



Course Syllabus: Marching Band Techniques
Lamar D. Fain College of Fine Arts
MUSC 4621 Section 101
Fall 2026 TR 11:00-11:50 AM

Contact Information

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Course Description

Marching Band Techniques is open to all music majors to provide an understanding of the practical history of marching band and drum & bugle corps in the United States. In this course, we will look at the major purpose of the marching band program, including football, recruitment, philosophy, and the advancement of musical competency. In addition, students of this course will:

1. Gain practical exposure to marching band show planning and production
2. Develop a list of resources for stock and custom marching band design possibilities
3. Gain exposure to concepts in traditional and contemporary arranging and musical design
4. Understand the legal issues and limitations pertaining to copyright and intellectual property
5. Design custom drill to pre-selected music
6. Understand the primary schools of thought with respect to marching fundamentals
7. Develop a repertoire of drill / music cleaning concepts
8. Understand appropriate pacing of marching arts instruction
9. Gain exposure to marching adjudication and evaluation
10. Understand considerations in selecting marching band competitions
11. Demonstrate the use of:
 - Audio editing software
 - Traditional (paper and pencil) drill design tools
 - Computer-based drill design software
 - App-based marching band instructional tools

Textbook to Instructional Materials

- PyWare 3D Interactive/Pro (student edition)
- Supplemental Course Materials (on D2L)
- Writing Utencils: Pencils, Colored Pencils, Markers, etc.

Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance

Please see Dr. Luttrell for assistance regarding study hours and tutoring.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy to Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work, not the individual to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Student Assessment

Students will be assessed based on the requirements of the grading rubric and the projects needed for completion, as well as your effectiveness in completing assignments on time and with certification in mind. You have a responsibility to the students you are teaching to be prepared, to be thorough, to think, and to participate with intent in your development as an educator. There is no one way to be effective as an educator, but you can smell out someone who is ill prepared to teach.

Grading

Grading Scale: Refer to University Code regarding + and – grading scale.

A = 90 – 100

B = 80 – 89

C = 70 – 79

D = 60 – 69

F = 0 – 59

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
Weekly Assignments	100
Attendance/Participation	250
Arrangement Project	200
Drill Project	200
Midterm Exam	100
Final Exam	100
Total Points	950

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	855
B	760 to 854
C	665 to 759
D	570 to 664
F	Less than 570

Homework

All homework assigned is to be turned in at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Late assignments will be accepted with a grade reduction based on the length of time after the initial due date.

Quizzes

Quizzes are attached to the daily assignments area of the syllabus. These will be clearly discussed during class.

Exams

There are two major examinations: the midterm examination and the final examination. The midterm and final examination are in typical format, featuring true/false, multiple choice, matching, and short answer questions based on the information given to that point in the course.

Projects Required

There are two major and various smaller projects in Marching Band Techniques. The first is an arranging project of a selection from one of three choices to be arranged for a typical marching band. The second major project is a drill design correlating with one of the provided scores in class. We will discuss both projects thoroughly in class before they are due.

The full-class group project is a band handbook. This will be discussed early in the semester. This document is to include: a brief history of the band program, letter to parents, students and administrators, statement of marching band philosophy, calendar of events for season (games, performances, rehearsals, competitions, meetings and trips), pre-season band camp schedule, grading and attendance policy and any other related information. (uniform policy, behavior, etc.)

Extra Credit

Extra credit assignments are at the discretion of the instructor and may (or may not) be provided.

Make-up Work/Tests

Make-up work and/or tests are based on the circumstances of the missing materials. Please discuss this with Dr. Luttrell as soon as possible.

Inclement Weather

In the case of campus closure due to inclement weather, key decision-makers will monitor weather projections and communicate with local news agencies and WFISD leadership to make a delay or cancellation decision.

Notification processes - Notification occurs through official campus channels and in communication with the local news networks. MSU channels include MSU Alert, MSU Safety app, Postmaster, and website headers. MSU Police and the Office of Marketing and Public Information. Information for all channels can be found at [MSU Ready](#).

The timeline is as follows:

Event	Time	Day	Decision
Inclement weather occurs during regular work/class day	3:30 PM	Day of inclement weather	Cancel classes/events after 5:00 PM
Overnight inclement weather expected	8:00 PM	Day before inclement weather	Close campus or delay opening
Delay called the day before but change to closure due to the extent of weather impact	6:15 AM	Day of delay	Close campus
No cancellation or delay decision made the night before	5:30 AM	Day after no decision made the night before	Close campus or delay opening

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: August 27, 2025

Deadline to file for graduation: September 21, 2025

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" October 7, 2025

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals to Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you

experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Please note: This class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete certain activities, check for class news updates, have access to materials, instructions, resources and to upload your assignments in D2L. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. Each time you log into D2L is documented. You should open D2L often to reference content, materials, and updates.

Attendance/Active Discussion/Participation

Students are expected to attend the class sessions and participate actively in discussions and presentations based on the course design as provided on the first day of classes. Regardless of the format, **YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO ATTEND CLASS**. Everyone is expected to perform in the in-class ensemble (as needed) **AND BE PREPARED TO PERFORM THE MUSIC AS ASSIGNED**. Attendance Policy: 2 unexcused absences will result in the maximum grade of a B, 3 unexcused-maximum grade of C, 4 unexcused-maximum grade of D, any more and you should probably drop the class. This is your career. Make the most of it!

Every time you conduct, you will receive a grade based off your preparation, musicality, expressiveness, and overall command of the podium. While conducting can be somewhat arbitrary in what looks “good”, people can tell when you don’t know what you are doing. Be prepared for ALL classes to conduct, not just the class you THINK you will conduct in.

All students will be required to bring their instruments to class (this will be discussed in class). Your participation is highly important to the structure of the class.

Instructor Class Policies

I expect all students to be in every class with baton and instrument. Be prepared to discuss, to move, and to emote. There is no specific dress code, however, students should consider that their presence on the podium can be adversely affected by choice of attire. Dress for success, dress for confidence.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. **Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.* Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. **Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!* There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Recording Classes

****Recording classes is generally prohibited without the professor's explicit permission.*** Such recordings, when permitted, are for personal use only and may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published without the professor's prior consent. Some faculty may not permit recordings of their classes. When it is feasible and appropriate, students may record classes to accommodate disabilities under the Americans With Disabilities Act, with prior approval of Disability Support Services. Such recordings may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees, and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. However, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans, and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make an application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Emergency Aid Resources for Basic Needs

Unexpected life circumstances can affect anyone. If you are experiencing challenges meeting basic needs—such as housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, technology, textbooks or other life necessities, resources may be available to help. Visit the [Student Emergency Support and Resources webpage](#) to learn more, and explore emergency support opportunities through MSU and how to access them. For additional information, please contact the Office of Student Affairs: Clark Student Center #108, (940) 397-7500, student.affairs@mstuexas.edu.

Privacy Statement

Federal privacy law prohibits the instructor from releasing information about students to certain parties outside of the university without the signed consent of the student. Thus, in almost all cases the professor will not discuss a students' academic progress or other matters with his/her parents.

Please do not have them call. Regardless of these important legal considerations, the professors' general policy is to communicate with the students, not their parents, even when a student has signed a consent form. College students are adults and are expected to behave accordingly.

Obligation to report Sex Discrimination under State and Federal Law

Midwestern State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. State and federal law require University employees to report sex discrimination and sexual misconduct to the University's Office of Title IX. As a faculty member, I am required to report to the Title IX Coordinator any allegations, personally observed behavior, or other direct or indirect knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking, involving a student or employee. After a report is made, the office of Title IX will reach out to the affected student or employee in an effort to connect such person(s) with resources and options in addressing the allegations made in the report. You are also encouraged to report any incidents to the office of Title IX. You may do so by contacting: Laura Hetrick, Title IX Coordinator, Sunwatcher Village Clubhouse. 940-397-4213, laura.hetrick@msutexas.edu

You may also file an online report 24/7 on the [Sexual Misconduct Report Form](#). Should you wish to visit with someone about your experience in confidence, you may contact the MSU Counseling Center at 940-397-4618. For more information on the University's policy on Title IX or sexual misconduct, please visit the [MSU Sexual Misconduct Resource Page](#).

College Policies

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by MSUTexas. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License-to-carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "*Run. Hide. Fight.*" which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: "[Run. Hide. Fight.](#)"

Grade Appeal Process

Students on a college campus have rights to fair treatment. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#) in the event they believe they have received a grade they consider unjust. Reminder: do your work.

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

Week	Activities/Assignments	Due Date
Week 1 8/25 to 8/27	Introduction & Discussion – why do we have marching band? Is it a safe activity? What is the point?	Thursday: Philosophy of Marching Band Due
Week 2 9/1 to 9/3	The History of Marching Bands – from the battlefield to the pageantry field...	
Week 3 9/8 to 9/10	Marching Styles & Fundamentals – Look good, feel good, play good, all good!	Thursday: Handbook Project Due
Week 4 9/15 to 9/17	Rehearsal Techniques – Where do I start, how do I get there, how do I finish?	Thursday: Handbook Project REVISIONS Due
Week 5 9/22 to 9/24	Arranging for the Marching Band (Winds/Percussion) – Your job is to make me look good, so let me help you do that....	Thursday: Rehearsal Plan Due
Week 6 9/29 to 10/1	Color Guard & Auxiliary – That person in your family that no one talks to, but you had no idea how cool they were...	Thursday: Arrangements due
Week 7 10/6 to 10/8	UIL vs. BOA, Competition, Adjudication, and trends – Do we have to?	Thursday: Flag video due
Week 8 10/13 to 10/15	Pyware Tutorials – Like your smartphone, but way more useful and frustrating...	Thursday: None
Week 9 10/20 to 10/22	Show Design – I don't know what to do with my hands...	Thursday: Adjudication Sheets due
Week 10 10/27 to 10/29	Flow Charts & Segments – What do you mean I have homework?	Thursday: Pyware Basics due
Week 11 11/3 to 11/5	Drill Projects – This is why I'm here...	Thursday: Design Concept due

Week	Activities/Assignments	Due Date
Week 12 11/10 to 11/12	Drill Projects – Still here...	Thursday: Flow Segments due
Week 13 11/17 to 11/19	Drill Projects – OOF...	Thursday: First three (3) sets due
Week 14 11/24	NO CLASS – I need a break...	Thursday: Eat something good.
Week 15 12/1 to 12/3	Drill Projects – Good or good enough...?	Thursday: Final Drill Projects due on Sunday, December 6 th , 2026 @ 11:59 PM

Appendix 1

TEGES Domains and Competencies

Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TEGES)

The Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for Marching Band Techniques link to the following TEGES domains and competencies necessary to become a music educator in the state of Texas:

Domain I- Listening

Competency	Outcome
Competency 001- The teacher applies standard terminology to describe and analyze various elements in a musical recording.	C. Recognizes and describes the melody, harmony and texture of a musical work (e.g., modal, tonal, atonal, ostinato, doublings, melody and counter melody). D. Analyzes chordal structures (e.g., major, minor, dominant seventh, diminished seventh), harmonic progressions, cadences (e.g., authentic, half, deceptive, plagal) and harmonic textures (e.g., polyphonic, homophonic, monophonic).
Competency 003- The teacher evaluates and critiques musical compositions and performances in a musical recording.	A. Identifies vocal and instrumental sounds and distinguishes among timbres (e.g., voice and instrument types and ensembles). B. Recognizes accurate pitch, intonation, rhythm and characteristic tone quality; recognizes and diagnoses performance problems; and detects errors accurately.

Domain II- Music Theory and Composition

Competency	Outcome
Competency 004- The teacher knows how to read, write and interpret standard music notation.	A. Knows standard music terminology and identifies and interprets music symbols and terms from notation (e.g., dynamics, embellishments, articulation markings, tempo markings). B. Recognizes clefs, keys and meters; recognizes scales and pitch collections (e.g., modal, major, minor, pentatonic, whole-tone); identifies specific melodic and harmonic intervals; and identifies different rhythms and meters.

	C. Reads melodies in various modes and tonalities; interprets rhythmic and melodic phrases from notation; and reads music that incorporates complex rhythmic patterns in simple, compound and asymmetric meters. D. Recognizes and describes melody, harmony and texture of a musical work (e.g., modal, tonal, atonal, ostinato, doublings, melody and countermelody). E. Analyzes chordal structures (e.g., major, minor, dominant seventh, diminished seventh), harmonic progressions, cadences (e.g., authentic, half, deceptive, plagal) and harmonic textures (e.g., polyphonic, homophonic, monophonic)
Competency 005- The teacher understands methods and techniques of musical composition and improvisation and knows how to arrange music for specific purposes and settings.	A. Knows how to compose and arrange simple vocal and instrumental music for specific purposes and settings (e.g., scoring techniques, transpositions, ranges). B. Analyzes compositional devices (e.g., repetition/contrast, delayed resolution, augmentation/diminution, fugue, tone row, ostinato) and applies knowledge of music forms (e.g., binary, ternary, rondo, concerto, opera, twelve-bar blues). C. Knows how to improvise melodically, rhythmically and harmonically (e.g., question and answer, variation, twelve-bar blues). D. Applies criteria for evaluating and critiquing musical compositions, evaluates specific musical works and styles using appropriate music terminology and knows how to offer constructive suggestions for the improvement of a musical composition.

Domain V- Music Education

Competency	Outcome
Competency 011- The teacher knows how to plan and implement effective music instruction.	C. Demonstrates an understanding of appropriate sequencing of music instruction and knows how to deliver developmentally appropriate music instruction that is sequenced and delivered in ways that encourage active engagement in learning and make instructional content meaningful. D. Knows how to adapt instructional methods to provide appropriate learning experiences for students with varied needs, learning modalities and

	levels of development and musical experience. E. Knows how to provide instruction that promotes students' understanding and application of fundamental principles of music and that offers students varied opportunities to make music using instruments and voice, to respond to a wide range of musical styles and genres and to evaluate music of various types.
Competency 012- The teacher knows how to provide students with learning experiences that enhance their musical knowledge, skills and appreciation.	F. Applies strategies and procedures for effectively managing and organizing the music class in various settings (e.g., rehearsal room, concert hall, marching field); knows how to manage time, instructional resources and physical space effectively for the music class; and knows how to teach students concert etiquette. G. Demonstrates knowledge of techniques for effectively and efficiently managing varied resources for the music education program and applies strategies for managing and documenting the use and condition of musical instruments and other materials in the music program.

TAC §228.30 Alignment

Competency	Outcome
(4) the skills that educators are required to possess, the responsibilities that educators are required to accept, and the high expectations for students in this state;	Students receive practical experience with arranging music for various ensembles, writing drill for a set instrumentation, and using performances of local ensembles to assess performance in "mock-adjudication" examples
(5) the importance of building strong classroom management skills;	Students work on enhancing instruction through the use of technology, consistent instructional practices from various schools and drum corps, and through engagement with "master teachers" in their respective disciplines
(7) appropriate relationships, boundaries, and communications between educators and students;	Students interact with professionals and directors in competitive environments; students assist in instruction (observed in controlled environment)

TAC §149.1001 Alignment

(1) Standard 1--Instructional Planning and Delivery. Teachers demonstrate their understanding of instructional planning and delivery by providing standards-based, data-driven, differentiated instruction that engages students, makes appropriate use of technology, and makes learning relevant for today's learners.	Course Objectives #8, 10, 11 Assessed through discussion and activities based on effective dissemination of materials in a modified classroom setting.
(2) Standard 2--Knowledge of Students and Student Learning. Teachers work to ensure high levels of learning, social-emotional development, and achievement outcomes for all students, taking into consideration each student's educational and developmental backgrounds and focusing on each student's needs.	Course Objectives #8 Assessed through classroom discussion of teaching practices and weekly demonstration of performance skills, as well as codifying marching style and instruction.
(3) Standard 3--Content Knowledge and Expertise. Teachers exhibit a comprehensive understanding of their content, discipline, and related pedagogy as demonstrated through the quality of the design and execution of lessons and their ability to match objectives and activities to relevant state standards.	Course Objectives #1, 2, 3, 5 Assessed through weekly projects, video assessments, and in-class collaborations.
(4) Standard 4--Learning Environment. Teachers interact with students in respectful ways at all times, maintaining a physically and emotionally safe, supportive learning environment that is characterized by efficient and effective routines, clear expectations for student behavior, and organization that maximizes student learning.	Course Objectives #6 Assessed through weekly interactions with the instructor of the course and discussed when appropriate during mock teaching assignments.
(5) Standard 5--Data-Driven Practice. Teachers use formal and informal methods to assess student growth aligned to instructional goals and course objectives and regularly review and analyze multiple sources of data to measure student progress and adjust instructional strategies and content delivery as needed.	Course Objectives #9 Students are instructed to assess and describe various elements of ensemble performance and the correlation of score-based performance, as well as its lack of consistency.