

**COURSE NAME:** Orchestra  
**COURSE NUMBER:** MUS 131.1/132.1 • MUS 131.2/132.2

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** ORCHESTRA MUS131 (Sem 1), MUS132 (Sem 2)

Orchestra is a two-semester, two-credit course that meets every day and provides students opportunities to study and perform within large and small instrumental ensembles and become lifelong learners of the arts. Orchestra can be taken all four years of high school. Students will participate in a variety of musical and aesthetic experiences through performance of music from a wide variety of styles, genres, cultures, and historical periods. Sectional and chamber rehearsals take place as needed and guest artists are brought in to help teach in their area of expertise for large projects or advanced music. During the year, all students will receive a regular individual lesson.

Orchestra students will perform in a variety of settings for hundreds of people, learn teamwork, develop valuable work habits, exhibit pride in their accomplishments, and make new and lasting friends with other students who have similar interests and talents. The following large ensembles make up the orchestra program throughout the year:

- **Symphony Orchestra**

This ensemble gives advanced students the opportunity to expand the fundamentals of ensemble playing as well as developing an individual's responsibility within the ensemble. The Symphony Orchestra will perform several times during the year including major concerts and festivals scheduled throughout the school year. Winds, brass, and percussion are added to the Symphony Orchestra following Marching Band season. Entrance to this ensemble is per instructor approval by both Director of Orchestras and Director of Bands.

- **Concert Orchestra**

This ensemble gives students of all levels the opportunity to expand the fundamentals of ensemble playing as well as developing an individual's responsibility within the ensemble. The Concert Orchestra will perform several times during the year including major concerts and festivals scheduled throughout the school year. All new and ninth grade orchestra students begin in this ensemble.

Alignment to the 2014 National Core Arts Standards for Music: *Creating, Performing and Responding*.

**PREREQUISITES:** Previous experience is required on violin, viola, cello, double bass, harp, or piano—or by instructor approval. The entry level orchestra to all string students new to Hempstead is **Concert Orchestra** (2<sup>nd</sup> period). Instructor approval is needed for enrollment in **Symphony Orchestra** (1<sup>st</sup> period). Woodwind, brass, and percussion students selected for **Symphony Orchestra** must be enrolled in **Band** (1<sup>st</sup> period). String students auditioning for **Chamber Players Orchestra** must be enrolled in either Orchestra.

**STANDARDS/COURSE EXPECTATIONS:**

The National Core Art Standards guides educators in providing a unified quality arts education for students in Pre-K through high school.

Creating

- Anchor Standard #1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard #2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

- Anchor Standard #3. Refine and complete artistic work.

#### Performing/Presenting/Producing

- Anchor Standard #4. Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation.
- Anchor Standard #5. Develop and refine artistic work for presentation.
- Anchor Standard #6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

#### Responding

- Anchor Standard #7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- Anchor Standard #8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- Anchor Standard #9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

#### Connecting

- Anchor Standard #10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- Anchor Standard #11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

### **ASSESSMENTS:**

Formative assessments include observations of student progress, listening to and watching recordings of student performances, self-assessment, individual and group goal setting, formal and informal conferences/discussions with students, checklists, studies, peer review, and critiques. Summative assessments include pre-tests, post-tests and rubrics that reflect the learning targets of culminating projects such as playing tests and unit tests (quarterly concerts). Assessments occur in rehearsal, performances, and individual lessons.

### **COURSE CONTENT:**

- Left hand technique (intonation, vibrato, pizzicato, shifting, etc.)
- Right hand/bow technique (déteché, louré, staccato, slurs, pizzicato, spiccato, etc.)
- Posture/stage presentation
- Tuning/scales/warm-ups
- Individual daily practice techniques
- Concert etiquette
- Music as a language as well as the language used (usually Italian) to guide the musician
- Musical expression
- Music theory (time and key signatures, tempi, dynamics, etc.), music history, and music appreciation
- Music assessment
- Concert reviews and assessments
- Team-building skills

### **INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES:**

The student will construct knowledge through authentic tasks such as group and individual lessons, string pedagogy, music theory, and music history.

- Students will develop an understanding and appreciation for one of the greatest achievements of man, the orchestra and its repertoire, and will learn to perceive music in an enlightened, discerning way.

- Students will learn to respond to the expressive qualities of music with sensitivity and appreciation—creating memorable performances that will enable them to continue making music, whether as an avocation or a profession, after graduation from high school.
- Students will share those perceptions and responses with others through the vocabulary and activities intrinsic to music.
- Students will demonstrate character through teamwork, selflessness, citizenship, stewardship of the school/community/state, and responsibility.

## **RESOURCES:**

- Technique/Scales Book/Handouts
- Orchestra Warm-ups/Chorales
- Orchestra Repertoire and Sheet Music
- Handouts (music-related articles)
- Canvas
- Websites
- Kepharts/West Music (local), westmusic.com, 563.391.7333
- Grigg's Music, griggsmusic.com, 563.391.9000
- Schultz Strings, schultzstrings.com, 319.895.8484
- Von Mulert Violins (local), vonmulertviolins.com, 224.489.9977

## **GENERAL EXPECTATIONS:**

Students are expected to abide by all Dubuque Community School District attendance and conduct/behavior policies as well as all specific attendance and conduct policies for Hempstead High School (found in the student planner). Show mustang PRIDE by being:

### **Prepared**

- Attend class daily and arrive on time. If arriving late for any reason students must show the teacher a legitimate pass in order to not be counted tardy or even absent. Attendance issues will be addressed through the Assistant Principals' Office (refer to the Hempstead student planner and district policy 5107).
- Be ready to learn and have all materials (pencil, planner, music, instrument and completed assignments). Students in Concert Orchestra (2<sup>nd</sup> period) must also have their laptop on hand daily.
- Demonstrate organization by keeping track of assignments and due dates so that work is completed on time and regular practice occurs outside the classroom rehearsals.
- Demonstrate good hygiene.

### **Responsible**

- Be responsible for your work, your time, your practice/rehearsal space, and the overall condition of the room. If a student chooses to misuse materials/equipment he/she may be asked to replace the item or may be asked to clean the room after school.
- Keep all food/drink in the cafeteria or poolside. Water is permitted if container is capped at all times since water may wreck instruments or damage supplies.
- Student ID's must be worn in orchestra classes as they are required everywhere else in the building.
- Please check to make sure that all electronic devices (cell phones, MP3 players, IPODs, Earbuds, tablets, and other musical devices) are silenced and placed in a backpack, pocket, or left in your locker (out of sight), unless teacher designates that it can be used for instructional purposes. If there is an emergency, please ask the teacher to use the classroom phone. Please inform your parents, guardians, and other people who want to contact you that you are in class and will not be allowed to accept any phone calls/texts on your cell phone during class; they must call the office to contact you. Please note Hempstead's Cellular Phone Policy found in the student planner.
- The Student is responsible for any loss or damage to personal property.

- Treat equipment, instruments, music and supplies with care and adhere to all safety expectations. Ask for permission to use equipment that has not been designated for your use (this includes the piano, percussion, and conductor’s podium and baton). Some items are fine to use—just ask first. Students misusing instruments/equipment may lose the privilege of using classroom instruments/equipment, which may result in a total loss of points for rehearsals. Students may also be referred to the assistant principal for further consequences.

#### **Inclusive**

- Assist others when needed.
- Allow others to speak. Respect presenter.
- Stand UP for others who may stand alone/need support.
- Collaborate with classmates using positive intentions.

#### **Dignified**

- Respect others work, space, and time.
- Help keep the entire classroom clean, safe, and functional for everyone.
- Respect others’ viewpoints and beliefs that may differ from your own. We share this classroom—no harassment or bullying will be tolerated.
- Use appropriate language for the classroom. Avoid words that can be hurtful, threatening, insulting, demeaning or just fowl.
- Comply with teacher requests without arguing.
- Resolve conflicts with maturity.

#### **Empowered**

- Be an active listener during demonstrations, discussions and critiques.
- Do your own work. Be innovative. Be creative. Create with quality.
- Participate in class and give consistent effort.
- Foster a positive environment.
- Ask questions when you need help.
- Focus on the task at hand. Avoid distractions such as completing homework from other classes or excessive socializing.

### **ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS SPECIFIC TO ORCHESTRA:**

Orchestra class is a “hands-on” learning environment with a curriculum that is outcome based. Orchestra classes are “curricular” at Hempstead High School. Students learn by doing—through orchestra class, chamber orchestra, small ensembles, individual lessons, performances, written assessments, and above all, individual practice. *Progress comes only through daily practice and repetition.* Additional musical opportunities are available to students through numerous extracurricular activities. Students must earn a passing grade in all classes, including Wellness Education, to be eligible for participation in extracurricular activities such as Chamber Orchestra or the Musical Pit Orchestra.

Students are required to complete assignments in the following categories in a timely manner (by the due date). Students must complete work in all categories to earn a passing semester grade. (For example, if a student earns satisfactory grades in class participation, tests, and writing assignments, but does not attend any lessons, they will have earned an F for their semester orchestra grade.) Assignments that are not completed on time will be graded as “incomplete” and scored as a zero. For each day the assignment is turned in late, 10% will be deducted from the grade.

In the case of absences, the student is responsible to contact the teacher to discuss arrangements regarding making up an incomplete assignment. This includes the daily participation grades. The student has two school days upon the student’s return to classes to have this discussion with the

teacher. This responsibility is on the student.

### Lessons

Students will schedule and attend a minimum of eight (8) individual lessons per semester—roughly one individual lesson every two weeks. Students will prepare for lessons and show evidence of practice. Depending on the scheduling of the last days of the semester, there will be no lessons on those days.

*Progress comes only through daily practice.*

### Class Participation

Students will actively participate in class, demonstrate positive effort and attitude, have the necessary materials to participate in class (i.e. instrument, music, pencil, etc.), and prepare music by means of individual daily practice. *Progress comes only through daily practice.*

### Writing Assignments

Writing is a part of every-day life. Students will complete minor written assignments in the following areas:

- Personal Goals Form and Assessment – One per semester.
- Concert Review – Attend one teacher-approved performance per semester.  
Submit a concert review for that performance.  
Plagiarism is wrong! Refer to pages 32-33 in the Student Handbook.
- Concert Performance Assessments – Music Performance Assessment form.
- Various Classroom Activities and Surveys.

### Tests

Students will complete tests the following areas:

- Unit/Playing Tests – Students will participate in all performances, demonstrating adequate preparation, positive attitude, and acceptable concert etiquette. Students will have their instrument and music and be in the appropriate concert attire. Students will also participate in individual playing tests.
- Written Quizzes – Music theory, music history, music vocabulary (spelling and definitions).

**Students enrolled in MUS 131/132 are required to participate in all performances of the class.**

### Attendance

The attendance policy of the Dubuque Community School District is very specific and applies to all classes at Hempstead High School. The attendance policy has been revised. Please refer to the Academic Accountability Policy (Policy 5107) and Attendance Procedures which can be found on the website.

Extra rehearsals are very rare but sometimes necessary and may occur after school, in the evening, or on a weekend. Nearly every performance will have a dress rehearsal immediately before the doors open at a performance. Attendance is required! An absence from a performance, apart from bed-ridden illness, must be cleared two (2) weeks in advance by the director. Although, the more advanced notice, the better for everyone.

**Students will attend all performances.** Performances are graded “unit tests” involving material learned in class, much like tests in any other curricular areas. However, music tests are unique in that they are public—parents, classmates, teachers, administrators, and the general public are invited to listen to what the choir, orchestra, or band has learned—and the “grade” a student earns is partially contingent on everyone testing at the same time and doing their very best. Your ensemble is a team. Every member is important to the success of the group. If someone is missing, the quality of the ensemble is diminished. Parents and the Dubuque community in general often measure an ensemble’s success by public performances. Please, look at the Music Department Calendar and mark the concert dates for the coming year on a calendar at home and in your student school planner. Students are responsible to make their parents aware of the concert schedule at the beginning of the year.

### Individual Practice

While the orchestra rehearses on a daily basis, this does not replace individual practice—the homework of the orchestra. In order to accurately and expressively perform high school-level literature, all students must take personal responsibility and ownership of their musical development—in a word, **practice**. Practicing is the process of acquiring new skills and making them into good habits or improving skills you already possess.

While there is no graded requirement for practice, individual practice does indirectly affect a student’s grade in other areas of orchestra. It is suggested that students practice a **minimum of 150 minutes per week**. Practicing once a week is not productive enough. Lastly, practice for progress.

### **BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS SPECIFIC TO ORCHESTRA:**

Expectations and guidelines for personal conduct are divided into four areas—performance, rehearsal, general conduct, and physical environment. Students who choose not to act in accordance with these expectations may be subject to the following progressive course of action: (1) lowered daily participation grade, (2) an individual conference with the teacher, (3) parental notification of the situation, (4) referral to the Assistant Principal Office, (5) written behavior plan through the Assistant Principal Office, (6) removal from the course at the discretion of the teacher and the Assistant Principal Office.

#### Performance Guidelines

Students will...

- positively represent their ensemble, school, and community at all times.
- strive for excellence in performance — master all aspects of the music.
- work to master the craft so the creation of art is possible.
- listen to and interact with other students and the teacher.

#### Rehearsal Guidelines

Students will...

- enter each rehearsal with a positive attitude, work ethic, and positive personal and ensemble expectations. Be ready to work (and have fun), be on time, be on task, be focused, and be prepared.
- listen to instructions.
- use class time for rehearsal and not as a study hall for homework.

- be focused and attentive.
- demonstrate proper playing position and/or posture.
- prepare music to the best of their ability.
- care about and take pride in their personal playing and the ensemble’s playing.
- complete and turn in assignments on time.
- always be prepared with instruments, music, and pencils.

Personal Conduct Guidelines

Students will...

- demonstrate a positive attitude and be empathetic to each other.
- be responsible and respectful to each other, to teachers, to school property (instruments, music, uniforms), and facilities.
- set high expectations for themselves and strive for musical excellence.
- be present and punctual for lessons, rehearsals, and performances.
- be respectful at lessons, rehearsals, and performances.
- give selflessly to the ensemble by doing things that need to be done without being asked.
- demonstrate pride in their accomplishments achieved through hard work and dedication.

Physical Environment Guidelines

Students will...

- keep the classroom, practice rooms, and instrument/uniform storage rooms neat, orderly, and free of trash. It is very difficult to learn and grow artistically in a physical environment that is disorganized and dirty.
- properly care for their uniforms, instruments, and music.
- keep instrument-storage cubicles free of anything but their instruments.
- keep music and folders in the assigned location.
- have no food or drink, other than water, in the music area at any time unless otherwise instructed by the teacher.

**GRADING PLAN:** A letter grade and citizenship grade is earned each semester. Student grades are entered online in a “running” grade book and are password accessible to parents via the Internet. The following district-wide grading scale is used:

A	93–100%	C	73–76%
A–	90–92%	C–	70–72%
B+	87–89%	D+	67–69%
B	83–86%	D	63–66%
B–	80–82%	D–	60–62%
C+	77–79%	F	0–59%

Letter Grade

Student letter grades are based on components in two areas:

- *Musical Understanding and Growth*

This area is a gauge of mastery of the musical skills that are taught in class, individual lessons, and out-of-class assignments. These skills will be assessed through written work (tests, writing assignments, and homework), playing work (lessons, playing tests,

performances, etc.), and oral work done in class. Through individual lessons and practice, musical development will always be noticeable regardless of a student's level of experience at the beginning of the year. *Progress comes only through daily practice.*

- *Effectiveness as an Orchestra Member*

This area evaluates a student's contribution as a team member in both musical and nonmusical areas. Orchestra class is dissimilar from most other classes in this area. Regardless of how well each student understands the material presented in class or how well a student plays, effectiveness (to the ensemble) diminishes if s/he is not present, does not have the materials needed, or chooses not to actively participate. Contributing positively in a group setting is an important component of orchestra class.

Letter grades will be determined using the above criteria in these weighted categories:

- Individual Lessons Practice/preparation and presentation (16%)
- Daily Participation/Materials Practice/preparation and participation (24%)
- Writing Assignments Self-Assessments/Concert report (5%)
- Outside Rehearsals \*Warm-up Dress Rehearsals and Sectionals (5%)
- Tests Unit Performances/Performance Assessments (40%)  
Written or Playing tests/quizzes (10%)

Participation in all categories is required for a passing grade. Assignments not completed on time will be noted as "incomplete."

\*This category is subject to fluctuate at the teacher's discretion. For example, if extra rehearsals are needed outside of school such as coached sectionals, this category percentage may increase resulting in an adjustment of the other categories' percentages.

#### Citizenship Grade

Student cooperation, responsibility, leadership, concern for others, helpfulness, and overall attitude are reflected in this grade.

#### **COMMUNICATION:**

Teacher: Dr. Kevin Price-Brenner  
Phone: (563) 552-5294  
Email: [kpricebrenner@dbqschools.org](mailto:kpricebrenner@dbqschools.org)  
Website: (under construction)

Dr. Price-Brenner reserves the right to make adjustments to the syllabus as needed throughout a given semester.