



Barack Obama Academy of International Studies

515 N. Highland Avenue | Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: 412-529-5980 | Fax: 412-622-5983

August 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I'd like to welcome you and your child to a new year of music explorations and introduce myself as the 9th-12th grade instrumental and IB music teacher for the 2016-2017 school year. The purpose of this letter is to describe the expectations and operations of the class, which will ensure your child's success in the program. References are made to the *IB Music Guide*, which will be given to each student and is available upon request.

IBDP Music 11 & 12—Course Description

This arts elective course is offered at the Higher Level and is completed over the course of two years (11th and 12th grades). This course is designed to offer students the opportunity to build on prior experience in music while encouraging a broad approach to the subject and developing new skills, techniques and ideas both personally and collaboratively. Students will study, analyze, examine, compare, contrast, and perform music from various musical cultures and time periods. They will develop investigative and thinking skills, reflection techniques, and an aural perception and understanding of music through the active listening and learning about musical elements (duration, pitch, timbre/tone color, texture, dynamics, form and structure), notations, music theory, and appropriate musical terminology. The learning of these skills will enable students to score highly on the IB Music Assessments, which consist of a musical links investigation, listening examination paper (musical perception) and solo performance.

Standard Level and Higher Level—Expectations

This course is offered at both the Standard Level (SL) and the Higher Level (HL). Although prior music experience is recommended it is not mandatory. Candidates who plan to complete IBDP Music at either the Standard or Higher Level will be expected to demonstrate:

- Knowledge, understanding, and perception of music in relation to time, place and cultures
- Appropriate musical terminology to describe and reflect their critical understanding of music
- Comparative analysis of music in relation to time, place and cultures
- Performance skills through solo music making, arranging, and/or composing
- Critical-thinking skills through reflective thought.

Musical Links Investigation

Through the study of pieces from different musical cultures, students are expected to explore, analyze, and examine the musical connections existing between two (or more) pieces of music from two distinct musical cultures. They will demonstrate their knowledge by submitting a written media script of no more than 2,000 words. When investigating musical links, students will need to develop depth of demonstrating the links that exist. The links must be musical (based on musical elements, not instruments/voices or functions of music). While students must use primary sources, and are strongly encouraged to support their work by also using secondary sources, the vast majority of their investigation should be their own work and ideas and not a summary of other sources. Corresponding in-class assignments and homework will be given on a regular basis and be assessed using the rubrics and assessment guidelines outlined in the *IB Music Guide*.

Listening Examination Paper (Musical Perception)

Students will study two musical works prescribed by the IBO. These pieces represent key features from two different times, places and /or musical cultures. Students are required to analyze, examine, and compare and contrast these prescribed works. Prescribed works that are movements/sections from larger works will be presented to the students within the context of the whole work. However, the examination question(s) will be on the specific movement/section. Corresponding in class assignments and homework will be given on a regular basis and be assessed using the rubrics and assessment guidelines outlined in the *IB Music Guide*. This task is considered the "external assessment" (students do the work and it's sent away to an IB moderator), which is 50% of the students' total IB Music grade.

Performing

Students should aim to develop performance skills through solo music making (SLS). Performance demands self-discipline and focus on the part of students as they learn to recreate music. The student is required to submit a recording selected from





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pieces presented during one or more public performance(s). **The total performance time must be 15 minutes (Standard Level) or 20 minutes (Higher Level).** The purpose of recording performances is to allow students subsequently to select a number of contrasting pieces to represent their best work for internal assessment. In performing their pieces, students may use any instrument and/or voice. Any musical style is permitted. However, the submission should consist of contrasting pieces and should display the student's strengths. The submission should reflect the best that the student has achieved throughout the course. In-class performance assessments are used to monitor progress and are given quarterly. Practice charts will be given weekly to monitor progress. Performance assessments will be given quarterly and be assessed using the rubrics and assessment guidelines outlined in the *IB Music Guide*. This task is considered part of the "internal assessment" (graded by the teacher and a sample is sent to an IB moderator), which is 50% of a standard level student's IB Music grade and 25% of a higher level student's IB Music grade.

****Group Performance**—Students may also choose to include **one** example of work as a member of a small group. However, the student's contribution to this small group must be clearly identifiable, with, if any, limited doubling by another instrument/voice, and must be a substantial part of the piece. This piece may not exceed five minutes in duration.

****Accompaniment**—With reference to accompaniment, submissions **must** be presented according to musical convention. For example, if a piece is composed for flute with piano accompaniment, then it is expected that the presentation will feature both the soloist and the accompanist. Backing tracks of accompaniments not conceived as such are strongly discouraged.

Creating

Students are expected to demonstrate musical knowledge and skills by creating through use of the following options: composing, music technology composing, arranging, improvising, and stylistic techniques. Standard level students are expected to submit two pieces of coursework while higher level students are expected to submit three pieces. All submitted coursework must have audio recordings and written work (reflections). This task is considered part of the "internal assessment" (graded by the teacher and a sample is sent to an IB moderator), which is 50% of a standard level student's IB Music grade and 25% of a higher level student's IB Music grade.

Academic and Behavioral Expectations

My role as the music director is that of both a conductor and a teacher. As a conductor, I am most concerned with the music ensemble as a whole. My philosophy is simple: The ensemble's needs, progress and high standards will always take priority over any individual needs. As a teacher I am concerned with a student's individual progress. The students' needs will come first. As both an individual and ensemble member, students will always be respected and treated with fairness, but keep in mind that I expect to be treated with the same respect and fairness as is given to them from both roles that I must fulfill. Students adhering to these rules and guidelines of the classroom will ensure their individual success as well as the success of the ensemble and perpetuate the district's mission of "*Excellence For All*".

1. Be Prompt.
2. Be Prepared.
3. Stay Seated.
4. Use Appropriate Words and Actions.
5. Raise Your Hand to Speak.
6. Remain Quiet During Instruction.
7. No Food, Gum, or Drink.
8. Treat Others and the Classroom Environment With Respect.

Be **PRESENT**—Come to class EVERY DAY

Be **PROMPT**—Arrive to class ON TIME. Submit homework ON TIME.

Be **PREPARED**—Have all of your materials every day (Instrument, music, pencil, etc.)

Be **POSITIVE**—Your *attitude* determines your *altitude*. Come to class with a positive attitude ready to rehearse and learn.

PARTICIPATE—Play your instrument every day in class, try your best, ask questions and request extra help if necessary.

PRACTICE and **PERFORM**—Your performance will be a reflection of how hard you've practiced. Work hard, participate in the concerts and put on a great show!





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Prior Planning and Preparation Promotes Proper and Positive Performance

*Students who are late to class or display open defiance will receive after school detention. Detention is to be served on the day that it is issued. Students who choose not to serve detention will be referred to a school administrator. Referrals may result in a phone call home students' conferencing with the teacher and administrator, parent-teacher meeting, and/or an out of school suspension.

Grading Guidelines

Theoretical—(Homework, Music Theory Assignments, Performance Tests, Quizzes, Music Analysis, Unit Tests, and Music Compositions)—40%
Performances—(Projects, Oral Presentations, Concerts)—40%
Participation (Individual/Pair Share/Four Square/Sectionals)—15%
Assessments (Journal Writing/Listening Log, Oral Reflections, Exit Tickets, Written Warm-Ups)—5%

****For the fourth quarter performance assessment, students will be required to perform in front of a cohort of their peers and teachers outside of the classroom. Parents are also invited to attend. Students must dress appropriately and exhibit appropriate performance etiquette, which will reflect in their grade. An example of what constitutes as appropriate dress for the final performance is: ****

Young Men—White collared dress shirt, black slacks, and black dress shoes.

Young Ladies—White blouse, black knee-length skirt (or black slacks) and black dress shoes.

Please contact me in advance if there are any questions or concerns about concert dress

Homework Policy

Students are required to practice at home to improve individual skills. Students are expected to practice for a minimum of 30 minutes per day AT LEAST 4-5 days per week. **Students will not be given time in class to practice.**

Additionally, all IBDP Music 11 & 12 students are required to complete at least one musical analysis paper per musical genre studied. **All analyses must be typed.** Students will have the opportunity to share their analyses in the form of pair share and small/large group discussion, which will go towards their class participation grade. Music analyses will be assessed according to the corresponding rubric and go toward students' homework (theoretical) grade. The due date for each musical analysis will be within the week that it is assigned and are worth 50 points each.

Periodic reminders for submitting musical analyses and other assignments will be posted on the corresponding Facebook page (Obama Academy IBDP Music) at least 24-48 hours prior to the due date.

Late Work Policy

Students who have an **excused absence** from school on the day of a performance assessment will be permitted to make it up the next school day. **Excused absences are:**

- Illnesses that are severe enough to keep the music student in bed or are highly contagious (**Doctor's note required**).
- Religious conflict
- Death in the family
- *****WORK, BABYSITTING, and other EXCUSES of this nature are NOT acceptable excuses for missing rehearsals and performances.*****

The Teacher will evaluate other reasons on an individual basis.

Students missing class due to school activities are expected to get all assignments for the day before leaving for the activity and to turn them in **ON THE DUE DATE.**





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The point value for all written assignments that are submitted one day late will drop one letter from what *could* have been earned had the assignment been submitted on time. **All assignments that are submitted beyond one day late will receive a grade of 50%. As per school policy, there will be no opportunities provided for extra credit assignments.**

Detention and Discipline Policy

In most cases, detention is meant to serve as an alternative to a school referral. Students who are late to class, display open defiance, or use inappropriate language will receive a *lunch detention*. Detention is to be served on the day that it is issued. In the event that an infraction is repeated or is considered a major offense (with the exception of tardiness), the student will be referred to an administrator. In the case of excessive tardiness, parents will be notified after the second offense. After the fourth offense, parents will be notified and the student will serve a week of lunch detention (as outlined in the school handbook). Students who choose not to serve detention for their infraction will be referred to a school administrator. Depending on the infraction, referrals will result in a phone call home and may include students' conferencing with the teacher and/or administrator, parent-teacher meeting, and/or an out of school suspension.

Adherence to these rules and guidelines will not only ensure your child's success in the music classroom and on the IB Music Examination, but also help foster a sense of dedication, responsibility, creativity, discipline, and pride within them. Please feel free to contact me via email or phone if you have any questions or concerns. I look forward a positive and productive school year.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Aisha Sharif-Lucas—Instrumental Music Director
Pittsburgh Obama Academy
515 N. Highland Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
School: 412-529-5980
Cell: 412-512-3849
Email: ashariflucas1@pghboe.net

Approved: Ms. Aisha Robinson, Director