

MUSC 2121 tips for success in Recitations

- **Be exceedingly well prepared.** “Cramming” does not work in a skill-based environment as our minds and bodies need **time** to absorb the material. You will be given all materials (with the exception of the occasional “at sight” example) well in advance of the exam, so there can be no excuses about not having time to prepare. We are all very busy and must learn how to practice effectively and efficiently. It is far better to spend 10 or 15 minutes per day of **focused** rehearsal time than to noodle around for hours with no direction. See me (or your studio teacher) for practice tips if you’re having difficulty approaching things on your own.
- **Take advantage of office hours.** We instructors are required to keep at least two office hours per week but will schedule alternative times with you at our mutual convenience. It can be very advantageous to perform a “mock recitation” for your instructor. This will serve to take the edge off, particularly if you are given to nervousness, and to give you an idea of how you will react to the situation.
- **Perform each exercise with musicality.** Be aware of phrasing, dynamics, articulation and the mood/character of a given piece. Being attentive to these details will enhance your musicianship as well as your grade.
- **Give yourself time to collect your thoughts and get in “the zone” just prior to your exam.** Your exam time will be fixed throughout the semester so you will generally be able to anticipate any distractions or complications that may interfere with your ability to focus.
- **Don’t show up with excuses.**
- **Don’t let nervousness get the best of you!** We all feel nervous from time to time. As professional musicians, we will spend a great deal of time on stage, in recording studios, in front of audition committees, and so forth, so we must learn to deal with intense scrutiny. The best remedy for nervousness is preparedness.
- **Have fun making music.** Academic pressures can tend to make music seem like a chore at times. Never lose sight of the love and passion for the art form that led you here in the first place.