

Welcome to Thomas Jefferson High School's orchestra class:

Included in this letter are: general information about our program,
a course syllabus, course grading scale & rubric, assignment rubrics,
weekly schedule, materials list, class expectations,
a bit of information about myself (the director), & concluding thoughts

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Thomas Jefferson High School currently offers band, orchestra, and percussion classes. The 5 Colorado State Standards for music instruction will guide the curriculum of these classes. These standards are as follows:

#1 Perform a varied repertoire of music

#2 Read and notate music

#3 Create music (composition and improvisation)

#4 Listen, analyze, evaluate, and describe music

#5 Relate music to historical and cultural traditions

I have explained the meaning and implications of these standards to the students, in terms of what our goals will be, and will again do so at back-to-school night for the parents. Because these classes are for students of varying proficiency levels, some of the benchmarks for high school instrumental music are unrealistic, but the instruction will still be guided by benchmarks; we will use those set for 1st and 2nd level instrumental music (3rd & 4th where possible) .

COURSE SYLLABUS

The following gives an overview of the course by marking period. These are guidelines, not a rigid agenda. If a technique is not firmly within grasp of most students in a class, it makes no sense to continue adding new techniques for mastery. All players will be learning major and minor scales and working towards use of vibrato and shifting. We will also work on bowing techniques, tone quality, rhythmic and melodic accuracy, use of expressive elements, ensemble balance, following section leaders, and how to follow a conductor. Students will be learning to improvise and compose on a basic level. Music will be put into historical and cultural contexts as well.

**1st- 6 weeks -- elementary show, middle school recruitment,
prep all-state auditions,**

Pep Band (for winds and percussion)

2nd-6 weeks -- small ensemble work and auditions for honor orchestras

3rd-6 weeks -- concert music and honor orchestras

4th-6 weeks -- studio recitals and string jazz/bluegrass exploration

Pep Band (for winds and percussion)

5th-6 weeks -- Mozart Recital/contests and recruiting trip(s)

6th-6 weeks -- concert music (final concert, senior showcase, and graduation)

GRADES

SCALE	COURSE RUBRIC - 6 week marking	COURSE RUBRIC - semester
A = 90% - 100%	Daily practice- 10 points (50 points/week)	There are three marking periods each semester. Each marking period counts as 25 % of the semester mark. The final exam counts as 25% of the semester mark.
B = 80% - 89%	Quizzes- 10 points	
C = 70% - 79%	Homework- 10 points	
D = 60% - 69%	Playing tests- 50 points	
F = 0% - 59%	Notebook checks- 25 points (2 each grading period) Performances (formal)- 100 points (1 each grading period)	

RUBRICS BY TYPES OF ASSIGNMENTS

Daily practice	Quizzes	Homework	Playing tests	Notebooks
materials- 1	posture- 1	manuscript- 3	stage presence- 5	organization- 5
dictation- 1	technique- 2	practice- 7	musicianship- 15	theory- 5
warm-up- 1	rhythm- 2		audience- 5	composition- 5
singing- 1	melody- 2		history- 5	
posture- 2	tone- 2		songs/ performance rubrics- 5	
technique- 2	expression- 1			
musicality- 2				

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Monday	ensemble work
Tuesday	
Friday	
Wednesday	theory and composition, small ensemble & sectional work, full ensemble work, marching (winds and percussion)
Thursday	
(block days)	

MATERIALS LIST

*Music

2-3 sharpened pencils
1 three-ring binder (1")
6 dividers for binder
day planner
instrument
*music
book to read
rosin & extra set of strings (strings)
reeds 3 (woodwinds)
slide/valve oil (brass)
sticks/mallets (percussion)

Each student will be issued sheet music which is to be returned in good condition after the last concert or performance in which the music was used. If music is damaged or lost, the student will need to pay for replacement.

String students will need to buy Essential Elements 2000: Level 2 and Broadway Favorites .

Wind Students will need to buy Essential Elements 2000: Level 2 and Film Favorites.

Percussion Students will need to buy Essential Elements 2000: Level 2 and Film Favorites.

String players should consider Whistler's position pieces and Melodious double stops (optional). Wind players should consider an appropriate level Rubank book (optional).

The required books need to be with the student for each rehearsal.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

"HARMONY" is the expectation of our class environment, both musically and socially. I've also chosen to use this word as an acronym.

H	yggiene	- no drink, food, or gum allowed in band room handle equipment with clean hands
A	ttitude	- be positive try the task assigned regardless of ease or difficulty
R	espect	- be courteous to everyone with whom you come in contact; treat other performers with respect
M	usicality	- play to the best of your ability at all times; practice as if you're performing for an audience
O	bservation	- listen, watch, evaluate (your own playing, as well as that of other performers)
N	otation	- mark music as needed with performance notes in pencil; take dictation and compose; take notes on historical or cultural information; keep dates in your day planner
Y	earning	- keep a "fire in the belly" meaning a desire to learn and excel

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

My bachelor's work was accomplished at University of Northern Colorado. My major instrument was the clarinet. For 4 summers I traveled to University of North Texas to study with Dr. Jill Trinka, and earned my Kodaly certification. I also have earned my first level of Suzuki piano certification and first level of Orff certification. I've been teaching private piano, flute, and clarinet lessons for over 20 years. My first job was teaching instrumental music 5th - 12th grades, as well as high school choir. For 3-1/2 years I taught music at Hamilton Middle School in the late 1980's, and then took time off to stay home with our 3 children (16 years). Over the past 9 years, I have attended violin and cello lessons with my children, and served frequently as their accompanist.

This is my first year at Thomas Jefferson High School, though I did fill in as a long-term sub last year. There is a lot of potential here, and I hope to tap into it. The students already involved in the program are some of the finest - positive, dedicated, and good roll models. I hope to build on those qualities.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Music means so many things to each of us, and though it's difficult to quantify the extent of its impact on our lives, that does not lessen its value or importance. The study of music will enrich your lives, and has the possibility of touching almost any aspect of your lives which you will permit. Due to the breadth and depth of the subject matter, there is no possible way one teacher can teach you all there is to know about music, or even performing on an instrument. To learn more you will need to: **listen to other performers** (recorded and live), **read about music and musicians** (in books, magazines, etc.), **sing your parts** (yes, even as an instrumentalist it's essential to sing. Music comes from within us, not the instruments. If you hear the music coming out your instrument, the instrument is in control. If you hear the music before it comes from the instrument, then you are in control.), and **dance** (yes, I said "dance" - much of the music we hear - classical, folk, jazz, pop, rock-n-roll - was made to accompany dancing. If you don't feel the music, you're not creating music, but rather organized sound.) As with any other subject, you get out of it what you put into it.

I strongly recommend attending live performances, especially those by performers on the instrument you are learning. There are quite a few free concerts around town, you don't necessarily need to pay for the experience of attending live performances. Check out the college campuses and the churches for free concerts. Watch the newspaper for announcements of free concerts. Listen to classical music on FM 88.1 or jazz on FM 89.3. On Saturday and Sunday mornings, between 6 AM and 10 AM National Public Radio AM 1340 and FM 90.1, frequently has interviews with musicians. I highly recommend listening in once in a while.

I also recommend dancing, as frequently as possible, and not just rock-n-roll or country. Try latin dancing, contra dancing, early dancing (dances of the 1700's), ballroom dancing. There are groups that meet once a month or so, and offer lessons for beginners prior to the "official" dance. The lessons are sometimes free, or cost around \$5. I've taken my family to a couple, and we've had a ball. Check on-line or watch the newspapers. Go with a group of friends, take the family, take a date - HAVE FUN!

Private lessons are invaluable, and there are many talented individuals around Denver. If the cost seems to high, ask about sharing a lesson with a friend, or attending every other week, or scheduling a lesson as you can afford. Save up for summer camp. Some are quite expensive, but others are very reasonable. The colleges and university sponsor some camps, and the instruction is frequently by professors. What a great introduction to the feel of a college campus.

I'm glad you're here.

KEEP A SONG IN YOUR HEARTS!

Sincerely, Mrs. Johnson

