

**Ball State University**  
**MUSE 254: Percussion Techniques**  
**Spring 2026**  
**Monday/Wednesday 2:00-2:50 pm**  
**Music Instruction Building - Room 152**

**Instructor**

Dr. Rebekah Weaver

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**Course Description**

MUSE 254 is a course that explores the development of fundamental performance skills on standard percussion instruments. This will include the examination of performance problems, diagnostic techniques, teaching strategies, and other specialized topics related to percussion instruments.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will have a greater understanding of the percussion family, be able to demonstrate basic techniques, assess standard repair and maintenance issues for various instruments, develop teaching skills in the area of percussion, be able to identify a great variety of percussion instruments, and demonstrate performance skills in the area.

**Required Materials**

Primatic, S. (2015). *Percussion methods: An essential resource for educators, conductors, and students*. Meredith Music.

Notebook and writing utensils for taking notes

Additional links to pdf readings, videos, and handouts as needed will be posted on Canvas.

You need to **purchase** (available from [steveweiss.com](http://steveweiss.com) or other retailers):

- One pair of snare drum sticks (Vic Firth SD1 recommended, please do not purchase marching or jazz drum sticks)

You need to **either purchase** for yourself **or rent** from BSU:

- One practice pad (Remo tunable 8" is a good choice if purchasing but any are acceptable)

Additionally, you may choose to start building your personal percussion collection with the following **optional purchases**:

- One pair of general use yarn marimba mallets (such as Innovative Percussion IP240 birch handles)
- One pair of timpani mallets (such as Vic Firth T1 General) – if you choose not to purchase I will have a limited number for the class to use

**Recommended *Optional* Materials**

- Cook, G. D. (2019). *Teaching percussion*. (Enhanced 3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Cengage.
- Primatic, S. (2015). *Percussion instruments: Purchasing, maintaining, troubleshooting, and more*. Meredith Music.

## CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

You should bring your textbook and other required materials to class every day. This is a collaborative, participatory class in which we learn by doing and learn from one another. You should prepare ahead of time so that you are able to actively contribute to class discussion each day. Food and drink are not allowed near any percussion instrument with the exception of water in a sealed container. Please silence cell phones before class starts and try to limit the use of electronics if possible - most of the time you'll be busy with some sort of percussion instrument in your hands anyway!

## BALL STATE UNIVERSITY/MUSIC EDUCATION POLICIES

### UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse.

### FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's [Statement on Freedom of Expression](#), the resources on Ball State's [Freedom of Expression webpage](#), and [Ball State's Beneficence Pledge](#).

### DISABILITY STATEMENT

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's [Disability Services Office](#) coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or [dsd@bsu.edu](mailto:dsd@bsu.edu).

### ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

As a pre-service teacher, you are expected to show an exemplary commitment to education and your personal growth as a professional music educator. Attendance at all class meetings is required. Students are required to provide the instructor with **prior** notice for all absences, just as you will be required to notify your future school and/or principal of an absence. Prior notification may be done via email. Lack of prior notification will constitute an unexcused absence. Any course requirements, expectations, or assignments that are missed because of an unexcused absence will receive no credit or a score of zero.

If an absence is the result of a last-minute emergency, please contact the instructor at the earliest opportunity. If the earliest opportunity to contact the instructor occurs after the start of class, and prior notice was not possible, the nature of the absence, i.e., whether it be considered excused or unexcused, will be at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Excessive absence from class, even when excused with prior notification, is considered unprofessional. As such, three (3) absences may be excused by the instructor if prior notification is provided. The fourth and subsequent absences from class will require medical documentation. Please note, medical documentation will be required for both **physical** and **mental** health absences. Informal mental health days are not recognized by our profession.

Tardy is defined as arriving to class after its official start time, regardless of what is going on in the class. Three (3) tardies, for any reason, will result in one unexcused absence. These expectations for attendance and punctuality are outlined in the revised Music Education Disposition Rubric. Failing to meet attendance and punctuality expectations will prevent a student from earning a passing grade and will result in the need to retake the course.

### ENGAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS

To support a respectful and engaging classroom environment that encourages the free exchange of ideas and civil discourse, we will follow these ground rules:

1. Respect different perspectives. Share your ideas and let others share theirs.
2. Challenge ideas, not people. Disagree respectfully. No personal attacks or put-downs. Focus on exploring ideas critically and constructively.
3. Listen to understand. Stay curious, ask questions, and give others space to speak.
4. Assume good intentions. Approach discussions with curiosity and compassion.
5. Keep it private. What is shared in class should stay in class. Do not share others' words or work without their permission.
6. Be respectful. Avoid hurtful language, stereotypes, or content that may demean others. Keep feedback constructive.

### STUDENT ACADEMIC ETHICS POLICY

Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Visit the Vice President for Academic Affairs' [academic integrity website](#) (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. The website also includes information on Title IX and the University Grade Appeal Policy. To learn about Ball State University's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#).

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself. Check with the instructor if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty. Examples of academic integrity violations include, but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the faculty member (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books).
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).
- Without the instructor's written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments, class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.
- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing).
- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

### DEGREE PROGRESS and LICENSURE

All music education students should know and understand current program and licensure requirements, suggested 4-year plans, course sequencing options and limitations, and Decision Point criteria. To do so, students should regularly meet with advisors, particularly the School of Music academic advisor, and review information provided by the [Office of Teacher Education Services and Clinical Practice](#) and [Teachers College](#). Specifically, in addition to university requirements, MUSE students must:

1. Successfully complete Decision Point 1: Admission to Teacher Candidacy and qualify for applying for student teaching and registering for 300- and 400-level MUSE and Professional Education courses by:
  - Earning grades of C or better and satisfying all course and assessment requirements in COMM 210, MUSE 100, MUSE 150, EDMU 205, EDPS 250, MUSE 291, and MUSE 293;
  - Earning and maintaining an overall GPA of at least 2.50; and
  - Exhibiting the Dispositions expected of and by the teaching profession.

⇒ Decision Point 1 can and should be completed by the end of the sophomore year (4 semesters) to ensure on-time program completion and graduation.

2. Successfully complete Decision Point 2: Admission to Student Teaching, by:

- Earning grades of C or better and satisfying all course and assessment requirements in MUSE 356, MUSE 376, MUSE 457, EDPS 390, EDFO 420, and MUSE 350 (V&G majors);
- Earning grades of C or better and satisfying all course and assessment requirements in MUSE 355, MUSE 375, EDPS 390, EDFO 420, and MUSE 350 (I&G majors);
- Earning and maintaining a GPA of at least 2.50 in all Professional Education courses;
- Earning and maintaining a GPA of at least 2.50 in all Music Education major courses;
- Earning and maintaining an overall GPA of at least 2.50;
- Exhibiting the Dispositions expected of and by the teaching profession; and
- Submit an application for student teaching and have your eligibility confirmed by passing a student teaching interview with the MUSE faculty.

⇒ Decision Point 2 can and should be completed by the end of the Fall semester of the senior year (7 semesters) to ensure on-time program completion and graduation.

3. Successfully complete Decision Point 3: Recommendation for Graduation and Licensure.

⇒ It is important to note that students SHOULD complete all [Decision Point 3 requirements](#) to become licensed in the State of Indiana, regardless of whether they plan to teach out of State or not at all. Choosing to bypass an Indiana Teaching license drastically reduces the likelihood of achieving licensure in other states and limits future possibilities.

### MUSE TWO-ATTEMPT POLICY

All MUSE courses are subject to a two-attempt limit. This policy applies to all current Music Education majors and any students participating in MUSE courses with the intent of gaining admission to the Music Education major. Students who do not successfully complete a MUSE course within 2 attempts will become ineligible to complete the Music Education program at Ball State. *An attempt is defined as any registration resulting in a letter grade less than "C"*. A copy of the complete policy, as well as the appeal process for a third attempt and program continuation, can be obtained from the Coordinator of Music Education.

### DISPOSITION ASSESSMENT

Becoming an effective teacher includes demonstrating professional dispositions, which include attitudes, habits of action, and commitments that foster student learning and assist in elevating the education profession, as well as in interacting with families, community members, and colleagues. The Ball State Disposition Assessment System is a systematic, consistent approach to assessing and supporting teacher candidates' disposition growth throughout their preparation. This system has two components: (1) a disposition rubric system, and (2) a disposition alert system, which provide opportunities for deliberate feedback and guidance regarding teacher candidates' disposition development. Information about the rubric, procedures, and alert policy are available on the Student Teaching page of the OTES website, found [HERE](#).

### PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

It is expected that all Music Education students at Ball State University be members of at least one professional music education organization: NAFME/IMEA, ASTA, ACDA, MTNA, NBA, AOSA, OAKE, etc. To ensure appropriate credit for professional membership, students should pay all registration dues and be listed on the chosen organization's membership roster by midterm. It is recommended that students strongly consider national membership in NAFME/IMEA, not just local membership in NAFME @ Ball State. Included in national NAFME/IMEA membership is access to three journals that are sources for continued professional development, i.e., Teaching Music, Music Educators Journal, and InForm, access to live and archived webinars on a variety of topics, and special collegiate pricing for conference registrations and merchandise. Membership in a professional organization remains an expectation for students' professional dispositions.

### APPLICATION FOR STUDENT TEACHING

Application for student teaching occurs in the academic year prior to the student teaching year. Students must attend the Application for Student Teaching in Music Education Orientation Meeting held in October. At this meeting, students will receive important information about student teaching, the application process, and the required interview with the music education faculty. Students must have achieved [Admission to Teacher Candidacy](#) (passed Decision Point 1) to be eligible to apply; there are no exceptions.

### THE LEARNING CENTER AND THE WRITING CENTER

The Learning Center offers free Tutoring and Academic Coaching for many courses at Ball State. Students can make appointments for online (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit [myballstate.bsue.edu](http://myballstate.bsue.edu) and click on “Navigate” in the Academic Tools section, or just go directly to [bsu.navigate.eab.com](http://bsu.navigate.eab.com).

The Writing Center (in Rober Bell 295 during weekdays, Bracken Library Frist Floor West in the evening, or online during any of our regularly schedule hours) offers free planning, feedback, and accountability sessions (in person and online) to all students composing essays, reports, reflections, and other digital or print texts. To schedule a free appointment to discuss your writing, go to [bsu.edu/writingcenter](http://bsu.edu/writingcenter).

### GRADING

#### Feedback Policy:

- *I will try to respond to email from your official Ball State email address within 24 hours during weekdays (Monday-Friday) and within 48 hours on the weekend.*
- *I will read every discussion post, but I may not always personally comment on the posts.*
- *I will make every effort to grade your quizzes, assignments, and discussions no later than 5 business days after submission. If you submit work late, it will be graded when I am caught up on current assignments.*

#### Late Work

- Discussion board posts will not be accepted once they have closed at the due date unless permission is given by the instructor on a case-by-case basis.
- **All other written work (except for assessments) will be accepted at any point in the semester, starting with an automatic deduction of 5% for each week past the due date (assignments submitted within one week of the due date will not be penalized). Students must email the professor should they require extra time past one week of the due date.**
- **Please note that in order to pass this class, all assignments must be completed and turned in before the end of the semester whether or not credit is earned.**

#### Professional Development (5%)

As a music educator, continual growth and development as a musician and teacher throughout a career is essential. During each term of study as a music education major, students will exhibit a commitment to professional growth and development by completing professional development hours and activities throughout the semester and by joining a professional organization. The Professional Development Log (PDL) can be downloaded from the Music Education website. Upload the completed form to Canvas. Please see me if you have any questions.

\*PDL MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE END OF THE LAST DAY OF REGULAR CLASSES.

\*PLEASE NOTE: YOU MUST EARN A PASS ON THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PORTION OF THE COURSE REQUIREMENTS IN ORDER TO OBTAIN A “C” IN THIS CLASS

#### Video Responses/Contributions to Discussion Board Posts (10%)

Each time a video is assigned you need to post a short response/reaction by 4:00 pm the day the assignment is due. Posts should occur in the appropriate Canvas discussion board (labeled by date and video name). **Discussion boards will automatically close at the due date/time so be sure to keep on top of these assignments – you are welcome to work ahead if you would like to do so.** While there is no length requirement, you should watch the videos in their

entirety before deciding what to contribute (they are all just a few minutes long). Your response should, at the very minimum, include *two* of the following for the videos assigned (in total, not *per* video): (1) an intriguing or new fact or idea, (2) a wondering, question, or doubt, and (3) an application to your experience as a teacher and/or musician. Be clear and use proper grammar in your response, making sure to include your own thoughts and explanations as well. Responses to other your classmates' posts are not mandatory but will likely contribute to your overall comprehension of the material – you may also earn one extra credit point per video if you respond to another student's comment. Videos will be linked in the discussion board posts. See Canvas assignment for more information.

### **Article Review (10%)**

Read 1 article of your choice related to percussion pedagogy (teaching and learning, not the history of an instrument or someone's biography) from *Percussive Notes* (the only professional journal for percussionists - found in the library or via Google Scholar). Try to find an article that was written within the last 10 years. Provide a complete summary of the content of the article (using paragraphs and complete sentences) first, and then give a personal reaction to the article including how it may be useful to your teaching practice in the future and how it relates to the course and what you have learned thus far. The summary and reaction should be a minimum of two typewritten (double spaced) pages. Be sure to give the complete APA citation for each article. See Canvas assignment for more information.

### **Part Assignment Scenario (15%)**

You will be assigned one classroom scenario in which you will be given the number of students in the percussion section as well as a brief description of each student and his/her strengths and weaknesses. You will also receive a score and percussion parts for your group. Your goal will be to accurately assign parts for each piece in each scenario so that all parts are covered, and all students are assigned a part. Details of the assignment will be discussed in class and posted on Canvas.

### **Peer Teachings/Presentations (15%)**

You will complete two peer teaching episodes during this course.

1. Snare Drum Beginning Lesson – You will choose a “student” (outside of MUSE 254 and preferably someone with no prior snare drum experience) for this lesson, which will be video recorded outside of class and sent to the instructor (detailed instructions for submission will be covered in class). It would be wise to wait until after we have covered the instrument thoroughly in class before you teach your lesson. You will need to teach a 10- to 15-minute lesson that includes the following: (a) proper instrument set-up, (b) proper grip and stance, (c) proper playing area on the instrument, (d) proper stroke, and (e) a rudiment of your choice. You should pretend as if the person you are teaching knows nothing about playing the instrument and be as thorough as possible. Additionally, a lesson plan must be written and uploaded to Canvas at the time of assignment submission. A sample lesson plan outline will be provided on Canvas.

2. Accessory Instrument – You will choose an accessory instrument not covered by the instructor and research how to correctly play that instrument (a sign-up sheet/list of instruments will be provided near the time of the assignment to avoid overlap). You may use credible YouTube videos (from major percussion brands or well-known percussionists/organizations) to guide you, as well as any written information from textbooks or the Internet. You will have 5-7 minutes to succinctly teach a classmate how to play the instrument, and you must provide a one page handout (email to me prior to your teaching day) that includes pertinent information such as a photo, instrument history, playing instructions, and resources for further information. Assignment specifics are posted on Canvas.

### **Performance and Written Assessments (20%)**

You will be evaluated on your ability to demonstrate basic techniques on the instruments listed below. A snare drum performance will be scheduled outside of class time, will take place in my office, and will not last more than 15 minutes. More detailed information will be discussed in class, but a general outline of requirements follows. Short written assessments will accompany this performance assessment and other units of study and will be open-book/take-home format. ***There will be a comprehensive, written final exam.***

### **Snare Drum Performance Assessment:**

The 40 Percussive Arts Society International Drum Rudiments

- You must be able to demonstrate a buzz roll as well as a multiple bounce roll (no. 4), flam (no. 20), and drag (no. 31). Additionally, you will choose one more rudiment to demonstrate from each category (I, II, III, and IV).

Exercises from those played in class  
Short sightreading

**Final Essays (5%)**

See assignment details on Canvas near the end of the semester.

**Final Exam (20%)**

An in person, written final exam will occur at the end of the semester. It will largely be focused on pedagogy, and a study guide will be provided.

**Grading Policy/Percentages**

Grade letters are based on the following percentages and in accordance with the university + and - system. Please note that you must complete all assignments to a satisfactory level, regardless of whether credit is earned, in order to qualify for a passing grade for the course. I do not offer extra credit to make up for grades, but I do provide the opportunity to redo all major assignments for improved grades provided they were initially submitted on time and that you conference with me to address areas needing correction. Resubmissions must be submitted no later than 2 weeks after the grade was returned or 1 week prior to the end of the semester unless special considerations are made in conference with Dr. Weaver.

A	94-100%	C+	77-49%	D-	60-63.9%
A-	90-93.9%	C	74-76.9%	F	0-59.9%
B+	87-89.9%	C-	70-73.9%		
B	84-86.9%	D+	67-69.9%		
B-	80-83.9%	D	64-66.9%		

**COURSE CALENDAR**

Week	Date	Topics to be Covered	Readings Due	Assignment Due
1	M 1/5	Introduction to class, syllabus, Myths & Truths activity		
	W 1/7	SNARE Parts of the snare drum, traditional/matched grip, possible problems in grip, stance, stroke	Primatec pp. 9-16	Vic Firth SD videos #1, 2, & 5, discussion board post
2	M 1/12	SNARE Grip and stance review, reading percussion clef, sticking policy, exercises on p. 17		Vic Firth SD videos #4, 6, & 7, discussion board post
	W 1/14	SNARE Sticking policy review, exercises on pp. 17-20 using sticking policy, dynamics on snare, exercises on pp. 21-23		Vic Firth SD video #12, discussion board post, write correct RH lead sticking (NOT alternate strokes) under exercises 1, 2, 3,

				7, & 8 on p. 17 in Primatic
3	M 1/19	NO CLASS – MLK DAY		
	W 1/21	SNARE Flam rudiments, exercises on pp. 25-27	Primatic p. 24	
4	M 1/26	SNARE Rolls and drags, exercises on pp. 29-31 and pp. 35-37	Primatic p. 28, pp. 32-34	
	1/28	SNARE Rolls and drags continued from Tuesday, PAS rudiments, etudes		Article Review
5	M 2/2	SNARE Review all material, sign up for assessments Practice day		Vic Firth SD video #3, discussion board post
	W 2/4	KEYBOARD Introduction to keyboard instruments, ranges, mallet choices, two mallet grip	Primatic pp. 73-78	Snare performance assessments this week (at assigned time outside of class), Vic Firth Keyboard videos #1, 2, 3, & 4, discussion board post
6	M 2/9	KEYBOARD Major scales (handout provided), rolls, stroke		SD Video Lesson and Lesson Plan  SD Written Assessment
	W 2/11	KEYBOARD Sticking, sightreading, practice day		Vic Firth Keyboard videos #6, 7, discussion board post
7	M 2/16	<i>TBA – Class will meet in a different room due to SoM Auditions</i>		
	W 2/18	KEYBOARD Four mallet grips and techniques	Primatic pp. 84-87	Vic Firth Keyboard videos #8, 9, & 10, discussion board post

8	M 2/23	KEYBOARD Playing/sightreading		
	W 2/25	KEYBOARD Playing/sightreading, unit wrap-up (handouts provided)		
9	M 3/2	NO CLASS – Spring Break		
	W 3/4	NO CLASS – Spring Break		
10	M 3/9	TIMPANI History, sizes/ranges, tuning and tuning changes, mallets, grips  Examination of timpani parts in band/orchestra literature	Primatec pp. 88-93	Vic Firth timpani videos #1, 2, & 3, discussion board post
	W 3/11	TIMPANI Special effects on timpani, tuning practice in groups		Vic Firth timpani videos #7 &8, discussion board post
11	M 3/16	TIMPANI – Flex Day		
	W 3/18	BD, CRASH/SUSPENDED CYMBAL Intro to all instruments	Primatec pp. 43-53	Vic Firth Bass Drum, Crash Cymbal, and Suspended Cymbal videos, discussion board post
12	M 3/23	BD, CRASH/SUSPENDED CYMBAL Centers – exploratory playing day, ear plugs recommended	Primatec pp. 54-62	Keyboard/Timpani Written Assessment Due
	W 3/25	TRIANGLE & TAMBOURINE		Vic Firth Triangle and Tambourine videos, discussion board post
13	M 3/30	ACCESSORIES (Presentations)		One-page handout for accessory due prior to day of presentation

	W 4/1	ACCESSORIES (Presentations)		
14	M 4/6	ACCESSORIES (Presentations)		
	W 4/8	ACCESSORIES (Presentations)		
15	M 4/13	PERCUSSION ENSEMBLES		
	W 4/15	PERCUSSION ENSEMBLES		
16	M 4/20	PERCUSSION ENSEMBLES		
	W 4/22	PERCUSSION ENSEMBLES		Part Assignment Scenario
17	M 4/27	Last day – final exam in class		PD Log Due
	W 4/29			Final Essays Due – Bring to my office in person at some point this week