Grading for Program Notes - Dr. McLamore

The majority of your grade for MU 400: Program Notes is based upon your working methods, since I will not approve a final version of your program notes until the notes themselves are at an A or high B level (meaning they are accurate, grammatical, and interesting). Needing to go through multiple drafts to arrive at a polished final product is not—in itself—a problem, but if writing, research, or analytical problems identified in early drafts persist in subsequent drafts, this unresponsiveness will hurt your grade. I do not have the time or patience to mark the same errors—or ask the same questions—over and over again; if I have to do so, your grade will be penalized. For every three items that have to be marked more than once, your grade will drop half a grade, i.e., from an A to an A-, or an A- to a B+, and so forth.

More crucial is your timetable. All deadlines will be established BY YOU (I retain veto power, though)—with the exception of the complete first draft, which is due no less than six weeks before your prerecital, which in turn is scheduled at least a month before your proposed recital date. If you are asked to do your prerecital "early," then you need to tell me so we can adjust your program note deadlines accordingly. YOU WILL LOSE YOUR PRERECITAL DATE IF YOUR NOTES ARE NOT COMPLETELY DONE ONE FULL WEEK AHEAD OF TIME. In the event of a cancelled prerecital, a new date will not be scheduled until the notes are finished and approved. The recital date may be forced to change so that it takes place no sooner than 4 weeks after the rescheduled prerecital date.

Therefore, you should control the timetable to suit your own schedule, but with the inflexible deadline of "one week prior to your prerecital" in mind. Your first task is to fill out the Program Note Timetable—and stick to it! Unexpected things may happen—illness, family emergencies—and "due dates" can be adjusted accordingly if I am notified promptly. Overall, though, you are responsible for meeting all deadlines with complete information. One missed deadline will not affect your grade; each subsequent occurrence of a late submission will pull down your grade by a third of a letter as well (A to A- to B+ to B, etc.)

Furthermore, I make the following grading stipulations:

• First, if I have to review more than two drafts of notes in the final week before your due date, the very highest grade you can receive will be a C, and the grade may be even lower, depending on how the rest of your editing had been proceeding (as discussed above). I am uncomfortable working under pressure; I do not like the feeling that if I don't mark your notes overnight, you might not be able to retain your prerecital date. Repeated efforts to impress this concept into the mindset of previous students have been unsuccessful; therefore, I am establishing this substantial grade penalty if you, too, choose to procrastinate.

• Furthermore, if your notes and program listing (and texts and translations, if relevant) are not completely done one week before your prerecital—so that your prerecital has to be cancelled—you will receive an F. The reason that the department cancels your prerecital is because it is detrimental to your prerecital preparation to be spending long evening hours at your computer in the week beforehand.

• Lastly: you need to be prompt in getting your materials to Michele after passing your prerecital, AND in responding to her subsequent requests for input. Delays at this stage will also hurt your grade.

Please talk to me if you have any questions about grading or the program note process. Truly, I believe that writing notes can be enjoyable and illuminating if you start and work on them early enough; I will be doing my best to help you create notes that will make you proud. You should easily earn an "A" if you:

1) meet all deadlines, and
2) correct all errors and diligently seek answers to all questions asked, and
3) strive to write interesting, accurate, and noteworthy commentary about your pieces.

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