



Music Department

MUE2003 Percussion Methods

1 Unit

Fall 2026

Meeting days/times: Tuesday/Thursday 12:25 pm – 1:20 pm

Meeting Location: CM 118

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 15, 2026, 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

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PLNU Mission

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Course Description

The catalog describes this course as “a laboratory class in playing the percussion instruments with emphasis on teaching and basic repair techniques.”

Percussion Methods is designed to teach future music educators how to build and sustain a successful beginner and middle school percussion program. Students will be given time to

interact with instruments and experience the technical complexities of percussion instruments including, but not limited to: snare drum, mallet instruments, cymbals, bass drum, timpani, drum set, hand drums, triangle, tambourine and other small orchestral percussion instruments. There will also be an emphasis on upkeep and basic repair of a variety of percussion instruments.

Program and Course Learning Outcomes

The material in this course forms part of the Program Learning Outcomes for the PLNU Department of Music under the heading of *essential competencies in musicianship skills*. By the end of this semester, you will demonstrate through assignments, quizzes, performance, and exams that you can:

1. Demonstrate an intermediate proficiency on snare drum.
2. Demonstrate the ability to play middle school level technique on all of the keyboard percussion instruments and timpani.
3. Demonstrate the ability to successfully start a student on snare drum.
4. Perform and diagnose simple repair problems on percussion instruments.
5. Demonstrate a basic understanding of transpositions, ranges and percussion nomenclature.
6. Demonstrate a functional knowledge and skill on drum set, hand drums, cymbals, bass drum, triangle, tambourine and other small orchestral percussion instruments.

Required Texts

Pearson, Bruce and Ryan Nowlin. *Teaching Band with Excellence*. Kjos Music Press, 2011.

*This textbook will be available with LomaBooks. You **need** to have consistent access to this book as we will use it all semester. This book will also be used in a variety of music education classes here at PLNU.*

Required Materials

Pair of Concert Snare Sticks: Vic Firth SD1 or equivalent

Practice pad: can be checked out from the instructor

Music staff paper, notebook, pencils (DO NOT USE PEN), and eraser (IPAD is acceptable).

Method of scanning or taking pictures of, or printing homework assignments (Genius Scan).

Canvas

PLNU Email (check daily)

Recommended Materials

forScore App for an IPAD (extremely useful way to notate, analyze, and perform music)

Music Notebook with Staff paper and standard paper on each side ([Example](#))

Pair of Mallets: IP240

Notation software such as Sibelius, Dorico, MuseScore, etc. (Students receive discounted rates and free trials for many of these programs. Access is also provided in the music lab.)

Assessment and Grading

Your final grade will be calculated using the following formulas:

Percentage of Final Grade:

Attendance/Participation:	15%
Assignments:	25%
Quizzes (Playing/Teaching):	15%
Observations/Field Visit:	10%
Midterm Exam:	15%
Final Exam:	20%
	100%

Letter-grade Equivalence:

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

Attendance/Participation

This course is a hands-on laboratory experience which requires consistent participation, punctuality, and engagement. You are expected to arrive on time for every class with your sticks, practice pad, and required materials ready to go. Missing class or coming unprepared directly impacts both your personal skill development and your ability to contribute to class discussions and peer-teaching activities. You will be assessed on your participation, punctuality, and engagement every four weeks.

Assignments

Assignments in this course bridge the gap between individual playing technique, diagnostic pedagogy, and administrative preparation. To maintain steady progress, you will have a weekly assignment due every Sunday night by 11:59 PM via Canvas. Most of these assignments consist of performance videos, which allow you to demonstrate individual technical progress on snare drum, keyboard instruments, and more while receiving targeted, personal instructor feedback. You will also complete select teaching videos to practice explaining fundamental mechanics and diagnosing common errors, as well as occasional written projects and reports, such as an accessory percussion presentation and a practical drumline and band percussion budget assignment.

Quizzes (Playing/Teaching)

Quizzes are brief, in-class practical evaluations designed to assess fundamental playing technique, sound production, pitch matching, and diagnostic accuracy in real time. Across the semester, you will complete 6 in-class quizzes positioned at the conclusion of key instrument units (Snare, Orchestral/Accessories, Keyboard Percussion, Timpani, and Drum Set). Given our small ensemble environment, quizzes are structured to be short and consist of both playing and teaching as appropriate.

Observations

You will complete 3 separate 1-hour field observations of percussion instruction across the semester (3 hours total). These are satisfied through a combination of independent school visits and a required live clinic:

- Independent School Observations: You will complete 1-hour observations of middle or high school percussion sections/rehearsals in local music programs. You are responsible for contacting local band and percussion directors to schedule observation times; traveling in pairs or small groups is strongly encouraged to minimize disruption to school rehearsals. Contact information for local directors will be provided on Canvas.
- Instructor Clinic Observation: You will attend one required 1-hour session to observe and assist me while I teach a live middle school percussion clinic (scheduled later this semester).

Observation reports are due via Canvas by the milestone deadlines marked on the course schedule: Observation Report 1 (Week 7), Observation Report 2 (Week 12), and Observation Report 3 (Week 15). The instructor clinic observation can satisfy any one of these three deadlines depending on when it occurs.

Following each 1-hour observation, you will submit a brief written reflection in Canvas analyzing:

- Specific pedagogical strategies used
- Diagnostic corrections made by the director/instructor in real time
- Section setup, logistics, and classroom management techniques observed

Midterm Exam

The Midterm Exam is a comprehensive, three-part assessment evaluating your practical execution, diagnostic abilities, and conceptual understanding of snare drum, orchestral percussion, and accessory instruments covered during the first half of the semester.

- **Written Portion:** Tests your knowledge of snare drum mechanics, snare/accessory maintenance, rudiments, stroke classification, instrument selection/usage for middle and high school ensembles, and basic knowledge and techniques of orchestral and accessory percussion.
- **Playing Portion:** Evaluates performance through a short, live snare drum solo alongside practical technique demonstrations on orchestral and accessory instruments (concert bass drum, crash cymbals, suspended cymbal, triangle, and/or tambourine).
- **Teaching Portion:** Evaluates your diagnostic eyes and ears through a live micro-teaching scenario where you analyze, identify, and correct common technical and sound-production errors on snare drum or an accessory instrument in real time.

Final Exam

The Final Exam is a comprehensive three-part assessment measuring your overall readiness to manage, perform, and instruct a secondary school percussion section.

- **Written Portion (Cumulative):** Covers concepts from all 15 weeks, including instrument ranges, transpositions, stick/mallet selection, head replacement, preventative maintenance, budgeting, part-assignment logistics, and more.
- **Playing Portion (Post-Midterm Focus):** Evaluates core performance mechanics learned in the second half of the semester, including keyboard scale execution/piston stroke, basic two- and four-mallet technique, timpani pitch singing/interval tuning, common drum-set grooves, and/or world percussion instruments.
- **Teaching Portion (Capstone Demonstration):** Features a live “Beginner Start-Up Lesson” where you teach a complete 10-minute introductory lesson from scratch to a peer (non-percussionist), demonstrating proper stance, grip setup, initial rebound stroke, and clear diagnostic feedback.

Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for *one* of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

Incompletes and Late Assignments

All homework will be submitted online through Canvas. **All assignments are due by 11:59 pm on their posted due date.** All late assignments will receive a full letter-grade deduction (10%) for each day they are late. Assignments will not be accepted after **two days** past the due date. Make-up exams and quizzes will only be granted under extreme circumstances, such as a documented medical or family emergency. University-sanctioned performances, trips, and official functions will also be excused, provided you communicate them with me in advance. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances in accordance with university policy.

Spiritual Care

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact your professor or the [Office of Spiritual Life and Formation](#).

State Authorization

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow distance education outside California.

PLNU Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU Recording Notification

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. Please consult the [Academic Honesty Policy](#) in the [University Catalog](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU Academic Behavior Policy

Both faculty and students at Point Loma Nazarene University have the right to expect a safe and ordered environment for learning. Students are expected to take the initiative to learn and conduct themselves in a mature and civil manner in the classroom environment. Any student behavior that is disruptive or threatening is a serious affront to Point Loma Nazarene University as a learning community. Students who fail to adhere to these behavioral standards may be

subject to disciplinary action, including removal from class or further university sanctions. For a full definition of disruptive behavior, response procedures, and the appeal process, please consult the [Academic Behavior Policy](#) in the [University Catalog](#).

PLNU Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

You are permitted to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro, specialized music software) **strictly as a self-study aid or practice tool**. Approved uses include generating supplementary practice exercises, explaining theoretical concepts, or receiving preliminary feedback on sight-singing and dictation self-practice.

However, **AI tools are strictly prohibited for completing or assisting with any graded coursework**. You may not use AI tools for written assignments, quizzes, or exams.

Relying on AI to solve or generate work submitted for a grade bypasses the cognitive mechanics necessary to master percussion pedagogy. Any submission generated, solved, or assisted by AI constitutes an academic honesty violation.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center, [by email](#) or phone at 619-849-2533. Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines approved accommodations. Professors are able to view a student's approved accommodations through Accommodate.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their approved accommodations in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive; as such, clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability-related need should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. In accordance with ADA, accommodations cannot constitute a fundamental alteration to course outcomes; therefore, planning ahead is vital in establishing appropriate accommodations for equal access to this course. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC eligibility process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any accommodations.

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination*

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the [Title IX Office](#). Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the [Title IX Office](#).

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact [Counseling Services](#) or [consult the list of campus pastors](#).

If you (or someone you know) has experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources via the [Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment Policy](#).

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an “F” grade.

LomaBooks Instructions for Students:

This course is part of our course material delivery program, [LomaBooks](#). The bookstore will provide each student with a convenient package containing all required physical materials; all digitally delivered materials will be integrated into Canvas.

You should have received an email from the bookstore confirming the list of materials that will be provided for each of your courses and asking you to select how you would like to receive any printed components (in-store pick up or home delivery). If you have not done so already, please confirm your fulfillment preference so the bookstore can prepare your [LomaBooks](#) materials.

Course Schedule

Red Italics refer to readings from the Textbook or other provided resources and videos to watch and study (Homework)

Blue Text refers to Assignments (Homework)

Red refers to Quizzes (in-class)

Purple refers to Observation Reports (out of class)

BOLD/UPPERCASE BLACK refers to Exams

Week 1:

Tuesday, September 1st

Welcome, Syllabus/Schedule Overview, Drum-Pad Sign-Out, Selecting Percussionists (aptitude tests), Snare Drum Set-Up, Stick Anatomy, Intro. To Matched Grip

Read Pages 267-270, 273-275, 285-287, Vic Firth 101 SD 5-6 ([link](#))

Thursday, September 3rd

Snare: Matched Grip (Fulcrum vs. Back Fingers), Rebound Stroke, 8-on-a-hand, Counting and Marking Time, Stick Control, Sticking Systems (Alternating, Right-Hand Lead, etc.)

Read Pages 276-279, Vic Firth 101 SD 7 ([link](#))

Assignment 1 (Perf. Video) Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Week 2:

Tuesday, September 8th

Snare: Four Stroke Types (Rebound, Down, Tap, Up), Dynamics and Stick Heights, Basic Sight-Reading

Read Pages 288-289 Vic Firth 101 SD 8 ([link](#))

Thursday, September 10th

Snare: Accents vs. Taps, Paradiddles, 16th Note Rhythms, Intro. To Roll Fundamentals: Multiple Bounce Roll (arm vs. wrist)

Read Pages 289-293, Vic Firth 101 SD 9-10 ([link](#))

Assignment 2 (Perf. Video) Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Week 3:

Tuesday, September 15th

Quiz 1: Snare

Snare: Multiple Bounce Roll Continued, Intro. To Open/Double-Stroke Rolls

Thursday, September 17th **(NO CLASS – COUNT ME IN CONFERENCE)**

Read Pages 294-295, Vic Firth 101 SD 11 ([link](#))

Assignment 3 (Teaching Video) Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Week 4:

Tuesday, September 22nd

Snare: Open/Double-Stroke Rolls Continued, Intro. To Flams

Read Pages 295-296, Vic Firth 101 SD 13 ([link](#))

Thursday, September 24th

Snare: Flams Continued, Intro. To Drags and Drag Rudiments

Read Pages 301-303, Vic Firth 101 SD 2-3 ([link](#))

Assignment 4 (Perf. Video) Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Week 5:

Tuesday, September 29th

Snare: Reading Snare Drum Solos, Combining Stroke Types, Common Technique Errors and Reading Mistakes, Tuning, Care and Maintenance

Read Pages 299-301, 332, 334, 336-340, Vic Firth 101 Concert Bass, Sus. Cymbal, and Crash Cymbal Videos ([link](#))

Thursday, October 1st

Quiz 2: Snare

Orchestral Percussion: Concert Bass (Beaters, Technique, Zones), Crash Cymbals (Holding Techniques, Grip, Angle), Suspended Cymbal (Mallet Selection, Roll Technique, Extended Techniques), Cymbal Types

Read Pages 342-347, Vic Firth 101 Triangle and Tambourine Videos ([link](#))

Assignment 5 (Written) Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Week 6:

Tuesday, October 6th

Accessories: Triangle (Technique, Beaters, Notation), Tambourine (Techniques, Rolls, Reading)

Thursday, October 8th **(NO CLASS – OUT OF TOWN)**

Vic Firth 101 Wood and Temple Blocks and Gong (Tam-Tam) Videos ([link](#))

Assignment 6 (Teaching Video) Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Week 7:

Tuesday, October 13th

Accessories: Woodblock, Temple Blocks, Tam-Tam, Shakers, Cowbell, Wind Chimes

Snare: Review and Reading Snare Drum Solos

Thursday, October 15th

Quiz 3: Orchestral Percussion and Accessories

Review Day: Snare, Orchestral Percussion, and Accessory Percussion

Assignment 7 (Perf. Video) Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Observation Report 1 Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Week 8:

Tuesday, October 20th

MIDTERM EXAM (Written, Playing, and Teaching)

Thursday, October 22nd **(NO CLASS – FALL BREAK)**

Read Pages 303-312, Vic Firth 101 KB 1-3 ([link](#))

Week 9:

Tuesday, October 27th

Keyboards: Overview of Keyboard Types (Marimba, Vibraphone, Glockenspiel, Xylophone, and Chimes) and Ranges, Mallet Choices, Two-Mallet Grip, Posture and Stance

Read Pages 313, Vic Firth 101 KB 4, 6-10 ([link](#))

Thursday, October 29th

Keyboards: Piston Stroke, Common Scalar Exercises, Bar Geometry (Edge, Node, Center), Sight-Reading (Techniques, Tips, and Practice)

Read Pages 313-314, 319-320

Assignment 8 (Perf. Video) Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Week 10:

Tuesday, November 3rd

Keyboards: Double Stops, Rolls, Dynamic Contrast, Intro. To Vibraphone: Pedaling, Dampening, and Motors

Read Pages 314-319, Vic Firth Technique & Musicianship with Four Mallets ([link](#))

Thursday, November 5th

Keyboards: Four-Mallet Grips and Technique (Stevens, Burton, Vice, Musser), Double Verticals, Single Independent Strokes, Common Exercises

Read Pages 321-325, Vic Firth 101 Timpani 1-4 ([link](#))

Assignment 9 (Perf. Video) Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Week 11:

Tuesday, November 10th

Quiz 4: Keyboard Percussion

Timpani: History, Sizes and Ranges, Anatomy, Tuning and Tuning Changes, Mallet Types, Grips (French vs. German), Striking Zones

Read Pages 326-331, Vic Firth 101 Timpani 5-9 ([link](#))

Thursday, November 12th

Timpani: Pitch Matching and Tuning Mechanics, Dampening and Muffling, Rolling, Pitch Changes in Literature, Common Maintenance

Read Pages 272, 376-383, Explore Drumeo ([link](#)), How to Play Drums Video ([link](#))

Assignment 10 (Teaching Video) Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Week 12:

Tuesday, November 17th

Quiz 5: Timpani

Drum-set: History, Anatomy, Notation, Limb Independence, Rock & Roll Styles

Jazz/Swing Groove ([link](#)), Bossa Nova Groove ([link](#))

Thursday, November 19th

Drum-set: Jazz Styles, World Grooves, Soloing, Resources for Middle Schools

History of Steel Pan ([link](#)), Steel Pan Panorama ([link](#))

Assignment 11 (Perf. Video) Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Observation Report 2 Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Week 13:

Tuesday, November 24th

Quiz 6: Drum-set

World Percussion: Afro-Cuban, Hand Drums, Steel Drums

Thursday, November 26th **(NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK)**

Marching Percussion 101 ([link](#)), Explore “Marching Percussion 101” ([link](#))

Week 14:

Tuesday, December 1st

Marching Percussion: Marching Snare (Traditional vs. Match), Tenor Drums (Logic, Movement, Reading), Bass (Sizes, Tuning, Notation), Student Health and Maintenance

Read Pages 384-392, 418-424, 433-436

Thursday, December 3rd

Logistics and Administration: Scoring Part Assignments, Inventory Management, Percussion Budgeting, Vendor Selection

Percussion Repair 101 ([link](#)), Blume’s Percussion Resources ([link](#))

Assignment 12 (Written) Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Week 15:

Tuesday, December 8th

Maintenance and Repair: Heads, Tuning, Emergency Repairs, Resources

Thursday, December 10th

Review Day: Teaching Workshop and Final Exam Review

Assignment 13 (Perf. Video) Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

Observation Report 3 Due Sunday at 11:59 pm

FINAL EXAM (Written, Playing, & Teaching): Tuesday December 15th 1:30–4:00 pm