

Applied Trombone Syllabus

WMU School of Music

Fall, 2023/Spring, 2024

Instructor: Dr. Steve Wolfinbarger
Studio: Room 1420

Cell phone/text: 269 665-0497
E-mail: wolfinbarger@wmich.edu

Private Study

Use the following criteria to judge your own development on trombone (based in part on Doug Yeo's "*What Makes a Good Student?*"):

- Do you have the desire and will to improve? Do you practice 2-4 hours *daily* at least six days a week?
- Do you "take care of business," such as answering e-mails quickly, ordering music and mutes right away, and completing assigned work for applied study? Or do you procrastinate?
- Do you arrive punctually for lessons?
- Are you warmed up and ready to play for lessons?
- Do you view each lesson as a *performance*?
- Do you listen to recordings or review scores for assigned music?
- Do you treat your professor with respect, and accept suggestions and criticism non-defensively?
- Do you make excuses when you play poorly or simply say that you're unprepared?
- Do you inspire your peers to be better players?
- Do you attend both area recitals and your peer's recitals?
- Do you keep your instrument in good working order?
- Do you seek out opportunities to play trombone in a variety of musical ensembles?
- Do you demonstrate a cooperative, cheerful attitude when working with peers in ensembles?
- Are you willing to delay current pleasures to secure future rewards?
- Do you use technology in your daily practice routine? Do you frequently record yourself?

Required for Applied Trombone

Get used to being a musician by thinking and acting like one. Unlike expensive textbooks used in many other classes, you will use your music, mutes, metronome and tuner the rest of your life. ***Be prepared to invest in your career. You will need the following:***

- All assigned music and Tonal Energy app;
- Notebook and pencil for lesson assignments and notes;
- Schedule of trombone and musical events (iPhone?)
- Trombone accessories, including slide grease, lubricant system, spray bottle, a Tom Crown or Denis Wick straight mute, Denis Wick cup mute (other mutes as needed), and music (as assigned).
- ITA membership (Highly recommended—see below)

Final Grade

- The final grade will be determined as follows:
 - Lesson "performance:" 60%
 - Studio requirements: 10%
 - Jury/Hearing: 10%
 - Other: 20%

If an item listed above is not required of a student in a given semester, then that percentage of the final grade will be added to the weekly grade percentage.

- **Weekly Grade Average (60%)**
 - Every lesson must be treated as a performance, demonstrating material that has been prepared since the last lesson. It is NOT a monitored practice session. **If you show up for a lesson unprepared then it is a waste of my time and yours.** However, I will give you 110% if you do the same for me. Most of the final grade will be based on the weekly lesson grade average. *Students may be dismissed from lessons if unprepared, and an appropriate grade will be given for that lesson.* Absences will also figure into the weekly grade average. Each student will be allowed one unexcused *attendance* absence per semester without penalty. After that a letter grade of “E” will be recorded for each lesson missed. Guest artist and student trombone recitals, guest clinics and studio classes are required attendance, and students with an unexcused absence will receive an automatic “E” for each event missed. It will then be averaged into the final weekly grade average. It is your responsibility to regularly check the studio webpage for a listing of required events.

- **Undergraduate Studio Requirements (more information below) (10%)**
 - Studio requirements must be completed by the first week of November or the lesson prior to spring break, depending on the semester (see the “Jury and Performance Requirements” sheet to determine exact requirements). Semester studio requirements must be passed before a student will be allowed to register at the next level the following semester.

- **Jury/Hearing (10%)**
 - Juries or hearings are not required every semester. See the “Brass and Percussion Area Jury and Performance Requirements” for additional information.

- **Other (20%)**
 - This includes attitude, judgment—or lack of (as it related to your applied study or development as a trombonist), punctuality, area recital attendance, trombone choir and ensemble participation, or assignments (i.e., recital program notes, record reviews, reading).
 - “**Take care of business**” by completing assigned tasks quickly. Avoid displaying a sense of laziness and take care of business.
 - Attitude problems affecting your applied study or work with others **will NOT be tolerated** and will be dealt with appropriately.

Studio Requirements

- See the Trombone Studio Requirement Outline for scale and arpeggio requirements.
- Each student is responsible for knowing the information on the “Brass and Percussion Jury and Performance Requirements” form, outlining yearly jury and hearing requirements.
- Scale requirements must be performed TWO octaves, range permitting.
- Graduate students are *required* to present a jury and perform a solo on an area recital each semester. Undergraduate non-performance majors are *encouraged* to perform a solo on area recital at least once during the semester, while undergraduate performance majors are *required* to perform.

Studio Policies

- Students may be dismissed from a lesson if unprepared, and those who are consistently unprepared will be reassigned to the graduate assistant for future semesters.
- Music or materials can be borrowed from the instructor *for one day only*. Students who return material late or in damaged condition will not be allowed to borrow again. Anyone not returning material by the end of the semester may receive an “I” or a lower grade. Anyone choosing to copy material for future use will be expected to purchase an original copy.
- You are *required* to attend the recitals of other studio members. It will be a component of your lesson grade. By attending, you will learn new repertoire. You will also observe the performance etiquette of your fellow studio members and learn what to do and what not to do during a recital. You will also be supporting your colleagues in their pursuit of excellence, and they will do the same for you. If there is a reason you feel is important enough to be released from this requirement you must request an excuse from the professor prior to the recital. Any notification after the event will be recorded as an unexcused absence, which reflects negatively on your level of commitment.

- Studio classes and area recitals are **NOT** optional. Attendance will be taken at each, and absences will result in a lowered applied lesson grade (see Weekly Grade Average under Final Grade).
- You are *required* to attend all guest trombone artist's recitals and clinics. Attendance will be taken at each event, and failure to attend will affect your final grade and reflect on your level of commitment. Since all recitals and clinics (by both students and guest artists) are posted on the studio webpage weeks and months in advance, you are expected to arrange to be off work. You will NOT be excused for work-related conflicts.
- Your instrument must always be clean and kept in good working. Each case must contain a pencil, slide lubricant system, lubricants for the tuning slide and valve, and a mini screwdriver. At each lesson you must bring your instrument, all assigned music, mutes for assigned music, and a pencil.
- On rare occasions students *may* be assigned to meet with the trombone graduate assistant in either a clinic, master class, or a private lesson in place of your regularly scheduled lesson for that week.
- No lesson absence will be rescheduled unless 24-hour notice is given or there is an accident or illness. Lessons will NOT be rescheduled due to a lack of practice time.
- Dates of various trombone events will be posted on the studio web site, which can be found at <http://www.wmich.edu/trombone/>. It is your responsibility to check the website weekly for a list of studio classes, guest artist events, and other updated information.

Practice

Each student should expect to have all notes and rhythms prepared for lessons so musical detail can be addressed. This will typically require between 2-4 hours of *daily* practice. **Remember that a high level of commitment in applied will in turn result in significant progress on your instrument.**

Studio "Dynamics"

Good studio dynamics are essential for the benefit of ALL students. Students who are not working well with others in ensembles make learning uncomfortable. Throughout your musical career it will be *important* to put aside personal differences in ensembles for the common good. Furthermore, first-year students need to feel the support of older, more experienced students who have much to offer. Upper class students will therefore be expected to serve as role models and "mentors" for younger students (particularly freshmen). Spend time with the entering students so you feel comfortable mentoring.

Those who fail to abide by these policies will risk a lower semester grade.

Ensemble Participation

- Full time undergraduate applied trombone students are expected to participate in trombone choir during semesters when it meets, and they are encouraged to enroll. Graduate students are required to play but are not required to register for credit. The ensemble typically meets on Sunday nights, and students are expected to reserve that block of time.
- It is expected that all applied trombone majors will participate in a major ensemble during semesters of private lessons. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Performance Preparation /Accompanist

- Jury or Area Recital Performance
 - Each student is required to provide his/her accompanist with the required music no less than six weeks before a performance, and rehearsals must begin no less than two weeks before a performance. A minimum of two rehearsals with the pianist will be REQUIRED for any jury or area recital performance. Lack of funds must NOT be a factor in determining the adequate number of rehearsals or the proper accompanist to hire for a performance. Students will NOT be allowed to perform unless the instructor has observed at least one rehearsal.
- Solo Recitals/Rehearsal Timetable
 - Music should be selected a *minimum* of one semester (16 weeks) prior to the recital, and the accompanist should receive the music at least 12 weeks before the scheduled recital date. Rehearsals must begin no less than eight weeks before, and the recital must be performance-ready for the hearing three weeks prior to the recital.

- Pianist protocol
 - Prior to securing an accompanist, it is important to obtain from the professor a list of suitable pianists for the music being prepared. Failure to do so may result in added expense for the student, or the possibility of securing a pianist who is unable to adequately prepare the music.

Non-University Performance Opportunities

- As a trombone student, you represent WMU and the instructor's teaching. Therefore, the instructor must know about any auditioning, non-university performing, and study with other teachers. You may discuss these opportunities with the instructor as they relate to your study and progress as a player.

Letters of Recommendation

- To ensure that letters arrive on time, and to allow adequate time for them to be written, **two weeks are required** (from the date the request is received) for completion of any letter of recommendation. In addition, readers will assume that a confidential recommendation is frank, and almost no one will place value in a non-confidential letter. Therefore, the instructor will complete a letter **only** when the student agrees to waive the right to inspect the contents of the letter.

International Trombone Association Journal

- The importance of supporting one's professional association cannot be overemphasized. The International Trombone Association has been and remains critically important in the dissemination of vital information regarding all trombone-related facts and activities. From orchestral to jazz, pedagogy to performance, historical to current events, its value is enormous. It is therefore expected that all applied trombone students will (and will certainly want to) be a member of the ITA. You can access online membership by going to the trombone.net, or by emailing membership@trombone.net.

Important Final Words

1. Get in the habit of responding to texts quickly and checking e-mail **at least** once daily. There are times your professor or others will need to hear from you quickly. As a professional, a slow response will result in lost opportunities or income. Establish good habits NOW so that won't happen later.
2. Limit your time on activities that have limited value, such as social media, gaming and the internet. It's more important to focus on your future. Additionally, avoid blogging, posting, or saying anything that could be interpreted as controversial, or that you wouldn't mind a potential employer seeing. Anything you post can stick with you the rest of your life and can affect your career opportunities. I've seen it happen.
3. Protect your health. Get adequate sleep, eat a proper diet, exercise, and avoid drugs. Just because it's 'legal' doesn't mean it's good. For example, marijuana can affect your memory and thinking problems, loss of coordination, anxiety and altered senses. It can cause nausea and vomiting, disorientation, hallucinations, depression, increased heart rate, and can lead to addiction. Experts tie frequent use to the likelihood of dropping out of school. Heavy use results in impaired driving ability. Think it can't happen to you? Long term effects are usually more subtle and gradual. It's easy to miss the symptoms. Smoking? As a trombonist, **WHY** would you inhale something that will damage your lungs? There are multiple serious health risks associated with smoking. Don't do it.
4. Be organized. Write yourself notes or iPhone reminders so you will remember crucial details needing attention. Keep notes in your pocket and look at them frequently until completed.
5. In summary, **take care of business!** Practice, study, show up for class, be organized, respond quickly to e-mails and texts, complete assignments, avoid procrastination, limit your time on social media, get along with others, and be proactive—**take care of business.**

Other

- The instructor reserves the right to change or revise any part of this syllabus during the semester.