

Macatawa Bay Middle School 8th Grade Orchestra Syllabus 2019-2020

Mr. Meyer

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Objectives

In 8th grade orchestra, we strive to master new concepts and improve on ones learned in 7th grade:

- Demonstrating grade-appropriate tone (sound), intonation, rhythm, technique & interpretation
- Develop an improved vibrato motion/sound
- Become more comfortable shifting on your instrument
- Be prepared for transition to high school orchestra
- Playing in the keys of D, G, C, F, B-flat, E-flat, A, and their relative minors

Suggested materials:

-Metronome & tuner: All students should have a metronome and tuner in some form. On the Chromebooks, you can go to www.get-tuned.com for a tuner (pitch generator), and www.metronomeonline.com or just type “metronome” into Google for free online metronomes. For cell phones, I highly recommend these free options: Metronome Beats (Android) or Pro Metronome (Android/iOS), and A-Tuner (Android) or insTuner (iOS). There are a number of apps that cost a small amount of money which are great, also, such as Cleartune and Tonal Energy. If you prefer a physical metronome/tuner, I suggest the Korg TM-50. It is the best overall value, and can be found for less than \$25.

Grading: Grades will be made up of a composite of the following items: Practice Journals (10%), Participation (30%), and Performances/Assessments (60%). **Late work policy:** Assignments will be accepted 1 week late without penalty. After 1 week, the grade will be lowered. After 2 weeks, no late assignments will be accepted, barring other circumstances.

Participation: I have three main rules for the classroom-

- 1) Respect everyone & everything (yourself, others, Mr. Meyer, instruments, chairs, stands, etc.).
- 2) No talking while the teacher is talking.
- 3) Always come prepared to class (have your instrument, music, & pencil **every** day!).

Each class period, students have the opportunity to earn 2 points for their participation. Points will either be earned or lost depending on class participation. Students can earn extra credit in their participation grade by playing in Solo & Ensemble, Holland Area Junior Strings, All-State, or by attending other performances. Other things that we do in class, such as listening logs and writing assignments will also be included in this.

Practice Journals: After the first week of class, students will be required to complete a weekly practice journal, with how often they have practice and what they improved on/need to work on. Journals will be checked every Monday & Tuesday. **This is the homework grade for orchestra.** Practicing helps reinforce concepts and skills learned in class, and help individuals and the group progress more quickly. We will cover effective practicing strategies in class, so that students use their practice time wisely.

Calendar (also located on the website as a Google Calendar)

September 27, 2019: Deadline for MSBOA All-State Orchestra Applications (Auditions Oct. 24 & 26)
November 21, 2019: 7th & 8th Grade Orchestra Concert, West Ottawa PAC, 7:30pm
February 14, 2020: Deadline for MSBOA Solo & Ensemble Applications
February 27, 2020: District Orchestra Festival, West Ottawa PAC, Time TBA (7th & 8th Grade only)
April 18, 2020: MSBOA Solo & Ensemble (optional), Northpointe Christian HS, Time TBA
April 27, 2020: All-School Orchestra Night, North HS Gym, 7:00pm
May 20, 2020: Middle School Orchestra Concert, West Ottawa PAC, 7:30pm

Concert Attendance: A concert absence negatively affects the entire ensemble, as the success of the group depends on the combined efforts of all of its members. Concerts are the culmination of many weeks of preparation, and are a reflection of the group, the music department and the school. It is required that every student be in attendance for all scheduled performances. **If you realize there is a conflict with one of the concerts, please let Mr. Meyer know within the first two weeks of school.** Unexcused absences will result in the student receiving a zero for their concert grade. Excused absences include illness or a death in the family. Other absences may be excused on an individual basis after discussion with the director and a principal. **Students who have an excused absence will be given a make-up assignment after verification of their absence with a parent or guardian.** Make-up assignments will be either doing a writing assignment, or performing all of the concert music for Mr. Meyer, depending on the performance. A student's concert grade (100 points per performance) is based on their attendance, punctuality, being in uniform, having all materials, following instructions, and stage etiquette.

Concert Attire: We will order uniform t-shirts that the 8th grade orchestra will design. Cost will be determined when we decide what to order. In addition to the shirts, students will provide their own black pants, black socks and black shoes. Failure to come properly dressed to a concert will result in the lowering of a student's grade. The Music Boosters have a closet of uniform supplies if you cannot afford your own. Please contact me if you have this particular need.

Music: It is the responsibility of the student to properly take care of their music. Music must come to every class, rehearsal, and concert. The school provides music folders and a storage rack for folders. Students will each be provided with their own folder and copies of the music to take home and practice. Students who do not bring their music to class, or lose their music will have their grade lowered.

Playing Tests/Quizzes: Every marking period, students will be required to play selected parts of music we are currently working on in class for their playing test, as well as selected scales. A grading scale/rubric will be provided before the first test. It will be necessary for students to prepare for these outside of class. Rhythms quizzes will be given once per marking period, and vocabulary/background quizzes will be given once per concert. Some playing quizzes may be given on Google Classroom for students to complete at home.

Private Lessons: Private lessons are not required as part of the class grade, but they are very much encouraged. Private lessons are for students all of ability levels. They help students who are behind to catch up, and they help students who are advanced to continue to grow their talent.

Holland Area Youth Orchestras: The Holland Area Youth Orchestras offer two ability-based groups for MS students (Junior Strings and Concert Orchestra). These groups provide students with an additional challenge beyond their school orchestra and offer an opportunity to meet other orchestra students from around Holland. More information can be found here:

<https://www.hollandsymphony.org/education-community/youth-orchestra/>