

**Jazz Trombone Applied Lessons
Course Syllabus
University of North Texas
Jazz Trombone Studies; Semesters 1 through 4
3537; 5537; 6537**

Instructor: Nick Finzer

Meeting time: by arrangement;

Trombone Departmental is W 12PM in Voertman Hall

Office: Room MUS 107

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JTBN Day 2025 is Feb 21 & 22, 2026

Goal: To develop a greater understanding and proficiency of the techniques, skills, and concepts of playing the trombone in a variety of professional settings, focusing primarily on jazz and improvisation. Playing a brass instrument requires constant development of technical skills, therefore instrument specific work will be assigned each week.

Course Objective: Students are expected to come to each lesson with an open mind, hard work ethic, and desire to improve each day. Assigned materials should be prepared each week, with the understanding that any past assigned materials may come up again in future lessons. Once the material is assigned, the student will be responsible for that material for the duration of the course. Assignments include but are not limited to: technical and fundamental exercises, etudes, transcriptions, tune learning, sight-reading, scales, patterns, improvisational exercises, compositions, arrangements, and material from performance ensembles and recitals.

Required Materials: Materials will be student specific. Students should expect to be responsible for obtaining any sheet music, CD's or Digital Audio Files, or books as assigned. Access to a working email account is required and signing up for a file sharing service (like Dropbox, Google Drive, etc) will allow the Instructor to share required and supplementary course materials with the student.

- Students are required to join the International Trombone Association and apply for their solo jazz trombone competition. This will be the fall semester project, both years of study.

NOTE: It is highly recommended (but not required) that the student have an audio recording device (Zoom, app on iPhone/iPad, etc) to document sessions to revisit while addressing assigned material between sessions.

- Practice Journal - students will need to obtain a notebook to track weekly lesson assignments and track practice progress.
- Students will be required to fill out yearly goal planning sheets.
- Access to a music streaming service such as Apple Music or Spotify, for listening and transcription assignments. Students may also purchase the recordings in another means, as long as they have access to the recordings in a timely manner.
- Metronome

- Tuner

Transcriptions: Students will have to play each from memory and prepare it in a written format. These will be graded pass/fail.

Method/Etude Books: 120 Melodious Etudes for Trombone (Rochut); Rhythmical Studies (Bitsch), Kopprasch Book 1, JJ Johnson Transcription Book, blank manuscript paper notebook, Bach Cello Suites.

Access to Finale or Sibelius notation software (free basic-level software like "Note Flight" with limited functional capabilities, is not acceptable)

Suggested Materials:

Jamey Aebersold Volumes (any, as applicable), Drum Genius App, Jazz Piano Book (Mark Levine), Harmony Cloud app, access to as many jazz recordings as possible (or a streaming service)

Recital: Students are required to give a recital during the spring semester (or 4th semester) of the second year of study, regardless of their degree requirements. This recital should reflect the work we've done in the current and previous semesters. At least one original composition is required for each program. Students are highly encouraged to pursue performance opportunities each and every semester. Recitals must be 100% memorized. Recitals must be booked in cooperation with major professor. Recital must be booked on a Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday. Students should coordinate recital dates *no later than the first lesson of their final semester* - if this means finding a partner you should do so ahead of time. Recitals must be accompanied by program notes. Dress rehearsal should happen with the band coming to your lesson no later than 1 week before your recital. You may swap lessons times to accommodate your band if needed.

Attendance: Students should expect to arrive to each lesson on time. Tardiness will result in the lowering of the student's final grade by one third (A becomes A-, A- becomes B, etc) starting the third occurrence, and lowered by an additional one third for each subsequent occurrence. If the student will miss ANY scheduled lesson they should be in touch via PHONE. Please leave a voicemail or text message. Excused absences will be rescheduled, unexcused absences will not. Each unexcused absence after the first, will result in the final grade lowered one letter (A becomes B, A- becomes B-, etc).

Make up Lessons: Periodically I will need to cancel and makeup lessons due to travel for performances or other obligations. I will give you notice the week prior if I will be unavailable for the next lesson. Makeup lessons will be scheduled via the links below. The links are always the same. Availability will be updated periodically throughout the semester, and by request. Makeup lessons are not given when students do not give 24 hours notice for missing their lessons, and the instructor's availability. Is it the students' responsibility for scheduling makeup lessons, as necessary. Makeup lessons are not given for ensemble travel, performances, etc You should swap lessons ahead of time to make sure you don't miss out on instructional time.. It is the students responsibility to swap lessons times with a colleague in advance.

Book Makeup Lessons Here: <https://tidycal.com/nickfinzer/unt-makeup-lesson>

*** On May 13, 2020 the UNT Faculty Senate approved the following attendance policy as it relates to the current COVID-19 pandemic:

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.

Communication: All students shall be expected to communicate regularly and expediently via their University of North Texas email accounts. All official correspondence will be required to come through this channel.

Students will be expected to be active members of our community and support one another's activities when possible.

Students are responsible to join and actively read messages in the "Finzer Studio" Whatsapp group, as well as the "U-Tubes" Whatapp group for last minute and important updates.

Grading: Students will be graded based on their measured progress towards goals, overall preparedness, and execution of assigned materials.

- Beginning of Semester Goal Setting (5%)
- Assignment Preparedness/Attendance, and weekly agendas (45%)
- Scales and Tunes Midterm (10%)
- Written Assignments: Transcriptions, Arrangements, etc (20%)
- End of Semester Jury (20% - split 50/50 between your jury packet and performance)

Jury (Fall Semester): The fall semester jury will be held at the end of the semester in Prof. Finzer's Office. You will be required to perform with a live rhythm section. You must provide accurate and detailed charts for the rhythm section. Details of the requirements will be made during the final weeks of the semester but will include:

- The semester's scale or mode workout in any key
- 1 Classical Etude, from the semester's study
- 1 transcription with the rhythm section
- All 5 Studio tunes at the instructor's discretion as assigned for the semester with rhythm section
- All 5 "Your Choice" tunes from the semester

Note: In lieu of a Fall Jury; students may substitute one of the following activities:

- Submission for ITF or ATW Solo Jazz Trombone Competitions
- Submission for Downbeat Student Music Awards
- Submission to Jazz Aspen or other significant Summer Program (to be approved in advance)

Jury (Spring Semester): The spring semester jury will be held at the end of the semester in Prof. Finzer's Office. You will be required to perform with a live rhythm section. You must provide accurate and detailed charts for the rhythm section. Details of the requirements will be made during the final weeks of the semester but will include:

- The semester's scale or mode workout in any key
- 1 Classical Etude, from the semester's study

- 1 transcription with the original recording, and with the rhythm section
- All 5 Studio tunes at the instructor's discretion as assigned for the semester with rhythm section
- All 5 "Your Choice" tunes from the semester

Note: in lieu of a Spring Jury; students may substitute one of the following activities:

- Video recording of a gig where you book and lead a quartet, document at least two rehearsals, develop a program, do all of the arrangements (not calling tunes), speak to the audience, and provide a short written reflection on the gig and what you could improve from a musical and organizational standpoint. This must be approved in advance.

Note: if you do not arrive at your Jury with **2 Hard Copies** and digital submission of your Jury Packet, you will not be allowed to perform and will receive a "0"

Jury Packets: Each semester, you must create a physical (and digital copy) jury packet that highlights all of the work done throughout the semester collected into one place.. ***This is due AT or before your jury. Jury packets are due even if you opt for an alternate assignment.***

To Include:

- Lead sheets (in your hand or copy work) of 5 studio tunes and 5 "Your Choice" tunes
- Arrangements or original tunes worked on
- All transcriptions
- Etudes and Technical Exercises
- Lists of tunes learned

Trombone Studio Departmental: Each week the Jazz Trombone studio will combine with the rest of the trombone studios for our departmental. 12pm - 1250pm in Voertman Concert Hall. ***Attendance is required for those enrolled in applied jazz trombone study.*** Private teaching and outside jobs are not acceptable conflicts. Only unavoidable conflicts are acceptable excuses and must be approved by the trombone faculty. Students should plan to use this time to present music they have been working and feel passionate about sharing.

Notes on Departmental Performances: Each Semester, each student is required to perform **at least** once. This shouldn't be a last minute thrown together performance. The performance should include a rhythm section of at least 2 members (a full trio is preferred).

You must follow all program submission deadlines as advised by the Overall Trombone Studio

New attendance policy

Students are required to attend trombone departmentals, trombone ensemble rehearsals and performances, guest artist performances and masterclasses and trombone faculty performances and masterclasses. Students are also required to attend a minimum of **three** off-campus performances of a professional (non-scholastic) ensemble, i.e. Dallas and Fort Worth Symphonies, Dallas Opera, Dallas Winds, etc. At least *one* of these ensemble performances must feature a style of music outside of the student's discipline, i.e. if you're a performance major, one of your off-campus performances can feature jazz. The student will submit to their teacher a minimum ½ page description of each performance by the end of the semester.

Students are expected *but not required* to attend student recitals and large ensemble performances involving trombone (Note: your large ensemble may have its own attendance policy). However, attendance *will* be taken at all trombone events, regardless of whether or not the event is required.

Scales & Tunes Tests:

East semester, jazz trombone students will be required to take a “Scales & Tunes” test that will count as a “Mid-Term” grade, during Mid-Term week. Please see the additional handout relevant to each semester’s Scales & Tunes assignment for the most up-to-date information - the Jazz Scales and tunes are similar but different, from the general Trombone studio’s Scales and Tunes exam. ***Students who do not pass this test will not proceed with new lesson material until this is passed.*** Students may pass out of the scale portion of the test by receiving a perfect score.

Week to Week Assignments and Workflow:

Assignments will vary week to week and in the order deemed most effective by the instructor. However, the following workflow should be followed each week:

- Each week, the student will be expected to send an updated agenda via email 24 Hours before their lesson time. This will be on a shared document. The agenda should correspond to what will be covered on that date (that is an agenda for 8/29 should be the agenda for that lesson, 9/5 for that lesson - NOT the assignment for the following week.) Students should track assignments each week via a method of their choosing.
 - The agenda shall include:
 - All Assignments from their Professor. For each and every lesson you should have prepared:
 - Scale Workout
 - Tune(s) of the week
 - Transcription (new material each week)
 - Technical Studies
 - Etudes (as assigned)
 - Questions/Topics that need addressing
 - Future projects or goals
 - All rollover materials from prior lessons
- Students should know that if we do not play all lesson materials in a given lesson, it is expected that we can circle back to it. Do not forget about prior materials.
- It is highly recommended that you record your lessons to be able to remember

Note: All lessons must have an agenda submitted. No lesson will be given without the agenda sent, and will not be made up.

Essential Topics for Every Semester

- Sound and Sound Concept Development
- Articulation Studies
- Flexibility Studies
- Swing Eighth Note Flow Studies
- One Key per week of the assigned Scale/Key Workout
- Arpeggiating chord symbols (and inversions) throughout the range of the instrument.
- 4 Transcriptions from Memory with and Without the original recording
 - OR learn 1 whole album - melody/arrangement/1 solo trombone or not
- 5 tunes from the jazz canon, as assigned.

The following is a guide. Individual attention will be given to the curriculum to cater to the students needs/interests. The specific transcriptions, tunes, and patterns will change.

Semester 1

- Major Scale Workout (in 12 keys, one per week)
- 12 transcribed bebop phrases (in 12 keys, one per week)
- Rochut and Kopprasch Etudes as assigned.
- Prepare and Record Material for International Trombone Association Carl Fontana (or JJ Johnson) Jazz Trombone Competitions. (Also American Trombone Workshop)
- 1 JJ Johnson Solos Transcribed by ear, played with and without recording, and written.
 - "Billie's Bounce" (from *Live at the Opera House*)
- 1 Curtis Fuller Solos Transcribed by ear, played with and without recording, and written.
 - "Blue Train" (from John Coltrane's *Blue Train*)
- 1 Bennie Green Solo
 - "Why Do I Love You"
- 1 non-trombone solo to be selected by the student (and mutually agreed upon) transcribed by ear, played with and without recording, and written.
- Jazz Repertoire to Study
 - Jazz Standards:
 - It Could Happen To You (Jimmy Van Heusen)
 - Alone Together (Schwartz/Dietz)
 - What is this Thing Called Love (Cole Porter)
 - Bebop Study
 - Scapple from the Apple (Charlie Parker)
 - Blues for Alice (Charlie Parker)
 - Anthropology (Charlie Parker)
 - Ballads:
 - Body and Soul (Johnny Green)
 - My One and Only Love (Guy Wood)

Semester 2

- Major Mode Workout (in 12 keys, one per week)
- 12 transcribed bebop phrases (in 12 keys, one per week)
- Rochut and Kopprasch Etudes as assigned.
- At least 1 Original Composition and Arrangement for Small Group

- Preparation for Recital; write original music and arrangements, select tunes, rehearsals, etc.
- 1 JJ Johnson Solos Transcribed by ear, played with and without recording, and written.
 - “Yesterdays” (from *Live at the Opera House*)
- 1 Curtis Fuller Solos Transcribed by ear, played with and without recording, and written.
 - “What is This Thing Called Love” (from *New Trombone*)
- 1 Lawrence Brown Solo
 - “Down the Street ‘Round the Corner Blues” (from *Slide Trombone*)
- 1 non-trombone solo to be selected by the student (and mutually agreed upon) Transcribed by ear, played with and without recording, and written.
- Jazz Repertoire to Study
 - Jazz Standards:
 - Have You Met Miss Jones (Rodgers and Hart)
 - Stella by Starlight (Victor Young)
 - If I Were a Bell (Frank Loesser)
 - Bebop Study
 - Confirmation (Parker)
 - Ornithology (Parker)
 - Four (Miles Davis)
 - Ballads:
 - In a Sentimental Mood (Duke Ellington)
 - My Funny Valentine (Rogers and Hart)

Semester 3

- Melodic Minor Scale Workout (in 12 keys, one per week)
- 12 transcribed bebop phrases (in 12 keys per week)
- Bach Cello Suite Study as Assigned
- Bitsch Etudes as Assigned
- Prepare and Record Material for International Trombone Association Carl Fontana (or JJ Johnson) Jazz Trombone Competitions.
- JJ Johnson Solos Transcribed by ear, played with and without recording, and written.
 - “Laura” (from *In Person!*)
- Curtis Fuller Solos Transcribed by ear, played with and without recording, and written.
 - “It’s Alright with Me” (from *Meet the Jazztet*)
- Jazz Repertoire to Study
 - Jazz Standards:
 - My Romance (Rogers and Hart)
 - Soon (George Gershwin)
 - Jazz Compositions:
 - Airegin (Sonny Rollins)
 - Joy Spring (Clifford Brown)
 - Bebop Study
 - Donna Lee (Davis/Parker)
 - Hot House (Dizzy Gillespie)
 - Ballads:
 - Polka Dots and Moonbeams (Jimmy Van Heusen)
 - I’m Getting Sentimental Over You (George Bassman)

Semester 4

- Melodic Minor Mode Workout (in 12 keys, one per week)
- 12 transcribed bebop phrases (in 12 keys per week)
- Bach Cello Suites (as assigned)
- Bitsch Etudes (as assigned)
- At least 1 Original Composition and Arrangement for Small Group
- Preparation for Recital; write original music and arrangements, select tunes, rehearsals, etc.
- JJ Johnson Solo Transcribed by ear, played with and without recording, and written.
 - “Misterioso” (from *In Person!*)
- Curtis Fuller Solo Transcribed by ear, played with and without recording, and written.
 - “Five Spot After Dark” (from *Blues-ette*)
- Jazz Repertoire to Study
 - Jazz Standards:
 - But Not For Me (George Gershwin)
 - Yesterdays (Jerome Kern)
 - Jazz Compositions:
 - Recordame (Joe Henderson)
 - Woody ‘n You (Dizzy Gillespie)
 - Bebop Study
 - Milestones (John Lewis)
 - Bouncin with Bud (Bud Powell)
 - Ballads:
 - Darn that Dream (Jimmy Van Heusen)
 - A Flower is A Lovesome Thing (Strayhorn)

**** Note ****

This Syllabus will be tailored to meet the needs of each student, additional or other repertoires will be on a per assignment basis. Updates to this syllabus will be made periodically, and students will be notified of any changes, additions, or subtractions.

****updated for Spring 2026****

Course Syllabi Information

For complete information on course syllabi requirements, please see the [university's policy](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049).
(<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049>)

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>