



FUNDAMENTALS OF CONDUCTING MUAG 3800-004
Curriculum Syllabus
Spring 2026

Instructor: Ella Castro

Email: Ella.Castro@unt.edu

Office: MPAC 136 (Orchestral Library) / MPAC 132 (IRR) [*for in-person appointments*]

Office Hours: MWF 11:15 – 12:00pm [*by appointment through email only*]

TTh [*Zoom, by appointment through email only*]

Course Content:

The Fundamentals of Conducting course is designed for the development of a professional conducting approach. The course will cover beginning and intermediate conducting techniques, score analysis and preparation, development of visual and aural skills, and transposition skills.

Required materials:

- (1) Fundamentals of Conducting workbook. [Provided by instructor]
- (2) Baton (shortest and lightest available).
- (3) Primary instrument.
- (4) Video recording device or SD card (2 GB minimum).

Course Purpose:

This course partially fulfills requirements for undergraduate music majors.

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 transpositions.
- 4. Aural skills.

Course Requirements and expectations:

This is a *skills-based course*, so regular attendance is essential. (See specifics regarding class attendance on page 2.) Regular and thorough preparation for class is also required; this means bringing all the required materials to class *every single day*, *thorough* preparation of class conducting materials before each class session as well as practice of individual parts *before* each class session.

Course Times and Location:

MWF 9:00 – 9:50AM

MPAC 132 - IRR

GRADING:

Conducting work in class (cumulative)	50%
Exams (other than final, cumulative)	20%
Final (written) exam	10%
Final (conducting exam / jury) exam	10%
Rehearsal and concert reports	10%
	100%

PREREQUISITES

Junior (or higher) in good standing.
Successful completion of MUTH 2500/2510

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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

Sections that meet **THREE** times per week:

- 2 no affect
- 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**

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. It is important that you communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so you, the professor, and the instructional team can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of the course learning goals.

Please inform the professor and instructional team if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of the community. Contact the UNT COVID Team at COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

CONDUCTING ASSIGNMENTS

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. 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*.

REHEARSAL OBSERVATIONS (2)

Each student is required to submit **two orchestra** rehearsal observations. Submissions are made through Canvas.

All reports must be typed – double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, and all margins 1 inch. The length must be a minimum of one page and a maximum of two pages (300–500 words maximum). Use formal writing guidelines. Failure to complete this requirement will result in the reduction of the final grade by one letter grade. For full credit, the assignments must be submitted on the dates found on page 5, by the end of class at 9.50am.

Submit online through Canvas. Correct spelling and the use of the English language is expected. In your observation, consider the following:

1. Name of ensemble and conductor. Date of rehearsal observed.

2. Baton (or hand) technique

Is it clear/understandable? Is it effective musically? Is it visible?

3. 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?

4. Rehearsal technique

Is there a plan for 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?

5. 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?

CONCERT OBSERVATIONS (2)

Each student is required to submit **two** concert observations of conducted performances. A live **symphonic concert from UNT orchestras or DFW orchestras** is mandatory for this assignment. Submissions are made through Canvas.

All reports must be typed – double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, and all margins 1 inch. The length must be a minimum of one page and a maximum of two pages. Use formal writing guidelines. Failure to complete this requirement will result in the reduction of the final grade by one letter grade. For full credit, the assignments must be submitted on the dates found on page 5, by the end of class at 9.50am.

Submit online through Canvas. Correct spelling and the use of the English language is expected. In your observation, consider the following:

1. Name of ensemble and conductor, date of concert.

2. Stage Presence

How does the conductor enter the stage?

How does the conductor acknowledge the audience and the performers?

What does the conductor do between movements of a multi-movement work?

How does the conductor acknowledge soloists or featured sections?

How does the conductor acknowledge the entire ensemble?

How does the conductor exit the stage?

3. Baton (or hand) technique

Is it clear/understandable?

Is it effective musically?

Is it visible?

4. Musicality

In what ways does the conductor enable the musical performance? (mechanics, musicianship, etc.)

How does the conductor visibly communicate style and musicianship to the ensemble?

Other general observations.

Weekly distribution of material to be covered, assignments, excerpts, exams, and quizzes, etc.:

**lesson coverage per week will be flexible, but the submission and exam dates are definite*

WEEK 1 [1/12]

Course and syllabus overview; anatomy of the beat; basic concepts of use of gravity, acceleration/deceleration; conducting areas/planes.

Basic conducting patterns; discussion of the “four hinges;” basics of transpositions.

WEEK 2 [1/21] - 1/19 is MLK holiday - no classes

Continue gravity exercises and other basic conceptual work from the previous week.

Prep for the following week: Time beating in 2, 3, & 4; preparatory gestures and cut-offs. Score study concepts.

WEEK 3 [1/26]

Continue gravity exercises and other basic conceptual work from the previous weeks. Time beating in 2, 3, & 4; preparatory gestures and cut-off's. [excerpts 1, 2, 3, & 4]

Prep for the following week: Basics of the pattern in 1.

***Rehearsal observation #1 due Friday, January 30, 2026**

WEEK 4 [2/2]

Time beating in 1, more sophisticated preparatory gestures; passive vs active gestures. [excerpts 5, 6, separation of hands exercises, & 7]

Prep for the following week: Basics of divided patterns.

WEEK 5 [2/9]

Conducting in divided patterns; more sophisticated conducting using passive vs active gestures; cues. [excerpts 8, 9, 10, separation of hands exercises, 11, 12, & 13]

Further transposition discussions.

Prep for the following week: Basics of fermati.

***Rehearsal observation #2 due Friday, February 13, 2026**

WEEK 6 [2/16]

Fermati. [excerpts 14, 15, 16, & 17] Separation of hands exercises.

****Exam #1 [Friday, February 20, 2026]**

Basic conducting concepts; review transpositions; terms, all concepts discussed to this point.

Prep for the following week: Basics of irregular time signatures.

WEEK 7 [2/23]

Irregular time signatures. [excerpts 18, separation of hands exercises, 19, 20, & 20.5]

Prep for the following week: More sophisticated gestures (legato/tenuto/sostenuto, staccato, breathing/cueing gesture, etc.) Score study discussion.

WEEK 8 [3/2]

More sophisticated style gestures (staccato/legato/sostenuto/gesture of syncopation), baton grip and use. [excerpts 21, 22, & 23]

Prep for the following week: Basics of tempo change and more on cueing (RH & LH).

SPRING BREAK (3/9 to 3/15) - No classes

WEEK 9 [3/16]

Tempo changes, changes of texture, and cueing, passive and active gestures in recitative. [excerpt 28]

***Concert observation #1 due Friday, March 20, 2026**

WEEK 10 [3/23]

Continue material from the previous week. [excerpt 24]

****Exam #2 [April 1, 2026]**

Concepts regarding expressive gestures, cueing, and separation of hands, transpositions, *plus all material from Exam #1.*

WEEK 11 [3/30]

Continuation of previous exercises, plus passive/active gesture work. [excerpts 25, 26, & 27]

Further work in style gestures, cueing (RH and LH).

WEEK 12 [4/6]

Continue work from previous weeks and review of all excerpts, materials, and concepts.

***Concert observation #2 due on Friday, April 10, 2026**

WEEK 13 [4/13]**

Conducting portion of the final exam this week.

WEEK 14 [4/20]**

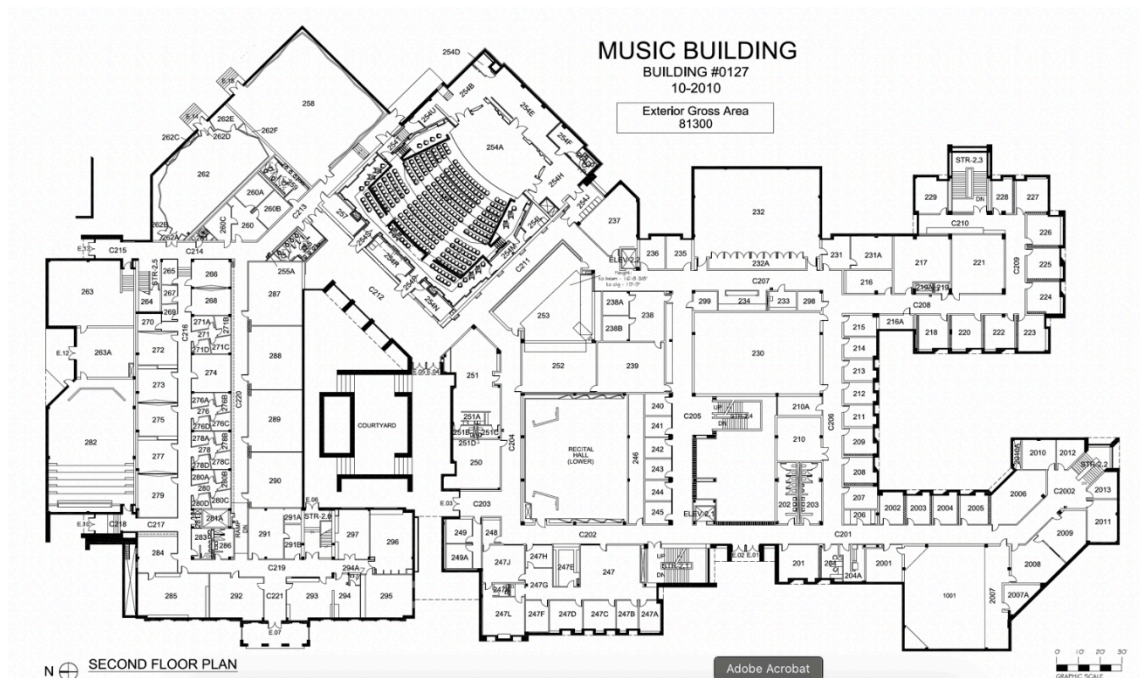
Review for the written portion of the final exam.

WEEK 15 [4/27] Juries

Review for the written portion of the final exam.

WEEK 16 [5/4-8]

Final exams week.



SPRING 2026 CALENDAR

January

01/12 – 01/14 – 01/16

[01/19 No class] – 01/21 – 01/23

01/26 – 01/28 – 01/30

February

02/02 – 02/04 – 02/06

02/09 – 02/11 – 02/13

02/16 – 02/18 – 02/20

02/23 – 02/25 – 02/27

March

03/02 – 03/04 – 03/06

[03/09 to 03/15 - SPRING BREAK]

03/16 – 03/18 – **[03/20 No class]**

03/23 – 03/25 – 03/27

03/30 –

April

– 04/01 – 04/03

04/06 – 04/08 – 04/10

04/13 – 04/15 – 04/17

04/20 – 04/22 – 04/24

04/27 – 04/29 –

May

– **[05/01 No class]**

[05/04 - 05/08 Final Exams week]

DEFIBRILLATORS IN THE COLLEGE OF MUSIC

- Music Building: Across from the west side of the Music Commons, directly across from the elevator
- Music Building: Third floor hallway, across from the staircase that comes up from the Copy Room. Next to Room 322
- Music Building: Across from the Copy Room next to Room 293
- Music Building: Voertman Lobby by the big double set of doors that lead out to the courtyard
- Music Building: Main Office (247) under the student worker's desk
- Music Annex: Next to room MA117, near the triple set of doors on the east side of the building
- Music Practice Building North: First floor on the Avenue C side
- Music Practice Building South: First floor on the Avenue C side
- Bain Hall: First floor by the restrooms
- Murchison Performing Arts Center: Located off the main lobby, beyond the grand staircase, across from the single occupancy restroom (next to the public water fountains)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam [or specify alternative sanction, such as course failure]. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students (Office of Academic Integrity), who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

See: [Academic Integrity](#)

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

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

See: [Student Code of Conduct](#)

Link: <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 the website that explains Eagle Connect.

See: [Eagle Connect](#)

LINK: 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. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter. You can now request your Letters of Accommodation ONLINE and ODA will mail your Letters of Accommodation to your instructors. You may wish to begin a private discussion with your professors regarding your specific needs in a course. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access.

See: [ODA](#)

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

Health and Safety Information

Students can access information about health and safety at:

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

Registration Information for Students

See: Spring Academic Calendar Information

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-academic-calendar.html>

Semester Calendar, Spring 2026

See: Spring Semester Calendar

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/sites/default/files/spring-2026-academic-calendar.pdf>

Final Exam Schedule, Spring 2026

See above

Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress

Undergraduates

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total hours registered. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

Students holding music scholarships must maintain a minimum 2.5 overall cumulative GPA and 3.0 cumulative GPA in music courses.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended that you to schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

See: [Financial Aid](#)

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

Graduates

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per term. Music scholarships require a 3.5 cumulative GPA. Students cannot exceed maximum timeframes established based on the published length of the graduate program. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may

lose their financial aid eligibility.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended you schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college, an advisor in UNT-International or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course.

See: [Financial Aid](#)

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

RETENTION OF STUDENT RECORDS

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university's policy in accordance with those mandates.

See: [FERPA](#)

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

COUNSELING AND TESTING

UNT's Center for Counseling and Testing has an available counselor for students in need. 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 resources, please visit:

See: [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.

Drop Information: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-academic-calendar.html>

STUDENT RESOURCES

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

See: [Student Resources](#)

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

CARE TEAM

The Care Team is a collaborative interdisciplinary committee of university officials that meets regularly to provide a response to student, staff, and faculty whose behavior could be harmful to themselves or others.

See: [Care Team](#)

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