



East Texas A&M University
Music Department

MUS 313-02E—Fundamentals of Conducting
Course Syllabus: Fall 2025
Dr. James Bowyer

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MUS 313-02E: Fundamentals of Conducting-Vocal

2 credit hours

Course ID: 80761

Meets M-W-F from 10 AM to 10:50 AM in Room 105 (the Choir Room)

Course Information

Catalog Description

Intended for the undergraduate choral conductor, this course is directed towards developing a working knowledge of conducting gestures and non-verbal communication determined to be necessary for successful conducting and teaching choral music on the secondary level.

Prerequisites

None.

Outline of Major Content Areas

1. Applied conducting
2. Rehearsal techniques
3. Musicianship skills demonstrated through the use of solfège, rhythm syllables, hand signs, play-and-sing, and conducting gestures, to name a few.
4. Score study
5. Achieving the desired choral sound through expressive conducting gestures

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) and Means of Assessment

SLO 1 Demonstrate a mastery of beginning and intermediate conducting techniques with an enabling posture, hand position, and clear indications of preparatory gestures, downbeats, patterns for symmetrical and asymmetrical meters, dynamics, cues, beat subdivisions, syncopation, and alterations of tempo (i.e. tempo rubato).

Means of Assessment: At-home assessments of self-made conducting videos, microteaching demonstrations

SLO 2 Demonstrate expressive intentions through both physical conducting and oral communication.

Means of Assessment: At-home assessments of self-made conducting videos, microteaching demonstrations

SLO 3 Demonstrate effective score analysis and score preparation.

Means of Assessment: Written assignments, score analyses

SLO 4 Demonstrate an understanding of performance practice according to the various stylistic periods of composition.

Means of Assessment: Score analyses, microteaching demonstrations

SLO 5 Demonstrate visual/aural discrimination skills for error detection.

Means of Assessment: At-home assessments of self-made conducting videos, microteaching demonstrations

SLO 6 Demonstrate the necessary skills to analyze, diagnose, and prescribe solutions to musical problems in a rehearsal setting.

Means of Assessment: At-home assessments of self-made conducting videos, microteaching demonstrations

SLO 7 Demonstrate solfège competency both in prepared and sight-reading applications.

Means of Assessment: Microteaching demonstrations, musicianship competency quizzes

SLO 8 Critically evaluate technical and musical criteria of an ensemble rehearsal/performance.

Means of Assessment: Written assignments, microteaching demonstrations

Required Texts and Materials—On Reserve in Library

Busch, Brian R. *The Complete Choral Conductor: Gesture and Method*. (Schirmer, 1984). ISBN 13: 9780028703404

Suggested Texts and Materials—On Reserve in Library

Lamb, Gordon. *Choral Techniques*. 3rd Edition. (William C. Brown Publishing, 1988). ISBN 13: 9780697006127

Phillips, Kenneth H. *Basic Techniques of Conducting*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). ISBN 13: 9780195099379

If I can secure additional physical copies of these books, I will also put them on reserve in the library.

Materials

Choral Packet (Some will be physical copies given out in class; others will be PDFs that you will need to print from D2L.)
Baton

Online Materials

Please check D2L often for course materials, information, and updates.

Course Changes

The syllabus, assignments, sequence of activities, and content of this course are subject to change.

Grading Scale

A+ 97-100	A 93-96	A- 90-92
B+ 87-89	B 83-86	B- 80-82
C+ 77-79	C 73-76	C- 70-72
D+ 67-69	D 63-66	D- 60-62
F 0-59		

Evaluation and Grading

The semester grade for this course will be determined based on reading responses, projects and assignments, and teaching demonstrations, to name a few. The following percentages are approximate and may be modified according to the needs of the curriculum.

50% Conducting (e.g., In-Class Conducting Demonstrations, Musicianship Skills)

40% Written Assignments (e.g., Score Analyses, At-Home Assessments)

10% Attendance, Participation, and Work Ethic

Assignments in Detail

Conducting

Applied performance assessments of new conducting skills will occur regularly. These In-Class Conducting Assessments will be observed in a "round robin" fashion. Bring a device to video record your conducting. You must be musically prepared to conduct:

- Sing any part at sight using text, neutral syllable, and solfège.
- Speak any part on rhythm syllables.
- "Play-and-sing" any two parts of the score: Sing one part on solfège and play any other part on the piano (simplifying the piano is allowed).

Written Assignments

After you have conducted in class, review your video later in the day. Log onto D2L and complete an assessment of your conducting based on your observations and on feedback that you received in class. A rubric for your assessments will be

provided. These are to be completed before Midnight on that day that you conduct. You will also be required to formally analyze at least three choral pieces. Instructions for doing so will be discussed in course readings and in class discussions.

Attendance, Participation, and Work Ethic

Assessment for attendance and participation will be derived in a holistic manner, taking into consideration student absences, tardies, in-class discussions and activities, and work ethic. Deficiencies in any of these areas will result in a reduction in total points.

- Attend all classes.
- Arrive to class on time with course materials.
- Notify instructor in advance of missing class.
- Be in class for the entirety of the scheduled session. Do not leave class unless absolutely necessary, and do not leave before the end of the period.
- Complete all course assignments on time. Late work is not accepted, though pre-arranged extensions may be granted.
- Listen and respond to others.
- Avoid disruptions or distractions in the classroom, including the use of electronic devices.
- Contribute constructively to class discussions and activities.

School of Music and East Texas A&M University Procedures and Policies

School of Music Mission Statement

The School of Music at East Texas A&M University promotes excellence in music through the rigorous study of music history, literature, theory, composition, pedagogy, and the preparation of music performance in applied study and ensembles to meet the highest standards of aesthetic expression.

University Mission Statement:

East Texas A&M University provides a personal educational experience for a diverse community of life-long learners. Our purpose is to discover and disseminate knowledge for leadership and service in an interconnected and dynamic world. Our challenge is to nurture partnerships for the intellectual, cultural, social, and economic vitality of Texas and beyond.

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy, please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [13.99.99.R0.01 Class Attendance](#) .

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance when possible.

School of Music Engagement Expectations

Students are expected to actively participate in all assigned components of this course. Active participation includes being present, engaged, responsive, cooperative, respectful, and professional. It may also include providing feedback, asking questions, and being supportive of class members and faculty during instruction time.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to actively participate in all classes. Notification for excused absence must be received in advance. It is the individual student's responsibility to notify the instructor of a legitimate absence in advance. It is also the individual student's responsibility to acquire any missed notes and assignments from other students and/or the instructor. Students are expected to actively participate in all classes by coming prepared and with all assigned materials. This course is a graduate research course. Bibliographical material, repertoire, library resources, applied techniques, as well as research techniques applicable to graduate study in music specific to flute/woodwind pedagogy will be surveyed and discussed. Be prepared to spend a significant amount of time doing research and review of materials outside of class. Students are expected to demonstrate skills in pedagogy through their observation, analysis, discussion and feedback of the performances of other students. Students are expected to gain skills in this area by the observation of teaching techniques in their own private lessons and through the observation of teaching techniques of other students in studio class, guest artist classes on campus, and optional conference attendance or optional observations of master teachers online. Students will need to submit teaching videos and acquire a waiver from the student(s) in their videos.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes. It is the individual student's responsibility to notify the instructor of a legitimate absence in advance. It is also the individual student's responsibility to acquire any missed notes and assignments from other students and/or the instructor. After one (1) unexcused absence, the student's final grade will be dropped by one (1) letter grade for each additional unexcused absence. Three tardies equal once absence.

Late Assignments or Work

No late work will be accepted.

Texas Education Code – Music Education

This course content is aligned with the standards established by the Texas Education Code, covering areas such as Music, the Commissioner's Rules, Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities, Technology, and English Language Proficiency. To review these standards, please visit the Music Education Program D2L Shell and select "Standards and Objectives."

Musician Health and Safety

As an Institutional Member of the National Association of Schools of Music, East Texas State A&M University supports the Association's commitment to student health and wellness. The following web address provides links to information for resources related to physical and mental well-being, as well as assists in offering preventative measures that students can take to avoid serious and/or chronic conditions: [Musician Health and Safety - East Texas A&M University](#)

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty](#)

[13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty](#)

AI Use Policy

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Technology Requirements

Learning Management System (LMS) in D2L: All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements.

- LMS Requirements: [LMS Requirements Link](#)
- LMS Browser Support: [D2L Brightspace Support](#)
- Zoom Video Conferencing Tool: [Zoom Video Conferencing Tool Link](#)

Access and Navigation

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems.

These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

Communication and Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace D2L, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

East Texas A&M University Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit <https://www.etamu.edu/counseling-center/>

Students with Disabilities—ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, contact the Office of Student Disability Services at 903-886-5150, 903-886—5835; email studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu; online at [Student Disability Services](#) or in-person in Room 162 of the Velma K. Waters Library.

Tenets of Common Behavior

All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See current Student Guidebook.)

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Campus Concealed Carry - Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East A&M Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to [34.06.02.R1 Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Choral Conducting Assessment Rubric

		Emerging	Progressing	Excelling
Conduct	Demonstrates proper body alignment and commanding presence without evidence of tension			
	Maintains visual contact with ensemble			
	Breathes with ensemble in appoggio position			
	Prepares beat indicating tempo, dynamics, articulation, and vowel formation			
	Conducts basic patterns in simple and compound meters			
	Cues entrances clearly			
	Releases musical phrases with precision			
	Effectuates tempo change			
	Makes use of the three types of fermata			
	Engages the left hand effectively			
	Executes anacrusis and fractional beat entrances appropriately			
	Connects gesture to desired dynamics, articulation, and phrasing			
	Conducts advanced patterns in changing, mixed, and asymmetrical meters			
Prepare	Performs any part of the musical score in a comfortable octave on solfège, rhythm syllables, neutral syllables, and text			
	Plays any part of the musical score on the piano, simplified if necessary			
	Demonstrates ability to play-and-sing multiple vocal, instrumental, and accompaniment lines			
	Conducts while singing any vocal or instrumental line			
	Analyzes and maps out the score			
	Comprehensively researches the musical work			
	Develops a logical and efficient rehearsal plan that prioritizes the development of fundamental musicianship skills			
Teach	Communicates rehearsal instructions succinctly and accurately			
	Models superb vocal technique			
	Conducts choral literature from a multiplicity of style periods and genres in keeping with performance practices for each			
	Incorporates solfège, rhythm syllables, conducting gestures, hand signs, and other tools into the rehearsal with ease			
	Demonstrates mastery of diction			
	Sequences rehearsal events logically and in a musically intuitive fashion			
	Assesses student learning using diagnostic, formative, and summative means			
Comments		Assessment		