Master of Music in Instrumental Conducting

Syllabus Spring 2026

Advanced Conducting Project

MUSG - 5349

Professor: Dr. Brandon Houghtalen
Course Dates: January 20-May 7
Email: bhoughtalen@utep.edu
Phone: 915-747-7796
Faculty Availability: bhoughtalen@utep.edu, office phone

Contact: I will be checking in on the course at least once a day M-F (unless otherwise notified). I am also very willing and happy to communicate individually with students as needed. If you contact me individually, my commitment is to respond to you in 24 hours or less on weekdays. If you must reschedule a meeting, please notify me as long in advance as possible, but no less than 24 hours in advance.

Faculty Expectations of Students:

Each student will set up a time with their professor to decide upon the repertoire that will be used to completion of this project. That information will allow the student to work independently on the written portion of the project while compiling the video footage necessary for completion of the project. The student will also be self-evaluating the conducting on the videos and working with their applied teacher as to what footage will be used for the final project.

Instructional Time: Student will spend approximately 5 hours (on average) per week preparing written assignments, planning and recording video footage, and completing self-assessments of video footage.

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to synthesize all aspects of conducting including score study/marking, interpretation analysis and rehearsal techniques/strategies the student has refined over their course of study. On a weekly basis, (or as structured by the student and teacher) each student will be required to submit the materials assigned working towards the completion and submission of the project. The Advanced Conducting Project will consist of both a written document and a video compilation.

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Course Objectives

1. To gain and develop a greater sense of awareness in the process of analysis.
2. To enhance and grow theoretical knowledge by in-depth analysis.
3. To gain experience writing "publishable quality" research pertaining to selected wind band literature.
4. To enhanced one's ability to self-assess their own visual representation of a composition which is vital for continued personal growth upon completion of the degree.

Textbook and Other Course Materials: Required

Turabian, Kate L. *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 9th ed.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Course Artifacts

1. **Written Component**

   The written document for the Advanced Conducting Project will consist of a series of publishable-quality conductor's articles/analyses of works in the major area of study, selected in consultation with the professor. Two of the articles will be considered major and the remainder will be minor. The format and length for the minor articles aligns with standard program notes—no fewer than five but no more than fifteen sentences. The suggested format and length for the 2 major articles/analyses is to be found in the teaching guides in the following books:

   Miles, et. al. *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* (GIA Publications: 1996)

   The number of actual works will vary based on program/track, but the total performance time of the works should amount to a full-length concert program (45- 50 minutes). All work should reflect your own work/research, including proper citations.

2. **Video Component**

   For the video compilation of the Advanced Conducting Project, the student will compile videos (face-on to the camera) of the student in a series of performance videos. The conducting videos will most likely include multiple groups on multiple dates. All of the conducting performances on the compilation should have occurred since the student began the M.M. program at the University of Texas at El Paso. The total length of the compilation should be approximately 45-50 minutes.

3. **Self-Assessment**

   This is not a scholarly document. This is a first-person, journal-type document which allows the student to reflect upon their journey through the M.M. in Instrumental Conducting program. The reflection should speak to the student's growth and learning in the program as well as directions for future learning and career aspirations.

Course Requirements:

In this course, students in the M.M. degree in Conducting complete their capstone project. The course requires a written document as well as a video compilation of the candidate conducting live ensemble performances. While the recording does not need to be from one concert, it must involve a compilation whose total length is the equivalent of a concert-length public performance (approximately 45-50 minutes, as specified in this syllabus).

All materials (both written and video) must be submitted to their professor by the deadlines stated in the course schedule. Week 2 begins Monday of the second week of classes. **Before** means before midnight the day before. All deviations of this schedule are under the discretion of the professor.

Course Schedule:

Before Week 2: First meeting, syllabus, expectations, course schedule
Before Week 3: First major article subject decided upon
Before Week 5: Remaining repertoire decided upon AND first video component due
Before Week 6: first major article due
Before Week 7: with instructor approval, begin assembling committee, if applicable
Before Week 10: Second major and first minor article due
Before Week 11: Written Component finished and submitted AND committee chosen, and date/time of oral defense scheduled with committee, if applicable
Before Week 13: Video Component finished and submitted (with the possibility of material from a concert to be added before the end of the course at the discretion of the professor).
Before the last day of class: Self-assessment due

Grading:

1. Written Component 40%
   Timeliness, grammar/syntax, academic voice, adherence to style guidelines, content, etc.
2. Video Component 40%
   Timeliness, visual quality, audio quality, sound/video synchronization, content, etc.
3. Self-assessment 20%
   Timeliness, depth of reflection, completeness

TOTAL FINAL GRADE **100%**

Students that must miss deadlines must notify the instructor ***in advance*** (preferably one full week before the due date) to alter the agreed upon schedule. A message may be left via voice mail at 915-747-7796, email, or by leaving a note on my office door. A request may or may not be granted, at the discretion of the professor. Emergencies happen, but what qualifies as an emergency is defined by the instructor.

Academic Integrity:

The International Center for Academic Integrity, comprised of a consortium of universities worldwide, defines academic integrity as "a commitment to fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals into action." As they relate to students, these values can be defined as follows:

Honesty: "adhering to standards of truthfulness and integrity"
Trust: participating in "an environment of confidence"
Fairness: abiding by the "standards, practices, and procedures" outlined by your instructors and institution
Respect: "encouraging a wide range of opinions and ideas"
Responsibility: assuming personal accountability and accepting sanctions in cases of misconduct.

Students are responsible for adhering to the above standards in all academic activity and refraining from all forms of academic dishonesty.

According to the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures, academic dishonesty includes committing (or attempting to commit) the following:

- Plagiarism – taking credit for work that is not your own (e.g., copying and pasting from the internet, failing to cite sources of information, failing to attribute direct quotes to their original author, or submitting your work from another course without prior permission).
- Cheating – This includes copying another student's work during an exam; using notes, books, or electronic devices during an exam without prior permission; taking an exam for another student; and communicating with or helping another student during an exam.
- Collusion – any collaboration with another student without the permission of the instructor.

Americans with Disabilities Act:

If you have or believe you have a disability that may impact your ability to succeed in a class, whether it be online or face-to-face, you may wish to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) to show documentation of a disability or

to register for testing and services. Students who have been designated as disabled must reactivate their standing with the CASS yearly.

If you feel that you may have a disability requiring accommodations and/or modifications, contact CASS: E: cass@utep.edu
P: (915) 747-5148

You also can visit the CASS website at https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/ or the CASS office in Room 108 East Union Building.

This course is ADA compliant by providing PDF's and closed captioning for multimedia when needed.

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students who become pregnant may also request reasonable accommodations, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy. Accommodations that constitute undue hardship are not reasonable. To make a request, please register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact CASS at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

Communicating Effectively:

Learning online is not a spectator sport. It is everyone's responsibility to participate as fully as they can so everyone can get the most from the experience. Here are some simple tips to follow to ensure your participation and engagement in the learning process:

Ask questions: If you don't know the answer, someone else will.

Reach out to others: Offer a fact, article, link or other item that can help others learn from something you can share.

Be appropriate: The online classroom is not the place for insulting or insensitive comments, attacks, or venting. Inappropriate behavior will usually subject to disciplinary action, as well.

Be diplomatic: When sending messages on emotionally charged topics, make sure you write the message and then walk away for at least an hour before rereading the message and then sending it. Re-reading emotionally charged messages ensures that they are constructive instead of destructive. Think of the person at the other end.

Stay focused: Stay on topic to increase the efficiency of your learning.

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Statement for (N) etiquette:

When communicating electronically, many of the feelings or impressions that are transmitted via body language in face-to-face communications are lost. Consequently, interpreting emotions and innuendos is much more difficult. Only what is written, or drawn, carries the message. Often, excitement can be misinterpreted as anger or insult. It is important that we all keep this in mind as we communicate. Words in print may seem harmless, but they could emotionally injure us when working at a distance. Hence, it is vitally important that we are conscious of how we communicate while working at a distance.

For example, avoid the use of caps in your electronic messages, as wording in caps comes across as shouting. The standard practice ("Netiquette") for participation in networked discussion requires that all participation be focused on the topic at hand, not become personalized, and be substantive in nature. (Translation: you may certainly disagree with others, but you must do so respectfully; you may express strong beliefs or emotions, but you may not get so carried away that you lose all perspective on the course itself.)

Please observe the following:

- You are required to check the Blackboard course shell daily for messages, updates and assignments.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to fellow classmates and the instructor at all times, in all contexts. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- Be professional and careful in what you say about others.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address and focus on the ideas, not the person who posted them.
- Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications your joke may be viewed as criticism.

Tech Support Tools and Resources:

Everything you need to help support you in a class that uses an online environment like Blackboard--can be found here:

Learning Remotely at UTEP

Technology Checklist:

As you prepare to take an online course at UTEP, we want to share with you some basic information about technology to make this a successful experience. Having your computer requirements checked and all software up to date is essential to access course content. Please take some time to read through this page and ensure you have the information you need to get successfully started.

Supported Browsers
For a PC: Firefox and Chrome **For a Mac:** Firefox and Chrome

Additional Software

When creating documents, slide presentations, spreadsheets, etc., you should use Microsoft Office. The UTEP Technology Support Services (3rd floor, UTEP Library) can also provide you with any applications, compatibility packs, patches, and updates you may need. You can also get the entire Microsoft Office Suite for FREE!

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Due to the nature of the course, the use of AI of any kind is permitted only in the final revision phase of the written portion. If the student chooses to use AI, its use must be approved of and documented.

AI tools may be used in the video production component, but again, its use must be approved of prior to any deadline and documented.

The student is responsible for gaining permission from the instructor at least one week *before* the deadlines of each component (page 3 of this syllabus).