



ORCHESTRAL CONDUCTING
MUAG 3870/5850
FALL, 2025

Instructor:

Dr. Clay Couturiaux, Assistant Director of Orchestral Studies
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Murchison Performing Arts Center, Room 137

Teaching Assistant:

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Office Hours:

by appointment

Textbook:

Beethoven: Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93
Weber: Overture to *Oberon*
Shostakovich: Symphony No. 9 in E-flat Major, Op. 70

Most public domain scores may be downloaded online at: http://imslp.org/wiki/Main_Page
You are welcome to purchase your own scores – consult instructor for advice on editions.

Materials:

- Baton
- Scores
- Your Instrument
- Recording device (cell phone)

Course Description:

This course is designed for the development of a professional conducting approach and will include instruction on orchestral conducting techniques and pedagogy, score analysis and preparation, development of visual/aural discrimination skills, transposition skills, the role of the conductor in historical perspective, and a review of basic musicianship.

Expected Outcomes:

Students will have made significant improvements in knowledge and ability in the following areas:

1. Physical technique of conducting.
2. Score study and analysis.
3. Orchestral repertoire.
4. Knowledge of orchestral instruments and mainstream audition excerpts.
5. Rehearsal technique.

Methods for Assessing the Expected Outcomes:

1. Instructor's assessment of improvement in physical technique of conducting.
2. Instructor's assessment of improvement in accompanying and other related techniques.
3. Instructor's assessment of the student's score study.
4. Instructor's assessment of improvement and knowledge of orchestral instruments and other related issues.

Course Requirements:

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Attendance is expected for all scheduled classes. The nature of the course requires active participation and interaction among all class members at all times. Absences will result in a lowering of the final grade as follows:

- 2 no change
- 3 reduction of 1 letter grade
- 4 reduction of 2 letter grades
- 5 reduction of 3 letter grades
- 6(+) grade of WF if withdrawal is requested, or final grade of F

*Each tardy will be counted as ½ an absence

CONDUCTING ASSIGNMENTS

Students will receive a grade each time they conduct from the podium. The major portion of the grade will pertain to how well the student knows the score. Each student will be expected to conduct the assigned musical excerpt in class with the class members as the ensemble.

Absence from class on a pre-assigned conducting assignment will result in the student being passed over for that conducting sequence, with a grade of zero or no credit. The instructor, in advance of the absence, may approve exceptions. The opportunity to make up a missed conducting assignment will be at the discretion of the instructor and will be rare.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Conducting Bibliography

Select one book from each of the following sections of the Conducting Bibliography attached to this syllabus. For each book, provide a one-page (minimum) to two-page (maximum) summary.

Conducting Treatises and Textbooks – [Reading Assignment #1]

Orchestral History and Practice – [Reading Assignment #2]

Conductors and the History of Conducting – [Reading Assignment #3]

PROGRAM ASSIGNMENTS

Programming assignments should be one-page and presented on the date due in the following format:

Student's name Due date

Description of assignment.

Program #1:

Joe Smith	Overture for Joe	
	2222-4200-tmp+2-hp-cel-str	7'
Jane Smith	Piano Concerto No. 4, Op. 19	
	1212-2200-tmp-str	25'

INTERMISSION

Steve Smith	Symphony No. 6, Op. 5	
	[3[1.2.3/pic]3[1.2.Eh]3[1.2.bcl]2/4331/tmp+6-hp-pf-str	44'

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD ANY WORKS BE OFFERED IN PROGRAMMING ASSIGNMENTS WITH WHICH THE STUDENT IS NOT FAMILIAR!!

#1: Two different programs that include Beethoven: Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93
Both programs must also include a soloist.

#2: Two different programs that include Weber: Overture to *Oberon*
Programs must also include a soloist.

#3: Two different programs that include Shostakovich: Symphony No. 9 in E-flat Major, Op. 70
Programs must also include a soloist.

REHEARSAL OBSERVATION

Each student is required to submit one rehearsal observation, reflecting a minimum of one hour spent in a university or professional orchestra. The student must be an observer and not a member of the ensemble.

Due on Friday, November 14 by 11:59pm in Canvas. The length must be a minimum of 700 words. Failure to complete the minimum word requirement will result in the reduction of the final grade for the observation by one letter grade. Correct spelling and the use of the English language is expected.

For each rehearsal observation, isolate one rehearsal technique used by the conductor and give the following information: (1) Description of the technique used; (2) Problem the technique was intended to solve or improve; (3) Name of work being rehearsed and location within the piece where the technique was used; (4) Your observation of the success of using the particular technique.

In your observation, consider the following:

1. Baton (or hand) technique
 - Is it clear/understandable?
 - Is it effective musically?
 - Is it visible?
2. Verbalizations
 - Does the conductor talk too much?
 - Do the performers respond well to the conductor's instructions?
 - Was the conductor professional in his/her comments?
3. Rehearsal technique
 - Is there a plan to the rehearsal?
 - Is the ensemble's interest focused on the music?
 - Is there an opportunity to relax in rehearsal?
 - What was accomplished during the rehearsal?
4. Musicality
 - Does the conductor insist upon dynamics, accents, phrasing, and rhythmic exactitude?
 - Were the balances correct, solo lines brought out, and/or supporting lines appropriate?
 - Were intonation discrepancies addressed?
 - Did the conductor insist on the correct style of each work?

Grading:

Attendance; In-Class Conducting Experience	40%
Reading Assignment	15%
Program Assignments	15%
Rehearsal Observation	10%
Final Conducting Exam	20%

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

LINK: <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

LINK: Student Code of Conduct - <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – EAGLE CONNECT

LINK: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

ODA STATEMENT

LINK: disability.unt.edu [Phone: (940) 565-4323]

Health and Safety Information

LINK: <https://music.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness>

Registration Information for Students

LINK: <https://registrar.unt.edu/students>

Academic Calendar, FALL 2025

LINK: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html>

Final Exam Schedule

LINK: <https://registrar.unt.edu/exams/final-exam-schedule/>

FINANCIAL AID AND SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

LINK: <http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

RETENTION OF STUDENT RECORDS

LINK: <http://ferpa.unt.edu/>

COUNSELING AND TESTING

LINK: <http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

LINK: <https://disparities.unt.edu/mental-health-resources>

ADD/DROP POLICY

Please be reminded that dropping classes or failing to complete and pass registered hours may make you ineligible for financial aid. In addition, if you drop below half-time enrollment you may be required to begin paying back your student loans. See Academic Calendar (listed above) for additional add/drop information.

LINK: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html>

STUDENT RESOURCES

LINK: <https://success.unt.edu/aa-sa-resources>

CARE TEAM

LINK: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care-team>

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

WEEK 1 [8/18; 8/20; 8/22]

Course and syllabus overview; anatomy of the beat; Programming discussion.

Score Study Discussion – Beethoven: Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93

WEEK 2 [8/25; 8/27; 8/29]

Conducting Assignment – Beethoven: Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93

Reading Assignment #1 due Friday by 11:59pm in Canvas

WEEK 3 [9/1 No class Labor Day; 9/3; 9/5]

Conducting Assignment – Beethoven: Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93

WEEK 4 [9/8; 9/10; 9/12]

Conducting Assignment – Beethoven: Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93

Program Assignment #1 due Friday by 11:59pm in Canvas

WEEK 5 [9/15; 9/17; 9/19]

Conducting Assignment – Beethoven: Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93

Program Assignment #1 due Friday by 11:59pm in Canvas

WEEK 6 [9/22; 9/24; 9/26]

Score Study Discussion – Weber: Overture to *Oberon*

Conducting Assignment – Weber: Overture to *Oberon*

Reading Assignment #2 due Friday by 11:59pm in Canvas

WEEK 7 [9/29; 10/1; 10/3]

Conducting Assignment – Weber: Overture to *Oberon*

WEEK 8 [10/6; 10/8; 10/10]

Conducting Assignment – Weber: Overture to *Oberon*

Program Assignment #2 due Friday by 11:59pm in Canvas

WEEK 9 [10/13; 10/15; 10/17]

Score Study Discussion – Shostakovich: Symphony No. 9 in E-flat Major, Op. 70

Conducting Assignment – Shostakovich: Symphony No. 9 in E-flat Major, Op. 70

WEEK 10 [10/20; 10/22 No class; 10/24]

Conducting Assignment – Shostakovich: Symphony No. 9 in E-flat Major, Op. 70

Reading Assignment #3 due Friday by 11:59pm in Canvas

WEEK 11 [10/27; 10/29; 10/31]

Conducting Assignment – Shostakovich: Symphony No. 9 in E-flat Major, Op. 70

WEEK 12 [11/3; 11/5; 11/7]

Conducting Assignment – Shostakovich: Symphony No. 9 in E-flat Major, Op. 70

Program Assignment #3 due Friday by 11:59pm in Canvas

WEEK 13 [11/10; 11/12; 11/14]

Conducting Assignment – Shostakovich: Symphony No. 9 in E-flat Major, Op. 70

Rehearsal Observation due Friday by 11:59pm in Canvas.

WEEK 14 [11/17; 11/19; 11/21]

Conducting Assignment – Shostakovich: Symphony No. 9 in E-flat Major, Op. 70

WEEK 15 [No classes – Thanksgiving Break]

WEEK 16 [12/1; 12/3; 12/5 No class]

Final Conducting Exam with UNT Concert Orchestra on Mon 12/1 & Wed 12/3