑ To heighten our level of responsibility and respect (including self-respect, sense of accomplishment and pride) through team-oriented ensemble playing.
- ❑ To reach the highest attainable level of musicianship.
- ❑ To give polished public performances.

- To thoroughly enjoy making music with each other.
- If we achieve these goals, we present an outstanding public representation of both ourselves and of Prep.

Grading Policy:

- Participation (75% of each quarter) will be based on the following:
 - Absence:
 - Please refer to page 16 of the school calendar for school policy on attendance.
 - Each unexcused (cut/skipped class) absence after the first will result in fifteen (15) points being deducted from the *participation* portion of your grade, barring college visits, retreats and extreme or unique circumstances.
 - Students missing an after school rehearsal or concert will be subject to the department policy for these events.
 - Lateness:
 - **ALL LATENESSES WILL BE TREATED EQUALLY.**
 - The first lateness of each quarter will be excused.
 - The second and each subsequent lateness', will result in five (5) points being deducted from your grade.
 - **Three (3) latenesses will equal an unexcused absence and result in the deduction of fifteen points off your quarterly grade.**
 - Cutting:
 - **Automatic fifteen (15) points off the *quarterly* grade for cutting. Two cuts equal an automatic failure.**
 - Extra points will be given for those students who demonstrate a willingness to help on a regular basis, such as setting up and breaking down rehearsals.
- Performance/Concert Grade (25% of each quarter) will be based on the following:
 - The growth of the whole orchestra in terms of its musical level and sense of community in quarters not including concerts (first and third).
 - The overall level of performance and professionalism exhibited at concerts (scheduled for second and fourth quarters).

- ▣ A uniform grade will be given for each student. A higher grade may be given to students distinguishing themselves on a regular basis, all at the discretion of the director.
- The final grade will be an average of the quarterly grades and the Spring Concert Grade (20% each).
- Notification.
 - ▣ Students will be advised verbally of any concerns. If 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 strongly encouraged to see Mr. Higgins if they feel they are having any difficulty in regard to the class. Time will always be made to give extra help or to speak with a student at mutually agreeable times. If students are in jeopardy of failing, they will be notified by Mr. Higgins as well as having an academic deficiency report sent home.

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

Dear Mr. Higgins:

I have read the course description for Strings Orchestra Honors (Music 2030) with my child and understand the requirements and policies for the class, ***including the dates and times of all performances and rehearsals.*** Therefore, I fully understand that there are consequences for missing an after school rehearsal or performance. Further, I understand that this will be fully treated as an honors course. I also understand that my child will be held accountable for all aspects of the St. Francis Preparatory School Honor Code as described in the school calendar.

If I have any questions, I am aware that I can reach you at the school at (718) 423-8810 x255, by e-mail at jhiggins@sfponline.org, 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 both short and long 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
Signature_____

Student
Signature_____

Print Student Name_____

Date _____