



August, 2019

Dear Redwood Band Students and Families,

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year! We hope you all had a great summer and are ready to begin another great year of music.

Class time is very valuable, and we want to make sure that every minute of it is maximized. Please take the time to read over the attached syllabus together and make sure you understand everything that is covered. You are responsible for all expectations outlined in the following pages. Our ultimate goal for class is a comprehensive education in music with my objectives being engaging curricula and relevant material. The difference between a good musical group and a **great** musical group is directly related to the acceptance and responsibility by both the student/families and the director. The rules and procedures that will be explained in the following pages are ones we feel will best aid each student in attaining our goals of musical knowledge and performance excellence as an ensemble.

Be sure to bookmark our Redwood music website, redwoodmusic.us with even more handouts, view the most up-to-date calendar, and download specific event information throughout the year. Also be sure to check out the Saratoga Music Boosters (SMB) at saratogamusicboosters.org to stay informed on the recent happenings and great things going on with music in Saratoga, download even more event handouts, keep up on exciting music news and view our media galleries!

We realize that the beginning of the school year is always swamped down with papers. Please be sure to check the following list of items that you should have received.

- Contract & Contact Information (final page of this syllabus)
- SMB form (Program Contribution & Membership)
- 2019-2020 Music Calendar
- Contact & Emergency Info Form
- Concert & Symphonic Band members: field trip form for marching band events - **coming soon!**

Please contact us if you have further questions or concerns. We hope you are as eager as we are to continue building a music program, team, and community in which every member will achieve a sense of pride and accomplishment!

Mr. Jow, Mr. Ramirez & Ms. McPherson

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(408) 867-3042 ext. 151



Redwood Middle School

Instrumental Music Syllabus, Bands

Mr. Jow, Mr. Ramirez & Ms. McPherson

Room 51 (Music)

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I. Course Description & Objectives

Students will learn and reinforce learning of:

- Fundamental techniques such as instrument handling/care, fingerings, embouchure, breathing techniques, intonation, and proper posture on respective instruments
- Basic musical notation and rhythmic counting
- General sight-reading strategies

Students may also learn:

- Basic music theory, general musical history, and different musical styles
- Simple improvisation techniques

Band is dominantly a performance-based class and curriculum with most of our ultimate and culminating goals being synergistic and collective collaborations as a group in the form of performances. Students are expected to commit to various performances throughout the school year via concerts and music festivals and competitions. These dates have been given to you via calendar (also available on the SMB website at saratogamusicalboosters.org and our Redwood music website at redwoodmusic.us). Every student is important to our group, and these events are vital to their musical progress!

Band Program:

Woodwind & Brass Sectionals, Percussion Ensembles: An integral element of band for all students. Sectionals are held with professional instrumental specialists, giving students the opportunity to go in depth on tone production, instrument-specific proficiency and unity of sound. Sectionals occur during regular band class time every month. Percussion Ensembles will also rehearse outside of the regular school day to allow percussionists from all classes to rehearse as a full group on percussion ensemble-specific music and skills.

Marching Band: 7th & 8th grade band students perform as the marching band in the Fall. Marching season runs until the beginning of December. Marching practices occur during A Period approximately twice a week during the season.

(Supplemental) **Jazz Band:** A supplemental audition-only group that rehearses Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:30-5:30. Refer to the Jazz Band flier for more information.

II. Materials

All:

- A black 1-inch 3-ring binder – organized as instructed with method books, name on the front cover
- Plastic pages (all music should be secured in plastic pages no later than the day after it is handed out)
- Pencil pouch to put in binder
- Pencils
- Name and phone number on your instrument case (luggage tags and unique identifiers recommended)
- Your instrument with accessories (listed below)

Flutes:

- Cleaning/tuning rod
- Cleaning cloth

Clarinet/Sax:

- Swab
- Cork grease
- Mouthpiece brush
- Size 2 ½ or higher Van Doren traditional reeds & case(s) – have at least 3 reeds in rotation at all times!
 - No plastic/fiber reeds!
 - Reeds should be replaced approximately every 3-4 weeks – their playability and tone production is significantly affected and handicapped after this amount of time
 - Reeds that are chipped, cracked, or warped (when the flat side is no longer flat) should be thrown out and replaced immediately

Brass:

- Valve/slide/rotor oil (whichever is appropriate for your instrument)
- Tuning slide grease
- Spit rag (blue)
- Mouthpiece brush
- Trombones: spray bottle

Percussion:

- Stick bag
- At least one pair of snare drum sticks (Vic Firth SD1 or SD2)
- FOR HOME: A bell/pad practice set. Vic Firth has several sets that you may consider: V8705, V8806, and V6705 (V6705 features a snare drum in addition to the practice pad and bell set)

III. Musical Instrument Care & Maintenance

Instruments **must** be in good repair. Playing on a damaged or ailing instrument is like writing with a pen that's running out of ink - it prevents you from learning! Make sure to take your instrument in for checkups and repair even the smallest noticeable problems as soon as possible. *Instruments not in perfect working order yields frustration and bad habits!*

All mouthpieces should be washed and cleaned weekly. Instruments should be kept oiled/polished and washed (brass) regularly. See below for more specifics on the care of your particular instrument.

Flutes:

- Clean the head joint frequently
- Wipe and swab out the rest of the flute with the cleaning rod covered with an absorbent rag after every playing session
- Do not place heavy cloths or any other item in the flute case as it might bend the keys

Clarinet/Sax:

- Take the reed off the mouthpiece and dry off with a small cloth after each use; store reeds in appropriate cases, NEVER on the mouthpiece!
- Grease the cork(s) 2 to 3 times a week, as it dries out
- Swab out the instrument after every playing session and (saxes) wipe down the bottom area of the neck as well as the inside of the top of the body

Brass:

- Valves and slides must be kept clean, oiled and lubricated regularly
- Get a brush and scrub out the mouthpiece after you practice at home; use hot, soapy water
- The entire brass instrument should be cleaned thoroughly at least once a month (**make sure you know what you're doing before you start** - see a teacher for more information)

Note: All students are expected to take their instruments/stick bags home (or have another instrument stored at home) to practice and maintain daily. ***It is the student's responsibility to pick up his or her instrument from the music room after school.*** This means no friends or other adults may do this for them at any time during the day (sorry, parents and friends!). This ensures safety of both equipment and school campus.

IV. Standard Performance Attire & Care

- Concert & Symphonic Bands
 - Redwood Band Black Concert Polo
 - Black dress slacks (*not* black jeans, yoga/stretch pants or athletic warmups, etc.)
 - Black dress belt (if your pants have belt loops)
 - Solid-black dress socks (*not* sports or crew socks)
 - Black dress shoes (*not* sneakers or sports shoes)
- Griffin Band
 - Plain white collar shirt or blouse (polo shirts are okay; no more than a small logo)
 - Black dress slacks (*not* black jeans, yoga/stretch pants or athletic warmups, etc.)
 - Black dress belt (if your pants have belt loops)
 - Solid-black dress socks (*not* sports or crew socks)
 - Black dress shoes (*not* sneakers or sports shoes)
- Marching Band
 - Redwood band uniform (jacket & bibber pants)
 - All-black socks
 - Marching shoes
 - Shakos

- Uniform Care

- Concert attire is expected to be clean and pressed for every performance
- Marching uniforms are to be stored at home and is expected to be hung up correctly on the provided hanger in the provided garment bag
- If necessary, marching jackets/pants will be cleaned or altered by a professional – bring the uniform in for these tasks; do NOT do this on your own
- Students are responsible for keeping their uniforms and attire clean and in excellent condition throughout the year

V. Classroom Rules & Expectations

1. WORK HARD

- a. “The more you give, the more you get. The more you get, the more you have to give.”
- b. “We don’t succeed unless **you** succeed.”
- c. “Don’t quit. Don’t stop. Don’t give up until it’s perfect.”

2. BE SAFE

- a. Only music students allowed in the music room
- b. All students must have their name on their instrument case (luggage tags are ideal)
- c. Play and handle only your instrument; Play your instrument only when instructed
- d. After rehearsal, carefully swab or empty the water out of your instrument, pack it into its case, and neatly return it to its proper place; Folders and music are to be stored in student lockers

3. SHOW RESPECT – give and receive at all times

- a. Support and encouragement of one’s peers is vital to building a unified and cohesive team. Put-downs, insults, and any other kind of harassment will not be tolerated
- b. Food, drinks, gum, candy, cell phones, video games, hats, or any other items which inhibit one’s attention or eyesight are not allowed at your seat at any time
- c. Remain in your seat or the room unless you are given permission to get up from the instructor
- d. All music students will be directly responsible for keeping the music building clean
- e. No one will be allowed in the director’s office without permission
- f. No disruptive behavior will be tolerated at any time
- g. When the conductor is at the front of the room, all talking should stop
- h. Raise your hand when you would like to speak; speak only when called upon
- i. No tapping on percussion instruments, “popping” keys and valves, etc. during rehearsal
- j. Stay seated until dismissed by the teacher, not the bell

4. BE ON TIME AND PREPARED TO REHEARSE

- a. Instrument maintenance should be handled outside of rehearsal – this includes the cleaning of mouthpieces, oiling of valves, etc.
- b. Students are expected to sharpen pencils outside of class time
- c. Students should bring extra tissues to their seat if they anticipate that they will need it
- d. All music and materials for class must be kept organized in your binder
- e. Daily preparedness includes having all required materials and your parts practiced as assigned
- f. Do not play after the bell rings until you are instructed to do so; Be ready to play at the bell
- g. “To be early is to be on time, to be on time is to be late...”
- h. Being on time for class means that a student is in his/her seat, instrument fully assembled (including reeds), warmed up for at least a couple minutes before class, with binder/music/pencil on the stand or under his/her chair
- i. Proper playing, posture and rehearsal technique is expected at all times
- j. Default rehearsal status is rest position
- k. “You audition every day.”

VI. Classroom Management

- In order to maintain the most effective environment for learning and synergy for the group, one or more of the following comprehensive steps will be taken in the event of unacceptable behavior in violation of **Classroom Rules & Expectations**, depending on the frequency and/or seriousness of the infraction:
 - Level 1A: Behavior is noted, student is warned (conference with teacher), and Rehearsal Contribution grade is lowered
 - Level 1B: Student puts instrument away and sits out of rehearsal
 - Level 2: Parent(s) contacted and/or lunchtime or after-school detention
 - Level 3: Student is referred to the office/principal
 - Level 4: Student may be removed from the music program at the discretion of the director and administration
- You are fully responsible for your own actions!

VII. Teacher's Oath:

- *I will not allow you to do anything that is not in your best interest or in the best interest of the class.*
- *I will not tolerate any behavior or distractions that prevent me from teaching.*
- *I will trust you until you give me reason to do otherwise.*
- *I will respect you and work with you to solve problems.*
- *I will work with you to meet learning goals.*

VIII. Performance & Public Visibility Expectations

- Performances are the equivalent of midterms or final exams!
- Attendance to all rehearsals and scheduled performances; if you have prior commitments and conflicts you must sort them out with your teacher **at least one month before the performance**. It is the responsibility of the student and families to review their group's music calendar, mark down performance dates, and anticipate any potential conflicts within the stated time frame.
- Conflicts must be excused by the director via a **Performance Excusal Request** form (included in this packet). Failure to do so, or failing to be present at a performance without excusal may result in the lowering of a student's performance grade. It is the responsibility of students and their families to check their calendars for conflicts. Fliers will be sent home with students one or two weeks before a performance to remind families as each event approaches. All other special concerns or conflicts (i.e. sudden illness, death in the family, etc.) should be discussed with your teacher ASAP.
- Appropriate concert attire at every performance event (unless specified otherwise).
- A commitment to good citizenship and appropriately representing your community, your school, and yourselves at every event.

IX. Evaluation, Assessment & Grading

Grading for music will be determined through three main categories: Participation, Progress and Performance.

Rehearsal Contribution (in the classroom): 30%

Students are expected to be on time for class, seated and prepared to work when the bell rings. Please be sure to have the following ready/completed at this time:

- all daily materials (see above)
- during class, observations will be made about proper playing techniques on your instruments including posture, hand positions, efforts to demonstrate proper technique, and overall behavior
- students are expected to be attentive and respectful of the teacher and other students when called upon; the unique quality of instrumental music is that the goals of the class are group-oriented in making a collective sound and performance through synergy; consequently, distracting side-discussion and other activity is detrimental to the learning progress and ultimate goals of the class
- students' grades will be lowered for every noted violation of the **Classroom Rules & Expectations** and other Presence category expectations
- most of all, *have a good attitude!* – we will get much more done when we are working hard and having fun!

Your grade for this section will be determined by how many points you have at the end of each grading period. All students will receive 50 points per week. Five (5) points will be deducted from this total for every noted violation of the **Classroom Rules & Expectations** and other Presence category expectations such as (but not limited to):

- disturbing rehearsal
- failure to bring materials to rehearsal
- not ready to play within allowable time limit
- tardy to class
- leaving instrument out after rehearsal (percussion: leaving instruments uncovered, not putting away toys, mallets, beaters, etc.)
- leaving music on music stand
- playing an unauthorized instrument
- playing an instrument with poor technique or posture
- playing an instrument when not instructed to do so
- having no identification on your instrument case
- leaving your instrument and/or music at school without prior permission

Progress: 50%

In music, daily practice is the same as the expectation that you would do your daily homework for any other class. Students are expected to practice at least 4 or 5 days a week and demonstrate sufficient progress throughout the semester (head to our website and find the "Practice" page for some pointers and reference your **Practice = Music** handout). In-class and at-home playing assignments of both musical material from class music literature, material covered on practice tasks, and scales may be held from time to time throughout the year. Elements that may be evaluated include:

- tone quality & intonation
- breath & air control
- posture and body position
- general music reading
- entrance & attack
- rhythm & articulation
- dynamics
- phrasing & style
- pitch accuracy (intonation)
- note accuracy
- overall progress

Students may be asked to record themselves performing a playing task at home and submit it electronically.

This can be done with a computer, a cell phone or any other functional digital recording device. It needn't be a "professional-quality" recording. If you need help, see your teacher for help.

Remember, you do not have to be perfect to receive a great grade! What we are after is *improvement*, so do your best!

Student's progress grades may also be comprised of written assignments and quizzes relating to musical terms, symbols, concepts, and intellectual growth and analysis relating to music and the arts. These will be announced with adequate time to prepare for and/or complete. Point values on these will vary.

There are a couple items that, if used consistently and properly, will greatly contribute to the success of their practice. Metronomes and tuners are both necessary to develop accuracy in any level of a musician's playing. Some companies combine both into one device (such as Korg's tuner metronome).

SmartMusic Learning Software

Your student may also work with SmartMusic learning and assessment software. This software can evaluate accuracy and pitches in an unbiased home atmosphere, and provides immediate feedback to your students. We will introduce more information on this software at a later time.

Performances - OUR FINAL EXAMS: 20%

Each and every student is essential to our success as an ensemble. A large percentage of time spent in any musical performing class is the preparation of concert music. The performance, therefore, becomes the final test of the group's ability to perform the prepared material. All performances have been listed at the beginning of the school year, giving more than sufficient time for each family to schedule these dates and ensure commitment on these performance days. Students are expected to be present for all performances unless discussed at least one month before the event or in the event of a special circumstance (review more information on performance excusals above). Unexcused absences will result in a potentially failing grade for these assignments.

Each performance will be worth 50 points. At the director's discretion, points may be deducted for being late to a report time, uniform infractions, and behavior throughout the entire duration of an event.

Grade Inquiry:

Students are expected to be their own advocates and responsible for discussing initial questions about grades with the teacher directly. Students should ask the teacher to schedule a meeting time. This may be done any time outside of class, over email or phone. Actual grading issues will generally not be discussed immediately before or after a class. Further policies on grading inquiries in the Student Handbook will be followed.

X. Other Encouragements, Recommendations & Considerations

- Students are highly encouraged to take private lessons on their respective instruments. Individual playing is equally important to the progress of a music student, and private music teachers can help facilitate refined and advanced improvements. Private instruction keeps students accountable and builds confidence in their own playing. With the right teacher, private lessons are absolutely worth the investment!
- 7th and 8th grade students are encouraged to participate in our local CMEA Solo & Ensemble Festival in March. 6th graders taking private lessons may also participate by performing a solo piece. Registration forms will be handed out soon. Sign up sooner than later – spots go fast! The earlier you register, the more certain you can be guaranteed a spot.
- Students should research and find recordings of famous performers of their respective instruments and concert bands. Having an “ideal” sound of instrument and ensemble in their minds is necessary for effective musical progress.
- Students are always encouraged to attend as many music performances of other school-level as well as professional musical groups as possible. The more we experience, the more musical we become, and the more our critical musical thinking evolves!
- Remaining procedures will also be followed and aligned with school policy. Please consult your Student Handbook for more information.

Please detach and complete this sheet, sign the contract below and return this page by Friday.

Redwood Instrumental Music Contract & Contact Information

We have read and understood the 2019-2020 Redwood Middle School Music Syllabus.
We understand what is expected of each musician and agree with the guidelines as stated.

Student Name: _____ Band Period: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Best Contact Phone Number(s): _____

Parent Email: _____

Date: _____

Thank you, and welcome!!!