

MUS 189: Low Brass Methods

University of Mississippi Department of Music
Spring 2026
11:00-11:50am TTh, 146 Music Building

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Course Materials

Assigned readings, fingering charts, warm-up exercises, and other materials are available online on the course Blackboard site, at www.olemiss.edu/lowbrass/lowbrassmethods.html, or will be distributed by the instructor.

Each student will be issued a packet containing trombone slide lubricant and valve oil during or soon after the first meeting. These items are provided through the course fee paid for MUS 189.

Instruments and mouthpieces will be assigned during the first class meeting, and during each meeting in which students “switch” instruments. Your assigned instrument and mouthpiece must be brought to each class meeting.

PDF copies of beginning band methods for class playing activities are available on the Blackboard site. The instructor has hard copies that may be used for in-class activities, or students can use tablets or laptops.

Pencils (NOT PENS) will be needed for written tests given in class. Bringing pencils and notebook paper to class each day is recommended, though these may not be used in every class meeting.

Course Description

Low Brass Methods is intended to introduce future teachers to the history, execution, and instruction of the trombone, euphonium, and tuba. While the focus of class meetings will be upon playing, readings and study outside of class will expose students to the history, literature, prominent performers, equipment, and other relevant issues pertaining to each instrument. Various beginning band methods will be used for class instruction and playing assignments so that future teachers will gain familiarity with materials available for use in their future programs.

Student Objectives

Students will:

1. Develop fundamental playing ability on trombone, euphonium, and tuba at least equal to that of an average beginning student on each instrument.
2. Develop sufficient pedagogical knowledge and skills necessary for teaching low brass instruments in elementary and secondary schools.
3. Study and evaluate a variety of instructional materials available to beginning band directors, in order to make informed decisions regarding materials for their future programs.
4. Gain exposure to other resources such as books and recordings that can aid in teaching.
5. Develop a basic knowledge of various makes and models of low brass instruments and mouthpieces, so that they can make informed choices when choosing equipment for students.

Teaching Strategies

1. Playing laboratories.
2. Student presentations and teaching opportunities.
3. Readings and study outside of class meetings.
4. Occasional lectures and class discussions.

Course Organization

This course will be divided into three units of study, with students playing a different instrument during each unit.* Lectures, class discussions, assigned readings, and study outside of class will correspond to the instrument being played at a given time, although general topics also will be covered. Three different beginning band method books will be used for playing labs and assignments during the course of the semester. This will expose students to the different instructional materials available to band and orchestra directors, thus allowing them to make an informed choice of band methods when out in the “real world.”

(*Students whose major instrument is trombone, euphonium, or tuba will spend additional time on one of the other two instruments rather than playing their primary instruments in class. They will still be required to take the written tests for their primary instruments.)

Organization of the course will be as follows:

Unit 1 Dates: January 20-March 5

Unit 1 Instrument: Trombone

Unit 1 Method Book: *Premiere Performance*

Unit 2 Dates: March 7-April 9

Unit 2 Instrument: Euphonium or Tuba (half of class on each instrument)

Unit 2 Method Book: *Tradition of Excellence*

Unit 3 Dates: April 14-May 5

Unit 3 Instrument: Euphonium or Tuba (half of class on each instrument)

Unit 3 Method Book: *Essential Elements 2000*

The final exam period on Tuesday, May 5, will be used for the last sight reading and overtone tests, additional questions/discussion, and the written final exam.

Assignments and Grading

1. Online written tests—15%. A “take home” written exam on the instrument being studied will be due at the end of each unit, submitted via Blackboard. These will contain multiple-choice, short-answer, and discussion questions on the unit’s readings, as well as fill-in-the-blank questions on notes and fingerings for the instrument being studied. Students will also be asked to provide a brief written evaluation of the method book being used for that unit, indicating strengths and weaknesses and whether or not the book will be considered for future students.
2. Overtone chart tests—25%. On the last day of each unit students will be required to fill in “blanks” on an overtone chart for the instrument being studied during that unit. This is intended to foster a greater understanding of the acoustical principles governing brass instrument construction, and also to prompt students to learn notes and fingerings for a greater range than that they are able to play.
3. Playing tests—25%. A separate playing test will also be given at the end of each unit, in which students will be expected to play a scale, a brief etude, and a sight-reading exercise. **Students will be responsible for video recording the scale and prepared etude and submitting the video file to the instructor via Blackboard or email by 11:59pm on the test date.** The sight-reading portion will be completed in class. Grading will not be incredibly strict, as the objective is to assess the student’s cognitive knowledge of the process of playing each instrument more than his or her actual physical ability to play the instrument. In other words, correct fingerings, breathing, and posture are more important than absolute pitch accuracy.
4. Teaching presentations—15%. Each student will teach the class during a portion (approximately 10-15 minutes) of two class periods. One of these lessons will be taking the class through the assigned warm-up, and the other will be working through selected exercises from the method book. Lesson plans will be

prepared and submitted to the instructor in advance. 80% of these grades will be based upon the presentations, and the remaining 20% on the written lesson plans. The written lesson plans should contain simple listings of planned exercises and etudes, along with anticipated problems to address in each exercise. The written document need not be extremely detailed, but it should be clear enough to easily follow while teaching.

5. Daily assignments/Quizzes—15%. These will consist primarily or exclusively of short playing quizzes, though short writing assignments or written exams may be given. These may be announced or unannounced. Expect to have at least one playing quiz during each unit. **As with the playing tests, playing quizzes will be submitted to Blackboard or via email as video recordings.**
6. Final exam—5%. The final exam in Low Brass Methods will be comprehensive, containing questions from each unit's readings, as well as notes and fingerings for each low brass instrument.
7. Extra credit. Extra credit assignments will not be given in this course.
8. Due dates. Assignments are due on the date listed on the schedule, unless changed by the instructor; you may or may not be reminded of these verbally. Late assignments will be accepted, with a ten (10)-point penalty. This penalty will double to twenty (20) points three weeks after the due date.

Grading Scale:

98-100=A+	92-97=A	90-91=A-	88-89=B+	82-87=B	80-81=B-
78-79=C+	72-77=C	70-71=C-	60-69=D	0-59=F	

****Please be aware that a grade of "C" (72) or higher is required in order to receive credit for this course toward graduation requirements. Those that earn grades of "C-" or lower will be required to repeat the course.**

Major Assignments Schedule

Below are the due dates for major assignments and dates on which scheduled tests will be administered. In addition to these, daily assignments/quizzes and teaching presentations will be scheduled over the course of the semester. These dates may be changed at the instructor's discretion, but will be close to these.

Thursday, March 5:

- Trombone Online Written Test
- Trombone Overtone Chart Test
- Trombone Playing Test

Thursday, April 9:

- Euphonium Online Written Test
- Euphonium or Tuba Overtone Chart Test
- Euphonium or Tuba Playing Test

Tuesday, April 28:

- Tuba Online Written Test

Tuesday, May 5:

- Euphonium or Tuba Overtone Chart Test
- Euphonium or Tuba Playing Test
- Comprehensive Final Exam

Attendance

Attendance at each class meeting is essential for the student to master required performance and pedagogical skills. In order for a pre-planned absence to be deemed excused, the student must inform the instructor in advance of the planned absence, and the instructor must approve of the reason for the absence. This rule, of course, does not apply to immediate emergency situations such as sudden illness or injury, car trouble, or death

in the immediate family, although it is still desirable that the instructor be contacted in advance, if possible. A doctor's note or other verification may be required. All other absences will be deemed unexcused. Work missed due to an excused absence can be made up; however, pre-assigned work must be turned in to the instructor prior to the missed class if the absence is planned in advance. Work missed due to absences deemed unexcused cannot be made up; pre-assigned work due on the missed date will be accepted, but with a penalty to the student's grade (see above). Students with four (4) unexcused absences will have their final grades lowered by one (1) letter. Students with five (5) unexcused absences will have their final grades lowered by two (2) letters. Students with six (6) unexcused absences will have their final grades lowered by three (3) letters. Students with seven (7) or more unexcused absences will receive a final grade of "F" in MUS 189.

Tardies

Students arriving late to class will have their tardies deemed excused if the instructor is informed in advance, or if the student has a note or promise of a note from a doctor, another instructor, or other responsible party. All other tardies will be deemed unexcused. In addition, three unexcused tardies will be considered equal to one unexcused absence. See the attendance policy above for penalties for unexcused absences/tardies. Policies regarding work missed due to tardies are the same as those listed above for absences.

Class Preparation

Students are responsible for practicing their assigned instruments on a daily basis. Although the amount of time students can devote to these instruments may vary from day to day, students are expected to practice a minimum of three hours weekly. Students are also responsible for assigned readings and/or short writing assignments and, of course, for adequate preparation for written tests and quizzes.

Class Instruments and Materials

The instruments used in this course are either University property or are on loan to the University from Amro Music. The band methods used are either University property or the instructor's personal property. Students will be required to complete paperwork accepting responsibility for the instruments and materials signed to them. All loaned materials are to be treated with the utmost care. Loss, destruction, or mutilation of these materials will result in a grade of Incomplete until appropriate restitution is made, unless the student can present a valid reason that he or she should not be thus held responsible.

Disability Accommodations

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individual basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or meet course requirements. Students with disabilities which have been verified through the Office of Student Disability Services are encouraged to contact the instructor to discuss their individual needs for accommodations.

Physical Contact Clause

In teaching and developing the physical aspects of playing the instrument it may become necessary in rare instances for some limited physical contact between the instructor and the student to take place, so that the instructor can correctly evaluate what the student is doing and diagnose any problems. Such contact will occur very infrequently, if ever, and will be strictly professional in nature. The instructor will inform the student immediately before contact will take place, and will ask if the student is comfortable with this method of diagnosis before proceeding. If the student is uncomfortable with such contact taking place alternative forms of diagnosis will be used.

Continuation of Instruction in Emergency Circumstances

Should an emergency situation lead to closure of the university campus and necessitate a shift to remote teaching and learning MUS 189 will necessarily become a primarily lecture-based course using video conferencing software such as Zoom or Google Meet. Because students will likely not have access to methods class instruments and method books in the remote environment, remaining playing assignments, along with teaching evaluations and in-class testing, will be replaced with alternative assignments as follows:

- Playing tests will be replaced with a series of three (3) one-page album reviews: one each featuring trombone, euphonium, and tuba in a solo or chamber setting. Students will be asked to submit their album selections for approval prior to writing, or review albums suggested by the instructor.
- Overtone series tests will be replaced with a 2-3-page narrative explaining how understanding the overtone series is helpful in brass teaching and performance. This topic will be covered during online lectures, and the instructor may provide additional bibliographical references.
- The final exam will be due on the originally scheduled date but will be expanded and converted to a take-home format with materials taken from the readings, fingering charts, and online lectures.

Due dates for these assignments as well as adjusted due dates for remaining online written tests will be determined as soon as possible after the closure of campus is declared. This plan will be modified as needed to respond to the particular needs of a given situation, as well as to comply with any applicable university policies. For example, if a full closure is avoided but shortened meeting periods are prescribed, the course will proceed in an appropriately modified fashion in order to comply with University directives, most likely without the assignment changes described above