



ORCHESTRAL CONDUCTING
MUAG 3870.002/5850.003
SPRING, 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. 1 in Major, Op. 21
Bizet Carmen Suite No. 1
Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36

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

The Cambridge Companion to Conducting, edited by José Antonio Bowen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

The Rise of Conducting – [Reading Quiz #1]
The Central European Tradition – [Reading Quiz #2]
The French Tradition – [Reading Quiz #3]
The Italian Tradition – [Reading Quiz #4]
The American Tradition – [Reading Quiz #5]
The English Tradition – [Reading Quiz #6]
The Russian Tradition – [Reading Quiz #7]

REHEARSAL OBSERVATIONS

Each student is required to submit two rehearsal observations, each reflecting thirty minutes spent in a university or professional orchestra. The student must be an observer and not a member of the ensemble.

All reports must be completed and submitted into Canvas by the deadlines listed below in the Schedule of Classes. 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.

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 Assignments	15%
Rehearsal Observations	10%
Mid-Term Conducting Exam	15%
Final Conducting Exam	20%

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

LINK: <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, SPRING 2025

LINK: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-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

LINK: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-registration-guide>

STUDENT RESOURCES

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

CARE TEAM

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

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

WEEK 1 [1/13; 1/15; 1/17]

Course and syllabus overview; anatomy of the beat; basic concepts of use of gravity, acceleration/deceleration; conducting areas/planes. 5 basic conducting patterns; discussion of the “four hinges”; basics of transpositions.

Score Study Discussion – Beethoven: Symphony No. 1

WEEK 2 [1/20 (no class); 1/22; 1/24]

Conducting Assignment – Beethoven: Symphony No. 1

Reading Quiz #1 due on Friday in Canvas by 10:00pm

WEEK 3 [1/27; 1/29; 1/31]

Conducting Assignment – Beethoven: Symphony No. 1

WEEK 4 [2/3; 2/5; 2/7]

Conducting Assignment – Beethoven: Symphony No. 1

Conducting Assignment – Bizet: Carmen Suite No. 1

Reading Quiz #2 due on Friday in Canvas by 10:00pm

WEEK 5 [2/10; 2/12; 2/14 (no class)]

Conducting Assignment – Bizet: Carmen Suite No. 1

Rehearsal Observation #1 due Friday in Canvas by 10:00pm

WEEK 6 [2/17; 2/19; 2/21]

Conducting Assignment – Bizet: Carmen Suite No. 1

Reading Quiz #3 due on Friday in Canvas by 10:00pm

WEEK 7 [2/24; 2/26; 2/28]

Conducting Assignment – Bizet: Carmen Suite No. 1

WEEK 8 [3/3; 3/5; 3/7 (no class)]

Conducting Mid-Term Conducting Exam with UNT Concert Orchestra (Mon, March 3 & Wed, March 5; 12:15pm-2:05pm)

Reading Quiz #4 due on Friday in Canvas by 10:00pm

WEEK 9 [3/17; 3/19; 3/21]

Conducting Assignment – Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4

WEEK 10 [3/24; 3/26; 3/28]

Conducting Assignment – Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4

Reading Quiz #5 due on Friday in Canvas by 10:00pm

WEEK 11 [3/31; 4/2; 4/4]

Conducting Assignment – Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4

Rehearsal Observation #2 due Friday in Canvas by 10:00pm

WEEK 12 [4/7; 4/9; 4/11]

Conducting Assignment – Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4

Reading Quiz #6 due on Friday in Canvas by 10:00pm

WEEK 13 [4/14; 4/16; 4/18 (no class)]

Conducting Assignment – Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4

WEEK 14 [4/21; 4/23; 4/25]

Conducting Final Exam with UNT Concert Orchestra (Mon, April 21; 12:15pm-2:05pm)

Review One-On-One Meeting: Final Conducting Exam

Reading Quiz #7 due on Friday in Canvas by 10:00pm

WEEK 15

No Class [room 232 needed for juries]