

MUCO 2300

Commercial Music Writing and Production

Monday/Wednesday 2pm - 3:20pm

Music Building room 287 (and alternate locations
throughout the semester. Details tbd)

PROFESSOR JEFFREY HEPKER

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OFFICE HOURS: (will be posted in week 2 after studio assignments)
Music Building room 2010.

Course Overview:

This class will explore writing, recording, and production techniques to maximize a song's emotional impact. We will utilize Pro Tools as a primary DAW.

Important Dates:

- No in-class meeting on Monday 1/19 (MLK day) or Monday 2/2.
- Throughout the course, groups will sometimes meet in the UNT College of Music Recording studio. Look to Canvas for details on that.

Credit Load:

This course carries a 3 hour credit load. Students should expect to spend additional 2 to 5 hours each week outside of class preparing. Some weeks will require more time spent working outside of class than others and actual time spent may vary depending on previous experience and knowledge.

Course Objectives / Student Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate intermediate proficiency as an engineer in Pro Tools, knowing the interface, tools and keyboard shortcuts.
- Gain an understanding of common recording studio etiquette and procedures.
 - Compile a shareable portfolio of original projects, including composition sketches and full-length song arrangements.
 - Command basic mixing abilities using levels, panning, corrective signal processing (EQ, compression, etc.), creative signal processing (reverb, delay, distortion, modulation) and automation.

Course Organization

Unit choices will cover some (or all) of the following, split out by modules:

- 1 - Tools of the Producer
- 2 - Pro Tools Basics and Procedures
- 3 - Recording Studio Best Practices
- 4 - Prepping a Recording Session
- 5 - Recording In The Studio
- 6 - Working With Recorded Material

Policies:

- Do not use computers, electronic devices for non-class-related activities (social media, shopping, work for other classes, etc.) during class meetings.
- Instruction begins at 2pm. Please be in your seat and ready to get started at 2pm. Do not log in to the station unless there is a notice on the board to do so.
- Phones are to be silenced and put away during classroom instruction. Some classes will have a "halftime", and you can attend to whatever you need to at that point.
- If I am in lecture, please interrupt me. Ask questions. If I present something you think is inaccurate or incomplete, please disagree with me. If there is something you do not understand, please pause me.
- No food in the classroom. Drinks must be kept on the ground.
- Near the end of each class, I will give you a minute or two to return the station to how you found it, then restart the computer. Please report any issues to me.
- You will be expected to receive all Canvas Announcements. This is how I will be communicating to the class, sometimes on short notice.
- This class is structured in a way that the only way to succeed is to have perfect or near perfect attendance. This is not the class where you can miss many sessions then "cram" for a heavily weighted exam.

Format (Canvas-Driven)

Canvas will be the hub for everything in this course. All lab and project assignments will be submitted online via Canvas. All quizzes will be administered online via Canvas.

Grading Summary:

This course will focus on qualitative not quantitative assessments, as these are the type of assessments you will receive in the professional world.

You will receive a final grade at the end of the semester, as required by university policy, but I will not be conventionally grading individual assignments. Instead, I will be asking questions and making comments that engage your work (and invite you to do so as well) rather than simply evaluate it. Crucially, this course will sometimes stress incorporating that feedback into your subsequent work.

You will be actively involved in deciding your final grade for this course.

How does this work?

You will receive credit/no credit for most assignments. If the assignment is not of a sufficient standard per the rubric or assignment description, you will be allowed to revise or resubmit it, *assuming you originally turned it in on time*. Late work will not have this chance for improvement. Just as late proposals would not be chosen by a client, co-writer, or colleague.

At the end of the semester, you will propose your final grade. The instructor reserves the right to change any final grade to one they feel is a more appropriate reflection of the work submitted, the student's attendance, and general engagement. Student and instructor will continue this conversation until there is agreement on what the final grade should be. The goal is for there to be an alignment of what quality work is and how to create it.

ATTENDANCE, DRAFTS, LATE WORK AND EXTENSION POLICIES:

This is a highly interactive class. There is no replacement for experiences that take place during class time. Attendance is integral to improvement in this area of study. It is also an opportunity to practice professionalism in your work.

The instructor must be notified in advance of an absence or tardy. In the event of an absence, students are still responsible for turning in assignments on time (unless previous arrangements have been made) and staying caught up on what was missed.

Work more than a week late will not be accepted at all unless prior arrangements have been made ahead of time.

Additionally, 3 unexcused absences lowers final grade by one letter grade, 5 unexcused absences lowers two letter grades, 6 or more is an automatic fail.

If you miss a class due to an unexcused absence, please ask your classmates to help you know what you missed.

Preferred Names, Preferred Gender Pronouns

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know (via email or in person). Please, feel free to correct us on your preferred gender pronouns either in person or in writing.

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

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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>