

VOCAL RUSH SYLLABUS

Instructor: Ms. Lisa Forkish
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Fall 2014- Spring 2015
M/Tu/Th/F: P 8 and 9 in Rm 316

Course Description:

Vocal Rush is an advanced audition-only a cappella ensemble, made up of 10-16 students grades 9-12. The primary emphasis in this ensemble is on learning contemporary repertoire from the soul, pop, rock and R&B idioms. The style of arrangements will pull from the contemporary a cappella model, in which there are one or two lead vocalists, backed by singers imitating the sound of instruments – including vocal percussion. Arrangements are typically made up of five to eight parts and are learned independently outside of class. Vocal Rush is a repertoire-driven ensemble, learning music at a quick and steady pace.. Vocal Rush performs frequently at the school, as well as out in the community, and students are expected to handle the demands of a highly busy performance schedule. In addition, students in Vocal Rush are expected to be exceptional leaders and role models in the School of Vocal Music, both in artistic merit and personal character. Lastly, students in Vocal Rush are expected to stay on top of their academics, maintaining a 3.0 or higher and demonstrating an exemplary level of professionalism and work ethic across all courses.

Course Objective:

Vocal Rush aims to achieve the highest level of contemporary a cappella singing, through a rigorous rehearsal process, as well as dedication from all students to music preparation outside of class. As Vocal Rush is a high-functioning performance group, participating in many concerts and competitions throughout the year, student leadership, passion, drive, and integrity is crucial to membership. Students will learn repertoire at a fast pace, and will choreograph their own songs, requiring an exceptional amount of focus, dedication and respect for a productive, no-nonsense rehearsal environment. Students must be ambassadors of Vocal Rush and OSA, exemplifying what it means to be a model student and upholding the absolute highest standards of professionalism, poise and humility at the school and within the community at large.

Course Requirements:

In order to be eligible for Vocal Rush, the department's top ensemble, Vocal Music students must succeed in a rigorous audition process and must have demonstrated mastery in the following areas:

- Strong sight-reading ability
- Strong ability as a soloist
- Ability to hold your part solidly on a 5-part arrangement
- Ability to work independently on music, solidifying notes and rhythms on your own
- Ability to self-direct in an ensemble setting
- Stylistic versatility – ability to sing in a variety of musical genres
- Strong stage presence and performance acumen
- Ability to move while singing and learn choreography without struggle
- Knowledge of choral markings and vocabulary
- Mastery of past repertoire
- Strong sense of leadership and accountability
- Active in the department -- auditions for shows, school musical, etc.
- Past Behavior Evaluation: punctuality, regular attendance in rehearsal and performances, focus during rehearsal (no side-talking), preparation for class, consistent positive attitude and strong work ethic, professionalism in and outside classroom, maturity, reliability (no excuses), singing posture and presence in class, accountability, and a strong sense of purpose.

Course Policies:

- **Students are required to maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA to remain in Vocal Rush.** To further clarify, students must receive a passing grade (70% and above) in all courses. Grade checks will take place at the end of every quarter. If a student does not meet this requirement, they will be moved to Chamber Choir.
- Students must adhere to all guidelines outlined in the “Vocal Rush Group Norms.”
- Students will receive 0 out of 15 participation points for each absence. **In order to have the absence excused, a parent/guardian must send an email notification with the reason for student’s absence within one week’s time.**
- Students will have Ms. Forkish’s cell number, but must refrain from calling/texting after 6pm on weekdays and all day on weekends/holidays, unless it is prior to/during a VR gig or trip. Students will have phone numbers of all members and a parent phone tree if there is an urgent matter.
- Students are required to learn half of their music outside of class, as designated by Ms. Forkish. Rep Assignments will be given on a bi-weekly basis with a Rep Check taking place one week after the assigned date. **If a student fails two or more rep checks, they will be placed on probation (see below).**
- All performances, fundraising events, trips, and retreats are mandatory. **If a student has one or more unexcused absences OR three or more excused absences from gigs/trips/other extra-curricular events, it will result in the student being placed on probation.** Ms. Forkish will most often be able to give advance notice for extra-curricular gigs and events, but students must also be flexible and ready to jump in on short notice. It is the expectation that students in Vocal Rush place a very high priority on the group and all of their endeavors.
- Students must demonstrate great to exceptional classroom behavior in Vocal Rush and all other OSA courses. **After three reports of unsatisfactory behavior (including but not limited to: showing disrespect to teacher and/or peers, engaging in cross-talk, not keeping up with coursework or making up exams, skipping class, and leaving class for extended periods of time) a meeting will be held with the student, parent/guardian(s) and faculty and the Behavior Improvement Plan will take effect,** consisting of the following consequences:
 - Probation: the student and parent/guardian(s) sign a Probation Contract outlining the areas in which the student must improve. After 30 days, a meeting will be held to determine whether the student remains in Vocal Rush or is suspended from the group. This decision will be based on their progress according to faculty reports and a Behavior Log that the student must fulfill each week of their probation.
 - Suspension: if the student has not shown improvement at the end of their probation, a Suspension Contract will take effect and the student has 30 additional days to fulfill a Behavior Log, demonstrate progress and prove a desire to be in Vocal Rush. During the suspension period, the student will not attend Vocal Rush class, gigs or other related events. They will spend Vocal Rush class time in the Vocal Music classroom where they must devote time to academic work and/or an independent project assigned by Vocal Faculty.
- **No eating, chewing gum, or use of cell phones,** including calls/texts to or from parents – students should ask to go to the main office to make a call but may not answer their phone under any circumstances in the classroom. Failure to adhere to these rules may result in deducted daily participation points.
- Students will respect and follow all OSA policies outlined in the student handbook. **Students will arrive on time, prepared and focused.**

Course Grading Criteria:

- **Attendance and Participation (15 points per day)**
 - 5 points off for each tardy
 - 5 points off if student has no binder/music
 - 5-10 points off for unsatisfactory classroom behavior

Note: see handbook for Vocal Department behavior expectations
- **Rep Checks (points vary based on length of piece – one point per measure)**
- **Gigs/Trips/Fundraising Events (25-100 points each)**
 - Gigs are mandatory for all Vocal Rush members
- --If a student has an excused absence (must be notified a minimum of 24 hours prior to gig date), they are permitted to do a make-up assignment in lieu of participating in the event. Make-up work is due the following school day, without exception.

Required Materials:

- Pencil and eraser
- Binder with all Vocal Rush music, three-hole-punched and labeled
- Water Bottle

Required Attire:

Formal:

- Ladies: black heels, black stockings, black pencil skirt, cobalt blue blouse/top (varying styles), gold necklace/earrings
- Gentlemen: black dress shoes, black slacks, white button-down shirt, royal blue bow-tie

Signature:

- Combination Outfit: any combination of cobalt blue, black and gold clothing items (skirts, pants, dresses are all okay) and black lace boots With skirts/ dresses, stockings must be worn.
*****All Vocal Rush students must have required attire by October 1st, 2014.**

“I _____ and my parent/guardian _____ understand what is required of me as a member of Vocal Rush. I understand that concerts and gigs are mandatory, and that my music must be learned on my own time if I am to be successful in this class. I commit to being prepared for every rep check, occurring one week after a new piece is handed out. I will be a model student, demonstrating leadership, positive attitude and an excellent work ethic in the Vocal Department, in my academic classes and in my community.

 Parent / Guardian Signature

 PRINT Parent / Guardian name

 Student Signature

PRINT Student name

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with or without advance notice