UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

SYMPHONIC BAND
DR. BRANDON HOUGHTALEN – CONDUCTOR
Fall 2026

MUSA 1143 (or 4033)	**Symphonic Band—001**
CRN: 11723 (12793)	
Time: T/Th	3:00 PM – 4:20 PM
Location:	Fox Fine Arts 140
Dr. Brandon Houghtalen – Conductor	Office: FFA #138
Office Phone: 915-747-7796	Email: bhoughtalen@utep.edu

Dr. Brandon Houghtalen currently serves as Director of Athletic Bands and Associate Director of Bands at the University of Texas at El Paso. In this position he conducts the Symphonic Band, teaches undergraduate and graduate conducting, and provides administrative leadership for all aspects of the athletic band program. He previously held positions at Abilene Christian University, the Georgia Institute of Technology, the University of New Mexico, and in the Fayette County (GA) public schools.

Ensembles under Dr. Houghtalen's leadership have performed at conferences and events in the US and Mexico, including the 2023 and 2024 MusicMexico Symposia, 2024 Bands of America West Texas Regional Championship, and the 2025 UIL 6A State Marching Contest. His professional activities include engagements as a guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator throughout the United States and Latin America.

A recognized expert on wind band repertoire, Dr. Houghtalen has commissioned works from Catherine Likhuta, Gilda Lyons, John Mackey, Cait Nishimura, James Stephenson, Haley Woodrow, and Roger Zare among others. He has been featured twice at the Midwest Clinic, on the podcasts *Trilloquy* and *The Score,* and professional development events sponsored by organizations such as CBDNA, TMEA, and NAfME. In 2018 he founded the On the List Project, and this effort has resulted in hundreds of pieces being added to state music lists throughout the US. His research on James Reese Europe and the development of US military bands led to the creation of new performing editions of *The Memphis Blues*, *The St. Louis Blues,* and *Clef Club March*, and in 2026, was awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Houghtalen earned degrees in music education and conducting from the University of Tennessee, University of Colorado, and Arizona State University. His primary conducting teachers were Allan McMurray and Gary Hill. He is a member of the Alpha Chapter of Phi Beta Mu, CBDNA, TMEA, TBA, NBA, Phi Mu Alpha, and is proud to serve as the Sponsor of the Alpha Chi Chapter of Kappa Kappa Psi.

Course Description:

The primary purpose of this course is to allow students to perform in a large ensemble setting. We will seek, together, the intent of the composers and discover the means to the most effective performances possible.

Course Goals & Objectives:

The primary goal of this ensemble is the preparation, performance, and preservation wind band repertoire. Further, it is the mission of the UTEP Symphonic Band to:

Expand the technical, intellectual, psychological and spiritual horizons of musicians.

Create a positive music-making environment which allows the knowledge gained in the studio to be allied to ensemble performance.

Provide a balanced experience which promoted creativity, flexibility and versatility in each musician.

Promote the highest performance standards that result in the highest level of music making.

Increase the awareness of the artistic and historical significance of music for winds and percussion

Preserve, through performance and recording, the repertoire of a medium which has become a uniquely American art form.

Broaden the concept of performance and teaching skills by encouraging creative thought and artistic interaction.

Encourage involvement in the performing arts for those whose career plans provide a place for music as an avocation.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Mandatory Rehearsal
Rehearsal Expectations:
Each student is expected to be in their chair with their instrument ready to play at the beginning of the class. Anyone not seated and prepared to perform at that time will be considered tardy.

Each student is expected to have their folder with all instructional materials and a pencil for every rehearsal. No baseball caps or similar head wear will be allowed during rehearsal. Each student is responsible for the preparation for his/her ensemble music outside of scheduled rehearsals.

Rehearsals are for developing ensemble concepts, not individual practice. In other words, *practice is learning your own part independently; rehearsal is for learning everyone else's part and how it fits with your own!* If a student has not prepared music within an acceptable timeframe, grade point reductions will result.

Course Policies:

Attendance

1. Members are expected to attend every rehearsal and performance. Rehearsals are held Tuesday and Thursday from 3:00 PM – 4:20 PM. Additional sectional rehearsals (large and small group) may be required as the needs of the ensemble dictate.

2. Events "beyond your control" are unavoidable. However, communication with the conductor is vital. Please contact me in advance or as soon as possible afterward.

3. If you should need to speak to me about a schedule problem or other issue, please attempt to do so at a time other than just before or just after rehearsal. My office phone is 915-747-7796 and my office is room 138.

4. If you are, for whatever reason, unable to attend, please be sure that your music is available for the other members of your section and/or stand partner.

5. Scheduled sectionals (whether large group or instrument area only) are required and will factor into the final grade and/or service award of every student in the ensemble. These will be M 3-4 for Brass and W 3-4 for Woodwinds. Percussion sectionals are yet to be scheduled.

Grading

Ensemble Attendance and Grading Policies:

Concert ensembles are graded using the same letter grading system as classroom courses. Concert ensemble grades are based primarily on the following four factors, all of which are considered when assigning ensemble grades:

- Performance and Preparation

- Contribution to the Ensemble
- Cooperation and Professionalism
- Attendance

Due to the importance of regular attendance by every member of the ensemble in creating a unified and consistent ensemble sound, each student's attendance record will be a major factor—but not the only factor—in determining their grade. Unexcused absences or tardies to ensemble services will cause a student to accrue grade reduction points as indicated below:

- Late to a regular rehearsal: 2 points
- Absent from a regular rehearsal: 4 points
- Late to a dress rehearsal: 3 points
- Absent from a dress rehearsal: 6 points
- Late to a performance call: 5 points
- Absent from a performance: a grade of F for the semester and a loss of scholarship/service award.
- Being unprepared or underprepared for rehearsal will lower the grade cominserate with the severity of the offence.

If a student receives an ensemble grade of C or less for the semester, the service award/scholarship for that student will be reduced. The amount of reduction will be determined by the ensemble conductor.

Any student who misses a dress rehearsal, or who misses a week or more of rehearsals in preparation for a program, may also be removed from the concert at the conductor's discretion. Also, any student who missed a dress rehearsal or a concert may be expelled from the ensemble for the remainder of the semester. Willful neglect of ensemble responsibilities may also subject a student to expulsion from the ensemble.

Music is expensive and a valuable resource for our ensemble. Should your part/parts not be returned, $50 will be subtracted from your service award.

Dress Code:

Option #1*: Black Suit, White Shirt, Long Black Tie, Black Shoes, Long Black Socks
If you do not have a real tuxedo, a black suit or sport coat will work with black pants, White Shirt and Long Black Tie.

Option #2*: All Black. Pants or Dresses are both acceptable, though dresses should fall below the knee. Black Shoes. Stockings or hose, no bare feet, please. No accessories of any other color.

* UTEP seeks to be an inclusive institution, and this classroom is no exception. If you need to discuss options for attire, please come discuss this with Dr. Houghtalen at your convenience.

In addition: No perfume, heavy amounts of hair spray, or cologne is permitted. **Grey is not black. Navy blue is not black. Black is Black. No Stripes.**

Concert and Dress Rehearsal Dates:
(Locations indicated)

Dress Rehearsal (RH)	Wednesday, September 30	6:00-9:00 PM
CONCERT (RH)	Thursday, October 1	7:30 PM
	Call Time:	6:35 PM
Dress Rehearsal	Wednesday, November 11	6:00-9:0 PM
CONCERT	Thursday, November 12	7:30 PM
	Call Time:	5:45 PM

PLAGIARISM/ACADEMIC DISHONESTY STATEMENT

Cheating/Plagiarism: Cheating is unethical and not acceptable. Plagiarism is using information or original wording in a paper without giving credit to the source of that information or wording: it is also not acceptable. Do not submit work under your name that you did not do yourself. You may not submit work for this class that you did for another class. If you are found to be cheating or plagiarizing, you will be subject to disciplinary action, per UTEP catalog policy. Refer to http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity for further information. You may use AI if it means you can play your instrument better.

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DISABILITIES STATEMENT

Disabilities: I will make any reasonable accommodations for students with limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please see me personally before or after class in the first two weeks or make an appointment, to discuss any special needs you might have. If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will need to contact the Disabled Student Services Office in the East Union Bldg., Room 106 within the first two weeks of classes. The Center for Accommodations and Support Services can also be reached: http://sa.utep.edu/cass/

The instructor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus at any time.