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# PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE SYLLABUS

Written by Glenn Schaft

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**Instructor:**

Glenn Schaft, DMA, Professor of Percussion, Percussion Coordinator  
Contact and schedule information available at: [percussion.yzu.edu](http://percussion.yzu.edu)

**Catalog Number:** MUEN 0009

**Rehearsals:** Tuesday 3-7p.m. Percussion Seminar (Friday 12-12:50pm) may be used for PE preview performances. Weekly Schedule can be found under the Media pull-down tab at [percussion.yzu.edu](http://percussion.yzu.edu)

**This is a document of understanding** between you and your teacher(s). Please discuss any concerns you have with Dr. Schaft during the first week of classes. Your enrollment signifies your understanding and acceptance of these policies.

**Office hours:** Dr. Schaft provides five office hours per week as per the YSU-OEA (Ohio Education Association) contract and these are posted on room 2234. Walk-ins are welcome but please make an appointment to guarantee my availability. Part-time faculty and graduate teaching assistants are not required to provide office hours.

**Ensemble admittance and enrollment:** Admittance is granted via an audition and permission of the Director and is typically limited to percussion majors. Majors are typically advised to register concurrent with each semester of applied percussion lessons unless otherwise advised by Dr. Schaft; if your degree requires eight semesters of Applied Percussion courses, you will typically perform in eight semesters of PE courses.

**Repertoire:** includes classic 20th century works, contemporary music, composer commissions, student compositions, marimba ensemble, group improvisation, Drum Circle, and various Latin/world percussion styles such as West African, Afro-Cuban, and Brazilian.

**Performances** include two feature-length evening concerts at the Dana School of Music and two Butler Institute of American Art "Music At Noon" performances each academic year. Off-campus performances typically include the Ohio Music Educators Association Professional Conference, Percussive Arts Society Ohio Day of Percussion, concerts at universities and various arts organizations, studio commissioning and recording projects, and K-12 school assemblies. Performance dates are published on our website homepage at [percussion.yzu.edu](http://percussion.yzu.edu) and are listed no later than the first day of each semester.

**Ensemble objectives:**

- Develop effective teamwork skills.
- Develop chamber music skills including: pre-rehearsal preparation, positive attitude in all situations, reading and memorization, group breathing and conducting skills, stage presence and concert etiquette.
- Foster an understanding of diverse percussion ensemble literature through listening and research, individual practice, group rehearsals, performances, and recording sessions.
- Experience improvisation, arranging, and composition individually and as a group.
- Select upper division undergraduate and graduate students are expected to serve as musical directors.

**Part assignments:** are made in consideration of:

- Results of ensemble auditions, juries, and applied percussion course achievement.
- Effective artistic programming.
- Student aptitude and experience - every effort is made to effectively match part assignments with your ability, i.e. challenging yet attainable.
- Previous achievement in this course.

**Music:** You are responsible for the music lent you. Be sure your name appears, in pencil, on each piece. Bring the music to all private lessons. Return music as requested after concerts. You must buy any music (entire score and parts) you lose or damage.

**Final Exam Period:** Will be used for PE related activities and attendance is required. See the YSU Final Exam schedule online. Generally, it is the Thursday of Finals weeks from 3:15-5:15PM.

**Instrument set-up and transport:** Everyone must assist with rehearsal and concert gear set-up and transport. No one is excused from a service until we have returned everything to its proper location. Call times will be posted on the studio website weekly schedule either online and/or on my bulletin board.

**Grading policy:** The process of assessing an individual's work in a musical ensemble (i.e. team) is partly determined by the achievement of other ensemble (team) members. I grade according to my expectation of appropriate repertoire for your course level, your potential and your realization of it. I expect a positive attitude, ability to establish clear and realistic goals, self-motivation, consistency of effort, punctuality, reliability, attention to detail, receptiveness to coaching and criticism, and the inevitable growth and accomplishment that comes from nurturing these traits.

A professional attitude consists of arriving with a specific purpose in mind, quiet attention to rehearsal instructions, enthusiasm for the task at hand, always having a pencil, and a courteous teamwork orientated demeanor. These qualities—the desire to raise the achievement of your colleagues—determine your value as an ensemble member.

Master your parts through individual practice prior to rehearsals. Failure to adequately prepare instruments, setups, or music will result in a grade reduction for that rehearsal. If you must be replaced

due to a lack of preparation, your grade will be reduced by a minimum of 20%. If a work must be canceled due to your lack of preparation, you will receive an “F” in the course.

**Musical expression.** Since effective musical expression has to do with one’s personality and ability to express emotion, I have included descriptions of some of the attitudes and behaviors that typically correlate with each letter grade. Clearly, assigning letter grades to emotions and behaviors is subjective business, so either the teacher and student avoid such subject matter and merely address technical mechanics—course content that is more easily “objectively letter graded”—or they embrace this subjectivity that is a central element of all music making. Interestingly, it is not the content of musical expression that is difficult or subjective to assess, rather it is made more subjective and difficult to assess within the confines of the letter grade system. When one minimizes letter grading as the central focus, musical expression can then be effectively addressed and assessed.

**Grading Scale** – The Dana School of Music grading policy states you must receive a “C” or higher in each course for it to count toward your degree program.

- Grade A, 90-100% – includes: superior attendance, superior achievement of weekly and semester goals, consistent positive attitude, and a complete commitment to attaining your potential. You love what you do and it shows through your passion, dedication, and achievement.
- Grade B, 80-89% – Slightly less than letter grade “A” above.
- Grade C, 70-79% – May include flawed attendance, partial achievement of weekly or semester goals, inconsistent attitude or progress, and/or a partial commitment to attaining your potential. Your passion, dedication, and achievement are questionable or inconsistent, and it shows.
- Grade D, 60-69% – May include flawed attendance, partial achievement of weekly or semester goals, inconsistent attitude, or a partial commitment to attaining your potential. Your passion, dedication, and achievement are often questionable and it shows.
- Grade F, 0-59% – May include significant disregard for any of the above or a minimal achievement of your potential.
- Grades of “incomplete” or “PR”: See the YSU Bulletin “Grading System”. The only valid reason for an incomplete, or PR grade, is for a medical or other reason so extreme as to cause you to be unable to complete the course. You must be passing the course at the time of your request and demonstrate that the circumstances requiring the “PR” are beyond your control.

**Attendance** is required at all PE events, unless otherwise indicated by your director. Your presence is necessary to realize the community of learners and collaborative nature of the ensemble. When you miss a rehearsal two things happen, first you miss the experience unique to that particular rehearsal and it cannot be recreated, and second, your absence reduces the learning of your colleagues.

- First semester PE members are required to attend all rehearsals until notified otherwise, in order to learn rehearsal protocol, ensemble techniques, and chamber music repertoire.
- Percussion ensemble concerts and events are posted on our website calendar no later than week one of fall semester.
- If you notice a schedule conflict with any Percussion Ensemble related event or portion thereof, regardless of how far in advance, immediately notify Dr. Schaft. Use standard memo format: to, from, date, description of the event, and explain why you were absent or anticipate being absent. Dr. Schaft will reply within a week to indicate if your request is excused or

unexcused. You may be responsible for securing a qualified substitute and providing them your music and instruments necessary.

- **Excused absences** may be granted for:
  - o Special YSU event (ensemble tour, field trip, conference, etc.) i.e. academic work required as part of an YSU course in which you are enrolled. A memo from the YSU course instructor or event coordinator to Dr. Schaft must document anticipated absences. You must schedule non-YSU events around our studio calendar.
  - o Documented court-ordered appearance.
  - o Absences due to serious illness and documented by a letter from a certified medical practitioner will be considered in light of your attendance history. In some cases, an excused absence may be granted. A minor cold or accepting a non-school related gig might not be excused.
- **Unexcused absence** will reduce your final course grade. The penalty will be determined in consideration of the significance of the event missed and your attendance history. The YSU Bulletin states that more than three absences result in failure of the course and when converted to percentages, this is 59% or less for the course; therefore, each absence, as per Bulletin policy, equals 13.3% deduction. One tardy equals 1/2 absence or 6.65%.
- **Courtesies:**
  - All percussion students shall share in our gear related logistical duties for each PE event including student recitals, percussion ensemble concerts, percussion seminar class, group lessons, convocations, etc.
  - If you fall asleep in a rehearsal you will be dismissed and an unexcused absence recorded.
  - Cell phones and other electronic distractions must be turned-off or kept out of the classroom. Each interruption will count as a one-half absence. Bluetooth earpieces are not permitted.
  - Hats, lewd or questionable attire, or other inappropriate or impractical (to play the instruments) attire is not appropriate. Violations will result in dismissal and that period counted as an absence. I recommend slacks and a loose-fitting shirt and no skirts, dresses, high-heel shoes, or tight clothing.
  - Avoid jewelry that makes noise or may damage the instruments, especially rings, bracelets, and metal watchbands.
  - Food or drinks (except bottled water) are not permitted.
- **Concert Attire:** Appropriate attire will be announced before each engagement. Generally, we wear dress quality garments—black slacks, shoes, socks, and black dress shirt with a collar. No suits, vests, ties, tennis shoes, ball caps, jeans, t-shirts, athletic wear, or clothing with a visible logo.
- **Concert Call Times:** You must be available for the entire call period as posted on the percussion website weekly schedule. Generally, our call for an 7:30 p.m. concert will be 5:00 p.m. – for set-up and sound check. The call for a noon Butler Concert is 11a.m. and load-out will be completed by approximately 1:30pm. Please notify the professors of any classes affected by these call times no later than the end of week one of classes.
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- **Disability Accommodations:** *In accordance with University procedures, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course; please contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. You must be registered with the Center for Student Progress Disability Services, located at 36 West Wood Street, and provide a letter of accommodation to coordinate reasonable accommodations. You can reach CSP Disability Services at 330-941-1372.*

**Non-Discrimination Statement:** *Youngstown State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, disability, age, religion or veteran/military status in its programs or activities. Please visit [www.ysu.edu/ada-accessibility](http://www.ysu.edu/ada-accessibility) for contact information for persons designated to handle questions about this policy.*

**Center for Student Progress** YSU is committed to your academic success. As a student, you have access to this learning support programs at no charge:

**What:** Academic Coaching, Supplemental Instruction, and Tutoring in a variety of courses

**When:** By appointment. Monday - Thursday 8:00am – 6:00pm, Friday 8:00am – 4:00pm

**Where:** Kilcawley Center West (near Dunkin Donut entrance)

**Email:** [blvarian@ysu.edu](mailto:blvarian@ysu.edu)

**The Student One Stop** is an enrollment resource on campus established to help students manage their academic record and accounts. Please visit the Student One Stop (second floor Meshel Hall), (330) 941-6000, [onestop@ysu.edu](mailto:onestop@ysu.edu). for assistance with financial aid, records, registration, and tuition charges/billing.