Beginner Afro-Cuban Ensemble

An Introduction to Latin American Percussion

MUCM 3617.512

MUEN 5617.512

T-TH 3:00-3:50 pm

Bain Hall 101

Semester: Fall 2026

Instructor: José M. Aponte

Email: Jose.Aponte@unt.edu

Office Hours: By appointment. Bain Hall 201

Course Purpose: To provide the student with the basic concepts of the most commonly known Afro-Latin American music styles, popular and folkloric. The course will emphasize Afro-Latin percussion performance practices and techniques, a brief history of Afro-Spanish Caribbean and Brazilian music cultures, and an introductory study of the leading artists/masters of the language. The information acquired by the student through lectures, research, and live performances will provide a solid general foundation in the language. The newly acquired knowledge will serve the student well in improving their musical abilities as a listener, performer, composer, arranger, and music educator.

Attendance Policy:

1. Since all information and practical experience will be provided in class, attendance is MANDATORY. **Any more than two (2) absences will lower the final grade, one letter grade per absence.** Students should give notice if they cannot attend class. The absence notification will only be sent by text or email before class. **The students will be responsible for the material covered in class during their absence.**

2. It is **IMPERATIVE** to **be on time for class and rehearsals**. Students who consistently show up late for class without a reasonable excuse will be penalized by **a reduction in their final grade.**
3. **Concert and performance times are subject to sudden changes. Dress rehearsals will take up to three (3) hours, and it is not recommended to schedule students' activities on the same day as the dress rehearsal or performance. Failure to attend and participate in the semester's final concert, dress rehearsal, or any other public or private performance will result in a failing grade.**

Ways of Communication:

1. Email: **Only a UNT email address will be accepted.**
2. **GroupMe Chat Service -**Scan the QR code in the module section.
3. All class members must complete this task by the end of **week 1** (**Thursday, August 20, 2026).**
4. **The student will be responsible for attending any unscheduled task, activity, or performance that may be announced via the chat service or UNT email.**

Rehearsal Room Use Policy:

1. After every class/rehearsal, all ensemble members must organize the room into a class format, following the organizational format posted at the door. **No one will be dismissed until the room is in order.**
2. **All ensemble members** will help store the equipment in the storage room in an organized manner and lock the door when finished. The **storage room door should be permanently closed when not in use.**
3. After chores are done, please review the room for any trash that can be collected and deposited in the garbage container on your way out.
4. The default status of the room (Bain101) doors is **"locked"** when they are not in use. **All Performance, Jazz Studies, or Music Ed Students must ensure all doors** are **closed** and **locked** on the way out.

Performance Dress Code: For the ensemble's concerts and performances, you must wear white pants or white skirts (ladies only, please). Failure to comply with this requirement will lower the **final grade.**

Hearing Protection is Required for this Course:

Hearing protection is **MANDATORY** for every student registered. The UNT Speech and Hearing CenterLinks to an external site. will provide a hearing test to every enrolled UNT student for a flat fee of $25. In addition, "musician's ear plugs" can be purchased at the clinic for around $200. The College of Music provides foam ear plugs at no charge; students can pick these up from the repair shop in the Music Annex, room 106.

Grading Policy:

1. **Concert Performance is 5% of the Final Grade. The semester concert will feature musical pieces from the Afro-Spanish Caribbean folkloric repertoire.**
2. **One Comprehensive Final Exam is 50% of the Final Grade. All information presented in lectures, handouts, student class presentations, and performances will be examined on the test.**
3. **One Playing Exam** is **20 % of the Final Grade**. The class will be divided into groups. Each group will test on the cáscara/campaneo modes on Tumbadoras, Bongó, and Timbal.
4. **Group Styles Research and Class Presentation are 20% of the Final Grade**(Read Group Styles Research and Class Presentation section).
5. **Listening Test is 5% of the Final Grade:** The class will be tested on the aural identification of a variety of styles from the Latin American repertoire studied in class.

Group Styles Research and Class Presentation:

1. The class will be divided into groups by style for their PowerPoint presentations. Each student or group will be assigned to give a 15-minute class presentation on a Folkloric/Popular Cuban Music Style.
2. The student or group will provide a handout of min. 2/max. Four pages long for each student in class, based on the format found in the **Styles Research Handout Format** provided in the Modules section of this CANVAS page.
3. The use of audiovisual material is highly expected. (PowerPoint, CD Tracks, YouTube, etc.)
4. Only information from scholarly sources (Textbooks, biographies, dissertations, periodicals, documents, and CD/LP cover reviews) will be admitted. Wikipedia is a good starting point for information searches, but it is unreliable as scholarly documentation and

will not be admitted as a bibliographic source. A minimum of 4 sources (only one Online entry of the fourth required source) is required on the handout.

5. The 4th Floor of Willis Library (A.K.A UNT College of Music Library) has many text resources to assist you. These resources will only be used in the library. I intend to make them available to all class members and to familiarize everyone with the resources accessible at our music library. Also, **meet your librarians**. They are there to assist you in making your quest for knowledge enjoyable.
6. A word of advice: **Rehearse your presentation and time it.** This will help you to manage your limited time and focus on communicating the most essential features of the material you are presenting.

SPOT Evaluations:

All class and ensemble members are encouraged to evaluate this course and its instructor at the end of the semester. Your opinions and views as students are precious to us faculty members. It helps us improve and become more effective in our mission to assist with your growth and education.

Class Schedule:

WEEK 1

TUES. Clave: An Afro-Cuban Rhythmic Concept.

THUR. Clave: An Afro-Cuban Rhythmic Concept.

WEEK 2

TUES. Congas/Tumbadoras: Sounds, Hand Technique and Tumbao.

THUR. Congas/Tumbadoras

WEEK 3

TUES. Bongó: Sounds, Technique, and Martillo

THUR. Bongó and Campana.

WEEK 4

TUES. Timbales: Sound, Technique, and Flow.

THUR. Timbales: Transitions

WEEK 5

TUES. The Cuban Percussion Trio in popular styles

THUR. The Cuban Percussion Trio continues.

WEEK 6

TUES. **Mid-Term Evaluation** (playing exam).

THUR. **Mid-Term Evaluation** (playing exam).

WEEK 7

TUES. Afro -Cuban 6/8 Styles (Bembe, Abakua, Iyesa, and others) **(6/8 presentation)**

THUR. Afro -Cuban 6/8 Styles (continues).

WEEK 8

TUES. The Rumba Complex: Yambú, Guaguancó and Colúmbia **(Rumba presentation)**

THUR. The Rumba Complex (continues).

WEEK 9

TUES. Intro to Afro Puerto Rican Styles (**Bomba presentation)**)

THUR. Intro to Afro Puerto Rican Styles (continues).

WEEK 10

TUES. An Overview of Cuban Popular Styles (**Danzon, Son, presentation**).

THUR. An Overview of Cuban Popular Styles **(Mambo, Cha-Cha-Cha, presentation).**

WEEK 11

TUES. An Overview of Cuban Popular Styles **(Bolero, Songo presentation)**

THUR. An Overview of Cuban Popular Styles (open)

WEEK 12

TUES. Discussion: What **is Salsa?**

THUR. Discussion: **What is Salsa?** (Continues).

WEEK 13

TUES. Review and Q&A session

THUR. **Listening Test.**

Finals Week: **Final Comprehensive Written Test.**

During Class Time (either TUES. or THURS.)

Course Policy on the Use of Generative AI Tools

To support your learning effectively, complete all graded assignments independently, avoiding any use of generative AI. Do not use AI tools to create content such as text, video, audio, images, code, or other materials for assignments or classroom activities. Submitting AI-generated content as your own, whether by copying, pasting, or paraphrasing, violates UNT's academic integrity policy. If you have questions about the appropriate use of generative AI in this course, please contact me via email or in person.

Important Student Information

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: Fall Academic Calendar Information

Link: https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html

Semester Calendar, Fall 2026

See: Fall Semester Calendar

Link: https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html

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

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/fall-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

Additional Resources for Faculty

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (including sample statement for syllabi)

See: Faculty Guide for the Use of AI

Link: https://guides.library.unt.edu/artificial-intelligence/AIfaculty

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/