

**MUSC 3603**  
**PERCUSSION TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS**  
UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA—DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Instructor:** Dr. Josh Byrd  
**Office:** HUM 340  
**Phone:** 678-839-6267  
**Email:** jbyrd@westga.edu

**Term:** Fall 2017  
**Class Times:** Monday 5:30-8:00 pm  
**Location:** HUM 331  
**Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Course Description:**

Principles, fundamentals, and techniques of playing and teaching pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments. Includes a survey of instructional materials and literature for percussion instruments.

*Please note that the information contained in this syllabus may be altered  
by the instructor at any point during the semester  
in order to adapt to the pace or needs specific to the current class.*

**Class Objectives:**

The primary objective of this class is to educate students in contemporary percussion rehearsal and performance techniques, current trends in education, and the many facets that make up and affect the percussion section within a band program.

1. Understand a variety of rudiments and stickings
2. Communicate how to play scales on mallet instruments using patterns
3. Understand the importance mallet and implement selection in percussion music
4. Develop a stance on mallet ownership in the classroom
5. Describe the differences between rehearsing a percussion ensemble/section and a group of wind players
6. Understand the assembly, care, and maintenance of percussion instruments
7. Detail the different approaches to marching percussion instruments and performance techniques
8. Understand the different method books, warm up concepts, and sound philosophies available to today's percussionists
9. Demonstrate proper instrument placement, grips, hand positions, setup, and posture
10. Describe the acoustic characteristics of each instrument (and the different approaches for each individual instrument)
11. Learn to identify and solve common performance and behavioral problems with high school and middle school percussion students
12. Develop a basic understanding of the method books and literature available to percussion students on all of the major instruments
13. Develop thorough score preparation techniques along with a *musical* approach to rehearsals and performances
14. List instrument purchase availability and price ranges
15. Be able to incorporate/adapt high school and middle school percussion sections into a variety of band rehearsal schedules
16. List, evaluate, process, and adapt techniques witnessed in observations
17. Describe how composers have and are currently using percussion in works for band and percussion ensemble
18. Become familiar with GMEA's audition requirements for percussion
19. Detail the practical and acoustic ranges of each percussion instrument covered in class
20. Develop a personal philosophy for everything listed above

### **Required Materials:**

1. Metronome
2. Assigned scores, readings, and recordings
3. Camera (phone, laptop, etc.)
4. DropBox or GoogleDrive
5. Paper/pencil (for taking notes **that will go in your notebook!!!**)
6. Percussion sticks/drum pad (**due at the beginning of Week 2**)<sup>i</sup>
  - Glenn Steele Finale Concert snare sticks: approximately \$10
  - Evans Real Feel Practice Pad: approximately \$30
    - **SteveWeiss.com** or **LoneStarPercussion.com** are great sites to find/purchase your sticks and pad
7. Notebook for compiling handouts
  - It is Dr. Byrd's intention that this notebook will become your percussion "textbook" for the rest of your career (or at least the beginning!)

### **Class Activities:**

1. Assigned skills preparation
2. Playing exams
3. Lectures and *discussion* of all class topics—**TAKE NOTES!!!**
4. Observe 1 hour of percussion ensemble rehearsal and evaluate
5. Literature reviews (books, scores, CDs)
6. Guest speakers
7. Exams/Tests
8. Projects

### **Attendance Policy:**

Do not miss class or arrive late to class. If you must miss a class, please email Dr. Byrd at least one day in advance.<sup>ii</sup> Following one **excused** absence your grade will be lowered by a full letter (A to B, etc.) for each subsequent absence. *Any unexcused absence will immediately result in a grade change.* **Late entrances will not be tolerated and may result in students being marked absent for that class day.** Should a student not be able to attend a class, he/she is responsible for the information and assignments covered in class. Presentations and assignments must be completed on their assigned day, no later than 5:00 p.m. for written assignments (30 minutes prior to class).

### **Student Expectations:**

Because this is a course specifically related to teaching, particular emphasis will be placed on professionalism through attire, punctuality, and preparation. All assignments must be completed and turned in on time. Late work will rarely be accepted, even if you were absent from class that day. Again, the purpose of this class is to prepare you for the professional world!

### **Email Policy:**

*PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY EMAIL MISSING A SUBJECT, HEADER, GREETING, EMAIL BODY, AND/OR SIGNATURE MAY NOT BE ANSWERED.*

### **Evaluation:**

Students are graded on the quality of work done on weekly assignments, exams, projects, and their ability to articulate concepts and philosophies both verbally and in writing. The instructor will evaluate the quality of work done on course assignments, papers, and

presentations and class participation. Work must be completed and turned in on time in order to receive credit. **All work (aside from class notes) must be typed!**

The following formula will be used to determine your semester grade:

Homework	10%
In-class Assignments and Participation	10%
Projects	25%
Tests	15%
Playing assignments/tests	10%
Percussion Ensemble Concert Observation	5%
Final Exam (written)	15%
Final Exam (playing/instruction)	10%

**Grade Scale:**

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

**University of West Georgia Honor Code:**

Please refer to the University's honor code regarding academic honesty and student integrity (<http://www.westga.edu/~handbook/index.php?page=honorcode>).

**Disability Services:**

All students are provided with equal access to classes and materials, regardless of special needs, temporary or permanent disability, special needs related to pregnancy, etc. If you have any special learning needs, particularly (but not limited to) needs defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and require specific accommodations, please do not hesitate to make those known, either yourself or through the Coordinator of Disability Services. Students with documented special needs may expect accommodation in relation to classroom accessibility, modification of testing, special test administration, etc. For more information, please contact Disability Services at the University of West Georgia. Any student with a disability documented through Student Services is encouraged to contact the professor right away so that appropriate accommodations may be arranged. In addition, certain accommodations (which will be discussed in class) are available to all students, within constraints of time and space.

### Notable Dates:

- Monday, September 4—Labor Day
- Monday, November 20-Friday, November 24—Thanksgiving Break

### Standard Class Procedures:

- Rhythm and Sticking examples, “Rudiment” of the Day
- Percussion Part/Score analysis
- New Instruments
- Instrument Care/Maintenance
- Pad work/Drum Exercises (pads must be in class by August 22<sup>nd</sup>!)

### Tentative Calendar:

Week 1	Introductions, Syllabus, Survey, Natural sticking (from beginners through professionals), Counting systems, “Old School” percussion notation, 4-mallets: The Stevens grip, Metallic Pitched Instruments: Bells/Vibraphone/Chimes/Crotales, Vibe and Chime pedal care and maintenance, “8 on a hand” exercise, Accent and Taps exercise, <b>HOMEWORK:</b> purchase pad, sticks, and a class notebook, <b>PROJECT #1 OVERVIEW (PURCHASING)</b>
Week 2	16 <sup>th</sup> note combinations/sticking, Buzz Rolls versus Diddles, “The Roll Base,” 4-mallet checkup (be ready for it at ANY TIME!), Ambiguous percussion notation, Bass drum and Tam-tam, Cymbal stands, Trap tables, Tom stands, and Snare stands: The Magic and Mystery, 8 on a hand exercise, Accent and Taps exercise, Double Beat exercise, <b>HOMEWORK:</b> Roll Base and Sticking Worksheet #1, <b>DRUMSTICKS AND PAD DUE</b> <sup>iii</sup>
Week 3	Triplet combinations/sticking, “Rudiment” of the Week: Das Flam (The Flam), Part Assignments, Toys: Vibraslap, Cowbell, Flexatone, Bird whistle, Brake Drum, Wind chimes, Mark Tree (bell tree), Slapstick, Snare care and maintenance, Double Beat exercise, 16 <sup>th</sup> Rolls exercise, <b>HOMEWORK:</b> Roll Base and Sticking Worksheet #2, <b>PROJECT #1 DUE</b>
Week 4	<i>NO CLASS (Labor Day)</i> , <b>Video submissions due (playing test #1)</b> <sup>iv</sup>
Week 5	4-mallets: The Burton grip, Xylophone and Marimba, Restringing a Marimba, <b>TEST #1</b>
Week 6	Duple and Triple shift combinations/sticking, “Rudiment” of the Week: Das Diddle (The Diddle) and 5/7/9-stroke rolls, 4-mallet checkup (from here on out these are possible in any class at any time), Xylophone and Marimba continued, Tuning and muffling a snare drum or tom head, Accents and Taps exercise, 16 <sup>th</sup> Timing Exercise, <b>HOMEWORK:</b> Score preparation, <b>PROJECT #2 OVERVIEW</b>
Week 7	Part/Score Analysis, “Rudiment” of the Week: The Paradiddle—“The One <i>EVERYONE</i> Knows,” Accents and Taps exercise, Cymbal notation, Crash and Suspended Cymbals, Cymbal care and maintenance
Week 8	Marching Percussion arrangements, “Rudiments” of the Week: The Paradiddlediddle, Flam Accents/Drags/Cheeses, Marching Percussion: Snares, Tenors, and Bases, Drumline care and

	maintenance: heads, muffling, safety pins, lugs, and rim guards, Splitting Bass Drum notes, <b>HOMEWORK:</b> Write your own cadence, <b>PROJECT #2 DUE, PROJECT #3 OVERVIEW</b>
Week 9	<b>Cadences due</b> (we will play through these in class!!!)
Week 10	<b>TEST #2</b> , “Rudiments” of the Week: The Ruff/Drag, Tambourine and Triangle, Continue work on Project #2 performances (if needed)
Week 11	Timpani (guest speaker)
Week 12	“Drum Talk,” Class Procedures (mallet ownership, scheduling, setup, behavior, hearing protection, etc.), Drumset Notation, Drumset, Drumset care and maintenance, Independence exercises, <b>PROJECT #3 DUE</b>
Week 13	<b>TEST #3, Percussion Ensemble Projects due</b> (we will play through these in class!!!); <b>video submissions (playing test #2)</b>
Week 14	GMEA requirements, Latin Percussion and patterns, Class Wrap-up, Course Evaluations, <b>FINAL WRITTEN EXAM OVERVIEW</b>
Week 15	<i>NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)</i>
Week 16	<b>FINAL EXAM AND PLAYING TESTS (1 hour written and 5 minute performance exam time slots)</b>

---

<sup>i</sup> Trust me on these purchases... plus, we aren’t using a \$250 textbook.

<sup>ii</sup> Please use the UWG email system for all communications. Examples of excused absences may include but are not limited to—with documentation where applicable—family emergencies, illness, and Music Department trips. When in doubt whether or not an absence will be excused... ASK!

<sup>iii</sup> From this point forward lack of materials will begin to affect your participation grade in class. You will need the proper equipment for this course, particularly the playing tests!

<sup>iv</sup> **Video submissions need to be a single file sent via DropBox, Google Drive, etc.**