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**University Jazz Ensemble
College of Fine Arts
MUSC 3941 Section 201
Spring 2026 TR 3:30-4:50 PM**

Contact Information

Instructor:

Dr. Rafael Powell

Office:

C117M

Office hours:

MTRF – 8-10:00am or by appointment

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Course Description

University Jazz Ensemble is open to all students and presents concerts throughout the semester. Repertoire includes standard and new literature for jazz band, jazz combo, and chamber groups. This ensemble is considered to be of the highest quality and standard at Midwestern State University. The concept of the ensemble is that of a “do-it-all jazz band”, using different groupings and setups, not simply the big band model.

Course Objectives

1. The student will demonstrate a high level of competence in skills required to perform with other musicians and as soloists in the large ensemble setting, i.e. matched tone and style, intonation, balance, blend and musical communication. This will also include the ability to collectively run a sectional rehearsal.
2. The student will demonstrate the ability to respond to non-verbal performance instruction from the conductor.
3. The student will demonstrate a high level of competence in technical aspects of performance, i.e., tone quality, articulation, pitch consistency, dynamic control, technical agility and accurate rhythmic concepts.
4. Students will have an understanding of jazz pedagogy through engaging rehearsal techniques, performances, community outreach, and exposure to numerous genres within the jazz style. Through performance in jazz band, all students will endeavor to understand style and improvisation with earnest efforts.
5. Students will gain a further understanding of jazz music through studying prominent recordings and learning prominent composers, performers, and band leaders. This furthers both understanding and performance of all styles of music and is an essential part of the historically aural art of jazz.

Textbook to Instructional Materials

Each member is issued his/her own folder and music. Care should be taken to keep the music in good condition. It must be returned free of all rehearsal markings. Lost music is subject to fines up to the total replacement cost of the set.

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 on their ability to arrive before rehearsal and be prepared to play at the assigned rehearsal time, arrive with music prepared for upcoming performances, and participate throughout the class period.

Grading

Your grade is determined by a combination of your attendance, professionalism, music preparation and performance. Your grade is lowered one letter grade for each unexcused absence or two unexcused tardies. Absence from a dress rehearsal lowers your grade one letter. **Absence from a performance results in a failing grade for the semester. Excessive excused absences or tardiness may also affect your grade.**

Students are expected to be prepared for every rehearsal and concert. Rehearsals are meant to help the band improve and solidify our sound, time, style, and pathos. To be prepared for rehearsal, your part should be practiced and prepared to the best of your ability; **recordings should be studied for style and interpretation**, solo changes should be understood to the highest level available, and instruments should be in working condition. For students on a “jazz setup,” regular practice on this setup ensures that students will be able to achieve the necessary tone and intonation. Failure to prepare for ensemble repeatedly will result in establishing a practice plan for improvement. If students are unable to achieve the practice plan, removal from the ensemble may be considered. For assistance, reach out to Dr. Powell in a timely manner.

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
Preparation	80
Attendance	80

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	144
B	128 to 143
C	112 to 127
D	96 to 111
F	Less than 96

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 28, 2025

Deadline to file for graduation

: September 22, 2025

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:"

October 8, 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

Attendance at every assigned rehearsal is expected. Students should arrive early to assemble equipment and then be prepared to play once the clock strikes the assigned rehearsal time. Two (2) unexcused absences will result in the maximum grade of a B, three (3) unexcused-maximum grade of C, four (4) unexcused-maximum grade of D. Any more unexcused absences result in a failing grade. Dr. Luttrell must approve any excused absence at least 48 hours IN ADVANCE of the rehearsal, or the student must provide official documentation of illness or family emergency for an absence to be classified as "excused." Any student who is absent from a performance will be removed from the ensemble and receive an "F" for their final semester grade.

Instructor Class Policies

I expect all students to be in every class with music and instrument. Be prepared to discuss, to play, and to emote.

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.

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.

The Midwestern State University Instrumental Program

EVERY REHEARSAL IS A PERFORMANCE

Experience the musical flow with every rehearsal moment. Don't wait until the concert to turn on musical concentration. Musical discoveries made during rehearsal can be retained and enhanced in subsequent rehearsals and the performance. Work with as much diligence during rehearsal as in a concert and listening/adjusting will be tremendously enhanced. Some players don't realize that passages are out of tune, for instance, until the concert. That is, obviously, too late.

MUSIC IS MADE OUT OF SILENCE

Musical sensitivity is based on the ability of players to hear. It is difficult to hear during a loud rehearsal. Talking destroys not only the silence, but also the concentration level of the players. Players who talk are not listening and interfere with the ability of others to concentrate. Players who do not listen cannot play musically.

A REHEARSAL IS NOT THE PLACE FOR INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE

Prepare your parts ahead of time. Rehearsals are needed to put together musical ideas, nuance, blend and balance, not work out notes that can be practiced individually. Don't hold the rest of the group back by not being able to play your part. Make it a personal goal to work out all technical problems immediately after the first reading.

Good performances are constructed, little by little, through progress in good rehearsals.

“Rehearsal as Realization”

- A rehearsal should be where musicians come together to learn each other's parts, not their own.
- A rehearsal must unite the performers in a shared understanding of the composer's intent and the conductor's interpretation of that intent.
- Each player must accept an equal responsibility for the outcome.
- Each player must know their parts well enough to concentrate on listening to others.
- Every rehearsal must have the potential to create beauty.
- Rehearsals must focus on what's right as well as what needs to be altered.
- Technical proficiency cannot dominate an entire rehearsal.
- Each rehearsal must encourage both extrinsic and intrinsic musical growth for the entire ensemble.

“Energizing the Ears”

- Listening must be of highest importance from the FIRST sound.
- Always tune in a way that promotes evaluative listening.
- Establish listening goals in tuning and warm-ups (i.e. match the clarinet, get inside the trombones, etc.).
- We will use real music or excerpts whenever possible.
- The conductor's actions are designed to guide the ensemble's listening.

“Pitch and Rhythm”

- Always be encouraged to listen for the ensemble's internal pulse!
- Learn your parts as if they were a mastery of homework.
- Use sounds from the ensemble as a metronome.
- Imitation is the highest form of flattering.
- Sing your parts when you are not rehearsing.
- Instead of thinking “You're behind”, think about how to LEAD.
- Always listen for something that is the same as what you are playing.

“A Balancing Act”

- Get inside the sounds of other players around you.

- Always try to focus your ears to instruments which are leading (i.e. low voice, solo part, high voice, inner part, melody, etc.)
- Make students aware of what others are playing by asking and not telling.
- Always think of the person to the left and right as part of your “trio”.
- When something goes right, acknowledge it, then play it again so the ensemble gains the awareness of what it sounds like to be right.
- Play only wonderful recordings.

“Tuning it in”

- Always match to the left, then right, then behind or ahead.
- Listen down to the lowest pitch.
- It's simple; the “beats” get slower as intonation improves and faster as it gets further apart.
- Tune to your instrument family.
- Use a tuner as an aid (i.e. as a reference for A 440) but do not expect to use it as a definitive way of creating good pitch.
- Don't use your eyes for pitch.
- When it comes to pitch, “make your best guess”; searching for intonation is better than holding a note out of tune.
- Tune to different pitches.
- If you hear more than one pitch, it's out of tune.

“Don't tune out”

- Parts are always handed off from one person to another; stay focused in the rehearsal.
- Listen, sing, and make evaluative ideas on how a part is played in a particular section. Be mindful of all sounds around you.

Appendix 1

TExES Domains and Competencies

Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES)

The Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for Basic Conducting link to the following TExES domains and competencies necessary to become a music educator in the state of Texas:

Domain I- Listening

Competency	Description
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 countermelody). 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

Domain II- Music Theory and Composition

Competency	Description
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	Description
Competency 005- The teacher understands methods and techniques of musical composition and improvisation and knows how to arrange music for specific purposes and settings.	<p>A. Knows how to compose and arrange simple vocal and instrumental music for specific purposes and settings (e.g., scoring techniques, transpositions, ranges).</p> <p>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).</p> <p>C. Knows how to improvise melodically, rhythmically and harmonically (e.g., question and answer, variation, twelve-bar blues).</p> <p>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.</p>

Domain V- Music Education

Competency	Description
Competency 011- The teacher knows how to plan and implement effective music instruction.	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Competency 012- The teacher knows how to provide students with learning experiences that enhance their musical knowledge, skills and appreciation.	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

TAC §228.30 Alignment

Alignment Category	Description
(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

Alignment Category	Description
(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	Course Objectives #9

Alignment Category	Description
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.	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.