

# Fundamentals of Conducting

## UNT College of Music

MUAG 3800.005, Fall 2022  
M/W/F 8:00-8:50 AM, MUSI 232

Dachuan Cao, instructor  
[DachuanCao@my.unt.edu](mailto:DachuanCao@my.unt.edu)  
Office Hours: by appointment

### Course Syllabus

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

To develop a professional conducting approach with emphasis on techniques appropriate to wind, orchestral, and choral conducting. The course will include instruction in beginning and intermediate conducting techniques, score analysis and preparation, development of visual/aural discrimination skills, the role of the conductor in historical and philosophical perspectives, and a reinforcement of basic musicianship.

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Demonstrate proper conducting posture
- Demonstrate effective baton technique
- Demonstrate the following techniques:
  - Preparatory gestures, downbeats, and releases
  - Patterns for various meters, including duple/triple, simple/compound
  - Representation of a diversity of styles
  - Representation of dynamic indications
  - Independent and complimentary use of right and left arms-hand complex
  - Entrances on beats other than one and incomplete beats
  - Diversity of gestural vocabulary in the service of cues and more
  - Representation of a diversity of tempos and transitions
  - Tempo alterations
- Evaluate conducting techniques by:
  - Observing and evaluating conducting experiences
  - Observing and evaluating class members
  - Reflection on different conductors of various ensembles in concert and rehearsal
- Demonstrate visual/aural discrimination skills through rehearsal situations
- Describe the role of the conductor in historical and philosophical perspectives
- Refine the essential skills of musicianship in a conducting context
- Internalize transpositions and their use in score reading through independent exercises and assignments

## **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

Each student must have the following materials:

- Baton (subject to instructor approval; there will be an opportunity to purchase a custom baton within the first week of class)
- Course Handouts/Packet (provided by the instructor)
- Three-Ring binder, folder or tablet to organize your scores, handouts, articles and reflections
- Your major or secondary instrument as determined by the instructor.
- Electronic device with video recording capabilities (cell phone, video camera)
- Manuscript paper or composition software for transposition assignments
- Metronome, separate from the device using to record/video call
- Appropriate set up for Zoom meetings, including: Computer, webcam, decent audio device, etc.

## **TEXTS**

The Art of Conducting Donald Hunsberger and Roy E. Ernst 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. McGraw-Hill, Inc. 1992

The Elements of Expressive Conducting Michael Haithcock, Brian Doyle, Kevin Gerald, Conway Publications 2020

Conducting: The Art of Communication 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Wayne Bailey and Brandt Payne. Oxford University Press, 2015

Basic Conducting Techniques Joseph A Labuta and Wendy K. Matthews 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Routledge 2018

The Modern Conductor, Elizabeth Green and Mark Gibson. Pearson, 7<sup>th</sup> edition. 2003.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Attendance/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. Thus, attendance is worth a large portion of the final grade in this course. Excused absences will be handled on a case-by-case basis and will require written e-mail communication as well as approval from the instructor **prior to being absent.**

Absences will result in a lowering of the final grade as follows:

- 0-1 absences..... no effect
- 2 absences ..... reduction of 1 letter grade
- 3 absences ..... reduction of 2 letter grades
- 4 absences ..... reduction of 3 letter grades
- 5 (+) absences..... grade of WF if withdrawal is requested, or final grade of F

\*\*Tardies will be counted as ½ an absence

## **COVID-19 impact on attendance**

While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. Please contact me if you are unable to attend class because you are ill, or unable to attend class due to a related issue regarding COVID-19. **It is important that you communicate with me prior to being absent** as to what may be preventing you from coming to class so I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class.

If you are experiencing cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, or any of the other possible symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptomstesting/symptoms.html>) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or [askSHWC@unt.edu](mailto:askSHWC@unt.edu)) or your healthcare provider. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

**Conducting Assignments:** First and foremost, this is a participatory class. Each week involves practice and preparation. While it is absolutely ok to make mistakes during the learning process, you must also be prepared to be engaged and willing to learn new concepts daily. Weekly conducting assignments will be given and graded. Each student will be expected to conduct the assigned musical excerpts in class with the class members as the ensemble (if in a live setting). Feedback will occur from the instructor and peers. The student must provide an electronic device with video recording capabilities to record their conducting experience. The opportunity to make up a missed conducting assignment will be at the discretion of the instructor.

**Written Assignments and Tests:** Individual written work pertinent to the course material will be assigned as needed. Examples include transposition assignments and quizzes, vocabulary/term assignments and quizzes, concert observations, rehearsal observations, article reviews, vocabulary quizzes, and conducting self-evaluations.

Discussion topics will be posted throughout the course (4 total). The purpose of the discussions is to provide awareness of the many viewpoints about the fundamentals of conducting and the role of the conductor/educator on the podium. Rather than restating or summarizing the author's ideas, the student is encouraged to synthesize the material and viewpoints represented and to critically reflect and relate the concepts expressed in the article to what you have learned in the class. The discussions are meant to spark positive dialogue with your personal background as the launching pad of learning.

**Concert/Rehearsal Reflections:** Each student must complete two (2) 45-minute rehearsal/concert observations (1 must be a rehearsal) with each reflecting attendance at a major university or professional (conducted) ensemble concert rehearsal. At UNT, these ensembles might include the A Cappella Choir, Concert Choir, Chamber Choir, Wind Symphony, Wind Orchestra, Opera, Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, One O'Clock and Two O'Clock Lab Band. Professional ensembles include, but are not limited to the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, the Dallas Wind Symphony, Lonestar Wind Orchestra, etc. The student must be an observer and not a member of the ensemble. The observations should be drawn from two different ensembles and should represent different conductors. The reports must represent two different performing mediums (winds, orchestral, choral, or major jazz ensemble).

**Transposition Project:** Student will select an excerpt of a piece to transcribe into a flexible ensemble setting, pending approval by the instructor. All harmonies of the excerpt must be represented in the students' final projects. Students must provide at least four parts (representing soprano, alto, tenor and bass) utilizing all pitched instruments (C, Bb, Eb and F). Students may use Finale/Sibelius on the UNT lab computers (preferred) or free software online such as MuseScore or Noteflight.

### **GRADING PROCEDURES**

65 pts: Conducting Rounds and Technical Proficiencies

10 pts: 2 Concert Observations

15 pts: Final Rehearsing Project

10 pts: Writing Assignments and Transposition Project

100 pts total

## RESOURCE LINKS

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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

### STUDENT BEHAVIOR

<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

### ACCESS TO INFORMATION – EAGLE CONNECT

Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at my.unt.edu. All official communication from the university will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit: <http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/>

### ODA STATEMENT

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access. <http://disability.unt.edu> Phone: (940) 565-4323

### UNT POLICY STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY

<https://idea.unt.edu/diversity-inclusion>

### ACADEMIC CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

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

### Health and Safety Information

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

### REGISTRATION INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

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

### FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE

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

### FINANCIAL AID AND SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

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

### RETENTION OF STUDENT RECORDS

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

### COUNSELING AND TESTING

UNT's Center for Counseling and Testing has an available counselor whose position includes 16 hours per week of dedicated service to students in the College of Music and the College of Visual Arts and Design. Please visit the Center's website for further information:

See: [Counseling and Testing](#)

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

For more information on mental health issues, please visit:

See: [Mental Health Issues](#)

Link: <https://speakout.unt.edu>.

The counselor for music students is:

Myriam Reynolds

Chestnut Hall, Suite 311

(940) 565-2741

[Myriam.reynolds@unt.edu](mailto:Myriam.reynolds@unt.edu)

#### 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. After the 12th class day, students must first submit a completed “Request to Drop” form to the Registrar’s Office. The last day for a student to drop a class in Fall 2022 is November 18. Information about add/drop may be found at:

See Academic Calendar (listed above)

#### STUDENT RESOURCES

The University of North Texas has many resources available to students. For a complete list, go to:

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