

## Teaching Dossier

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Percussion  
Techniques 2450  
*Fall 2024*

Lesson Plans

*Krista Bryson*

## **Introduction to Teaching Context**

This teaching dossier reflects my work as a sessional instructor in the UPEI Music Department during the 2024–2025 academic year, while completing my PhD coursework. During this period, I taught Percussion Techniques (MUS 2450/2460) and Applied Percussion (MUS2211/3211/4211). Percussion Techniques is a music education methods course designed to prepare students to teach percussion effectively within contemporary secondary band programs. The class I taught comprised 3rd- and 4th-year music education majors, along with a few students enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts program, majoring in music.

The course drew upon experiential learning, reflective practice, peer collaboration, and professional skill development, asking students to move fluidly between the roles of learner and emerging educator. My work with weekly private lessons for two percussion majors in Applied Percussion complemented this work through individualized instruction that balanced technical development, musical artistry, and professional accountability. Together, these courses positioned my university teaching at the intersection of instrumental expertise, teacher preparation, and the ongoing reflective development of music educators.

Prior to enrollment in the PhD program, I taught Conducting (MUS4450/4460), Jazz Techniques (MUS4470), in addition to Applied Percussion and directing the UPEI Jazz and Popular Music Ensemble in Fall 2023. I returned to full-time secondary teaching in 2025–2026, allowing me to continue grounding my doctoral research in ongoing classroom practice and maintaining an active practitioner perspective that informs both my scholarship and my future in academia.

### **Teaching Philosophy and Reflection**

Percussion Techniques instruction centered on experiential learning. I modelled the instructional approaches I would use in a secondary classroom, including individualized feedback during performance-based exercises that mirror many of the challenges students encounter in secondary school music programs. We frequently stepped back together to analyze those decisions: Why sequence learning this way? How might this approach shift for different learners or contexts? What assumptions are embedded in a given method? By making my instructional reasoning visible, I aimed to develop professional discernment alongside technical competence.

A significant moment of growth emerged after my first semester teaching Percussion Techniques in Fall 2024. Drawing on more than twenty years of percussion teaching across private, community, and public school settings, I designed a curriculum that I believed thoughtfully balanced rigour with scope. I carefully distilled essential skills and concepts into a focused two-semester-hour course and set expectations of approximately two hours of weekly preparation and practice outside of class, mindful of music education students' demanding schedules. In preparing the course, I reviewed syllabi for comparable instrument methods courses within the UPEI music department and at other Canadian institutions. I also consulted with Dr. Dale Sorensen, Chair of the UPEI Music Department, regarding expectations for scope and workload. In the absence of formal guidelines distinguishing two- and three-semester-hour courses, I exercised professional judgement in determining breadth and expectations.

Student feedback from SOTS at the end of the fall semester revealed that many experienced the pace and workload as overwhelming. Although they valued my expertise and enthusiasm, their perception of intensity poured through their comments, leaving little room for

constructive feedback. Just as I ask students to examine the assumptions embedded within pedagogical strategies, I had to investigate my own. What assumptions had I made about the students' prior musical knowledge and technical skill? About their capacity to manage competing academic demands? About their willingness to fully engage with this material inside and outside of class?

Before entering the winter semester, I faced a difficult decision: maintain breadth in pursuit of comprehensive preparation, or recalibrate to students' capacity in this context. I chose to restructure the course. I clarified priorities, refined pacing, strengthened the organization of materials, and built in structured opportunities for student choice. I also opened the winter semester with a candid, professional conversation about reflexivity, modelling humility and responsiveness to constructive feedback, while carefully illuminating some of the complexity behind the scenes of university teaching without teetering towards defensiveness.

The shift was evident in the overall tone and content of the winter term SOTS feedback. Students described the course as more manageable and well-organized, and their comments moved toward specific, constructive suggestions for refinement. For me, this was significantly more helpful in future course planning, and their precision speaks to the more engaged, sustainable learning environment of the second term.

Teaching in a university context, particularly as a sessional instructor, has sharpened my awareness of relational and structural nuance. Establishing high expectations while building an intellectual community within a limited timeframe requires a different kind of preparation and care than one curated over time with the music students I work with in high school over a span of three years. This experience reinforced my belief that working with education students requires far more than sharing expertise and teaching strategies; it requires prioritizing modelling

professional judgement, imperfections and all. Future educators need opportunities to see, and to experience, how high expectations, responsiveness, and mutual respect can coexist in practice, and more importantly, to experience the productive messiness of bringing that balance to life.

University of Prince Edward Island  
 Music Department  
 MUS-2450 Percussion Techniques  
**Fall 2024**



**UNIVERSITY**  
*of Prince Edward*  
**ISLAND**

**Instructor:** Ms. Krista Bryson  
**Pronouns:** She/her  
**Office:** Steel 214  
**Contact:** klbryson@upeil.ca or kristabryson83@gmail.com (if needed)  
**Office Hours:** by appointment  
**Class Time:** Tuesday and Thursday at 1:30 pm - 2:20 pm - Dr. Steel Recital Hall

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides group instruction in percussion instruments, including snare drum, timpani, mallet instruments, drum set, hand drums, and auxiliary percussion. It introduces materials and procedures used in teaching these instruments. (*Course Description from UPEI Handbook*)

Percussion Techniques 2450 is a music education course designed to help future educators build a solid foundation of skills and concepts for teaching percussionists in secondary instrumental music programs. While percussion tech will prioritize learning through performance, it's crucial to **remember that teaching (pedagogy) is the focus**. The fall semester focuses on concepts and skills needed for teaching beginning percussionists, sequentially leading toward intermediate-level players (2-3 years of instruction) with in-depth exploration of snare drum, bass drum and cymbals, keyboard instruments, and timpani.

The philosophy guiding the design of percussion techniques is to identify and practice useful strategies for teaching through experiential learning in class, reflective daily practice, practice teaching, observing and collaborating with peers, reviewing assigned videos and resources, observing the instructor's teaching practices, being curious and taking ownership in learning through exploration/asking questions, and organizing valuable information into a learning portfolio. While non-music education majors may take this course as an elective, please note the instructor will hold them to the same expectations as upper-year music education students. Previous experience in an instrumental music program is strongly encouraged.

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### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

- **A pair of drumsticks** - specifically *Vic Firth General SD1*
  - *Sticks are available for purchase at Long & McQuade*
- **Metronome** (app or physical) *\*Recommendation for Tonal Energy (tuner and metronome app)*
- **Drum pads will be provided.** However, you can purchase your own. Several options are available at Long & McQuade and for order on Amazon. You can purchase kits with a quality drum pad, stand, and storage bag for approx \$60 *\*note they may come with sticks, but I still require you to have one of the pairs above or another approved pair*
- **All other percussion equipment, including access to other mallets/sticks as needed, will be provided.** If you feel more comfortable owning your basic collection of keyboard and timpani mallets, see me for suggestions.

### **RESOURCES**

*You are not required to purchase a text for this course, as you'll receive access to resources and supplementary handouts throughout the course.*

**OPTIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS** - *If you want to add a widely used reference book to your collection, choose one of the following.* We will also discuss several other high-quality printed and online resources you may wish to add to your collection (not required)

- **The Complete Percussionist** by Robert Breithaupt
  - A quality reference book that is detailed but not overwhelming. One copy available in the UPEI bookstore.
- **Teaching Percussion** by Gary Cook
  - Popular Percussion Methods resource. Highly detailed

## EXPECTATIONS

Together, we will explore **pedagogy** and **philosophy** related to **teaching percussion** in the context of **secondary school instrumental music (band) programs**. The skill level, experience, and overall confidence in performing various tasks will vary significantly among classmates, which will be an asset to this course. Everyone must remain **supportive** and **encouraging** of one another throughout this journey.

Toggle between the **roles of student and educator** as you **analyze and reflect** on your experiences, noting how you may implement concepts and skills into your musicianship and teaching beyond this course. While focusing on percussion, the art of quality teaching extends far beyond the percussion section. The more “all in” each of you are, the more impactful this experience will be!

You will be expected to **review, take notes, and explore assigned material** to develop strong **aural** and **visual** concepts of **quality percussion sounds and technique**, in addition to regular practice. The goal is for this room of future educators to understand how to inspire student musicians to move from clang and bang to *artistry*.

**Each student is expected to: *This is what professionalism looks like in our space.***

1. Practice consistently. (This is essential to improvement.)
2. Prepare tasks in advance for each class with care and consideration.
3. Participate to the best of one's ability in each class – contribute to class discussions, provide helpful feedback to classmates, and appropriately receive feedback from others.
4. Show a willingness to learn and improve, often demonstrated through a growth mindset (seeing possibility)
5. Be supportive of peers and contribute to a positive learning atmosphere.
6. Be **prompt** and **regular in attendance** and **submission of assignments**.
7. Communicate with Krista regarding any absences. Each student is responsible for catching up on any missed material. Please note that extra help outside of class is limited.

## EVALUATION

*More details on assignments to be provided at the beginning of the semester.*

<b>Professionalism</b> <i>Consistently meeting the outlined expectations. Assessed using a rubric and based on instructor observation.</i>	15%
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<b>Quizzes (5% each)</b> <i>Snare Essentials, BD, Cymbals and Keyboard Essentials, Timpani Essentials</i>	15%
<b>Performance Assessments (10% each)</b> <i>Snare, Keyboard, Timpani</i>	30%
<b>Beginner Snare Lesson and Reflection</b> <i>Teaching fundamentals to a true beginner</i>	10%
<b>Leading Group Warm-up</b> <i>Assigned dates for leading the class through a 3-4 minute warm-up</i>	5%
<b>Skills</b> <i>Demonstrating success of skills and concepts through in-class observation. Criteria outlined in class.</i>	10%
<b>Learning Portfolio</b> <i>Criteria to include and possible formats will be discussed early in the semester</i>	15%

### DUE DATES AND MISSING WORK

All assignments are expected to be completed on the due date. Extensions will only be granted in severe illness or highly unusual circumstances. Please ask if you find yourself in an unavoidable situation. Clear communication is essential in determining if an assignment will be accepted late, which will be on a case-by-case basis due to significant roadblocks (as mentioned above).

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to abide by UPEI's regulations regarding academic offences. See the Academic Integrity section of the UPEI Calendar: <http://www.upei.ca/registrar/academic-calendar>.

### WORKLOAD

Given the amount of content being covered, it's essential that students **review all material after each class**. The course design focused primarily on breadth rather than depth. It is aimed at giving music education students as much experience as possible so they can build familiarity with a wide range of skills and teaching scenarios.

### Keeping this in mind, assigned work outside of class primarily consists of:

- Daily brief practice sessions to reinforce fundamentals
- Reflection and synthesizing notes from each class for your learning portfolio
- Reviewing brief resources or completing mini assignments related to the concepts covered in each class, and taking notes for the learning portfolio

### CLASS SCHEDULE: **\*\*subject to change**

	Date	Topics
<b>Week 1</b>	Thurs, Sept 5	<b>Day 1: Introduction to Percussion, Snare Drum Fundamentals</b> <i>Topics include: physical warm-up, setting up a drum pad, grip, fulcrum, rebound stroke, fundamental exercises, tap, down-stroke, and up-stroke.</i>

Week 2	Tues, Sept 10	<p><b>Day 2: Reinforcing Snare Fundamentals, Intro to Flam/Buzz, Anatomy of a Snare Drum</b></p> <p><i>Topics include</i> - warm-up strategies, rebound stroke exercises, intro to flam and buzz stroke, identification of the parts and materials of snare drums, and the location of the snare in the percussion section.</p>
	Thurs, Sept 12	<p><b>Day 3: Exploring Different Snare Drums, Storage, Dampening, Patterns</b></p> <p><i>Topics include</i> exploring different snare drums, setting up snare drums, caring for and storing snare drums, dampening options, and identifying and performing patterns.</p>
Week 3	Tues, Sept 17	<p><b>Day 4: New Warm-up Techniques, Sticks, Snare Talk, Intro to Rudiments</b></p> <p><i>Topics include</i> exploring different warm-up practices, choosing sticks, checking the quality of sticks, the language of snare drum playing, intro to rudiments, and single-stroke roll.</p>
	Thurs, Sept 19	<p><b>Day 5: Articulation Language, Buzz Roll Development</b></p> <p><i>Topics include</i> - <b>student-led warm-ups day 1</b>, variations on fundamental warm-ups, intro to stick control, developing language for snare when teaching articulation, buzz roll development, and buzz roll in JH repertoire.</p>
Week 4	Tues, Sept 24	<p><b>Day 6: Extension of Buzz Roll Development, Rim Shots, Lead Hand System</b></p> <p><i>Topics include:</i> student-led warm-ups on day 2, tap-buzz exercise variation, buzz-roll check-in and extension exercises/troubleshooting, rim shots, lead-hand system, and applying this to the repertoire.</p>
	Thurs, Sept 26	<p><b>Day 7: Reviewing Repertoire, Brushes, Replacing Head</b></p> <p><i>Topics include</i> - <b>student-led warm-ups on day 3</b>, replacing snare heads, tuning drum heads, choosing drum heads, adjusting snare tension, field drum/tenor drum, and using brushes.</p>
Week 5	Tues, Oct 1	<p><b>Day 8: Introduction to Concert Bass Drum</b></p> <p><i>Topics include</i> when to introduce the bass drum, drum and player setup, grip, basic stroke, rolling, dampening, extra effects, and bass drum mallet selection.</p>
	Thurs, Oct 3	<p><b>Day 9: Snare Quiz and Bass Drum Mini Group Lessons</b></p> <p><i>Brief written assessment on snare fundamentals, 10-minute mini lessons in groups of 3-4 to try all of the bass drum techniques and ask questions about snare repertoire assessment next class</i></p>

Week 6	Tues, Oct 8	<b>Day 10: Snare Performance Assessment and Peer Feedback Practice</b> <i>Groups of 3-4 will meet with Krista at assigned times, each performing their snare assessment while the other students practice the art of offering specific, detailed, and encouraging feedback</i>
	Thurs, Oct 10	<b>Day 11: Review Day - Teaching Philosophy, Practices, Critical Listening, Percussion Contexts</b> <i>Topics include class discussions on concepts regarding teaching philosophy and practice, critically listening to various examples of percussion sections, different contexts of percussion instruction and their approaches, and reviewing the contents of the learning portfolio.</i>
<b>Week 7 - Mid-Semester Break</b>		
Week 8	Tues, Oct 22	<b>Day 12: Crash Cymbals</b> <i>Topics include student-led warm-ups on day 4, getting started, set-up of player and cymbals in the percussion section, use of straps, preparing and executing a great crash, after the crash, types/sizes/anatomy of crash cymbals, super soft crash, the march trio, and examples in the repertoire.</i>
	Thurs, Oct 24	<b>Day 13: Suspended Cymbal and Crash Cymbals Practice Day</b> <i>Topics include student-led warm-ups on day 5, set-up, type of cymbal, mallets, rolling, 'slow your roll', crashes, percussion crescendo, and crash cymbal mini lessons in groups of 3-4</i>
<b>Week 9</b>		
Week 9	Tues, Oct 29	<b>Day 14: Introduction to Keyboard Percussion</b> <i>Topics include modelling an approach with beginners, identifying keyboard percussion instruments, anatomy of keyboard percussion, range, full stroke, 'less is more', and playing area.</i>
	Thurs, Oct 31	<b>Day 15: Fundamental Techniques for Keyboard Percussion</b> <i>Topics include a review of a full stroke, intro to double stops, rolling, chromatic scale, 'sticks low, not slow', and music stand placement.</i>
<b>Week 10</b>		
Week 10	Tues, Nov 5	<b>Day 16: Keyboard Percussion Mallet Selection and Vibraphone Technique</b> <i>Topics include improvisation exercises, roles (voicing) on instruments, mallet choices, vibraphone-specific techniques, individual check-in, and preparation of mallet ensemble piece(s)</i>
	Thurs, Nov 7	<b>Day 17: Keyboard Ensemble Practice or guest teacher</b> <i>Krista is in London, ON, presenting at the OMEA Conference. Mallet ensemble practice and preparation for keyboard percussion performance assessment. Possibility of Guest Teacher</i>



University of Prince Edward Island  
 Music Department  
 MUS-2460 Percussion Techniques  
**Winter 2025**



**UNIVERSITY**  
*of Prince Edward*  
**ISLAND**

**Instructor:** Ms. Krista Bryson  
**Pronouns:** She/her  
**Office:** Steel 214  
**Contact:** klbryson@upei.ca or kristabryson83@gmail.com (if needed)  
**Office Hours:** by appointment  
**Class Time:** Tuesday and Thursday at 1:30 pm - 2:20 pm - Dr. Steel Recital Hall

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides group instruction in percussion instruments, including snare drum, timpani, mallet instruments, drum set, hand drums, and auxiliary percussion. It introduces materials and procedures used in teaching these instruments. (*Course Description from UPEI Handbook*) Percussion Techniques 2460 is a continuation of 2450.

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6. Be **prompt** and **regular in attendance** and **submission of assignments**.
7. Communicate with Krista regarding any absences. Each student is responsible for catching up on any missed material. Please note that extra help outside of class is limited.

## EVALUATION

*More details on assignments to be provided at the beginning of the semester.*

Professionalism	15%
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<i>Consistently meeting the outlined expectations. Assessed using a rubric and based on instructor observation. Self-assessed with supporting evidence at the end of the semester.</i>	
<b>Small In-Class Assignments (5% each)</b> <i>Identifying Percussion Instruments, Assigning Percussion Parts</i>	10%
<b>Performance Assessments (10% each)</b> <i>Timpani, Drumset</i>	20%
<b>Final Project</b> <i>Several options will be discussed. 5% of the mark is for submitting a plan by February 6th</i>	30%
<b>Learning Portfolio - Due April 11</b> <i>Same criteria as last semester. Expecting that feedback from last semester was used to revise your portfolio and add to it throughout this semester.</i>	25%

### DUE DATES AND MISSING WORK

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### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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### WORKLOAD

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### Keeping this in mind, assigned work outside of class primarily consists of:

- Daily brief practice sessions to reinforce fundamentals
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- reviewing brief resources or completing mini assignments related to the concepts covered in each class, and taking notes for the learning portfolio

### CLASS SCHEDULE: **\*\*subject to change**

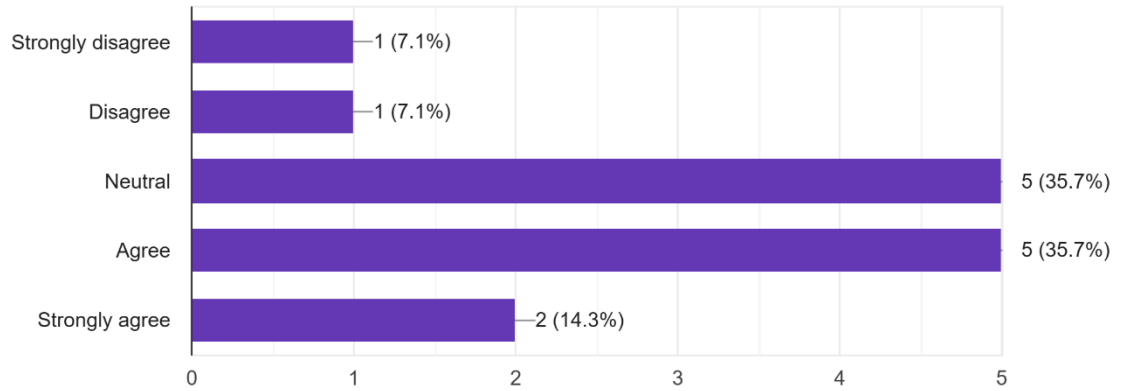
Date	Topics
Jan 7 & 9	Snare Drum Revisited, Essential Skills from First Semester Intro to Timpani Day 1 <i>Launch Final Project</i>
Jan 14 & 16	Intro to Timpani Day 2 & 3

Jan 21 & 23	Timpani Mini-Lessons, <b><i>Timpani Performance Assessment (Jan 23)</i></b>
Jan 28 & 30	Orchestral Accessories: Tambourine, Triangle & more Percussion Ensemble Reading Day 1
Feb 4 & 6	Percussion Ensemble Reading Day 2 Intro to Hand Drum - <b><i>Plan for Final Project Due (Feb 6)</i></b>
Feb 11 & 13	Intro to Latin & Afro-Cuban Percussion Grooves/Instruments Review Latin& Afro-Cuban Percussion and Intro to 'leftover' semi-common accessories
Mid-Semester Break	
Feb 25 & 27	Repair Week: Replacing a drum head, restringing a marimba/xylophone, and possibly more topics
March 4 & 6	Intro to Drumset Day 1 & 2
March 11 & 13	Drumset Mini Lessons Choosing repertoire with percussionists in mind and assigning percussion parts
March 18 & 20	<b><i>Drumset Performance Assessment</i></b> TBD
March 25&27	<b><i>Final Project Rehearsals and Presentations</i></b>
April 1 & 3	<b><i>Final Project Presentations</i></b> SOTS
<b>Final Portfolios Due - Friday, April 11 at midnight.</b>	

**SOTS Music 2450 Percussion Techniques I**  
Krista Bryson  
Fall 2024

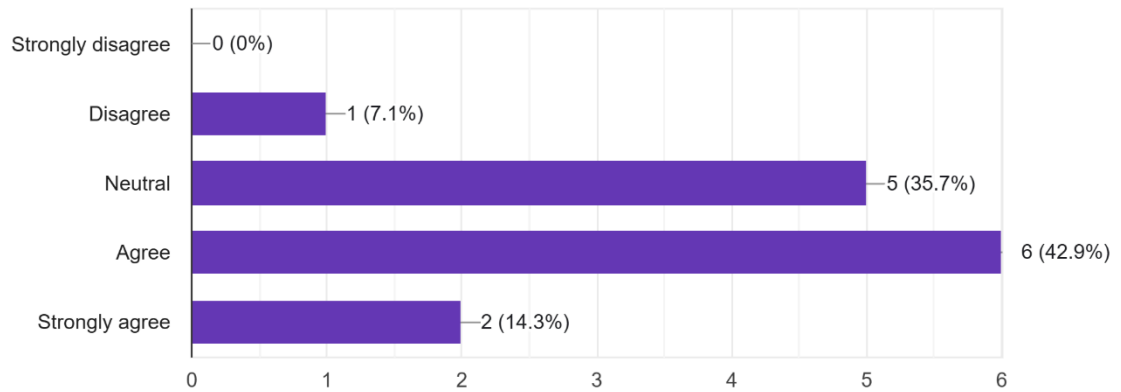
The instructor presented the course in an organized way that promoted my learning.

14 responses



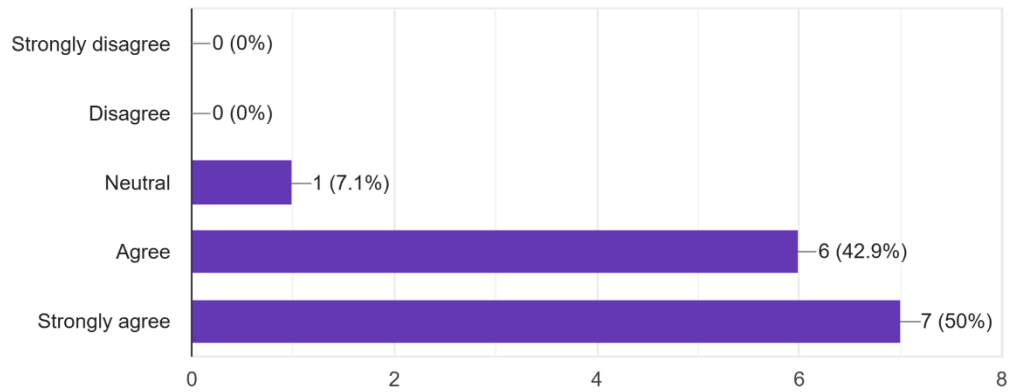
The course content was communicated in ways that helped me understand the subject matter.

14 responses



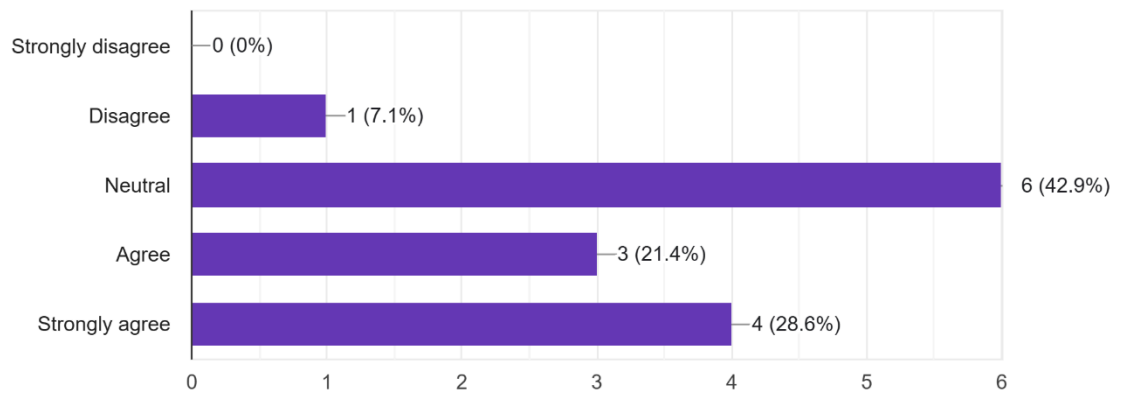
The course assessment and/or feedback provided helpful information about my understanding of the course material.

14 responses



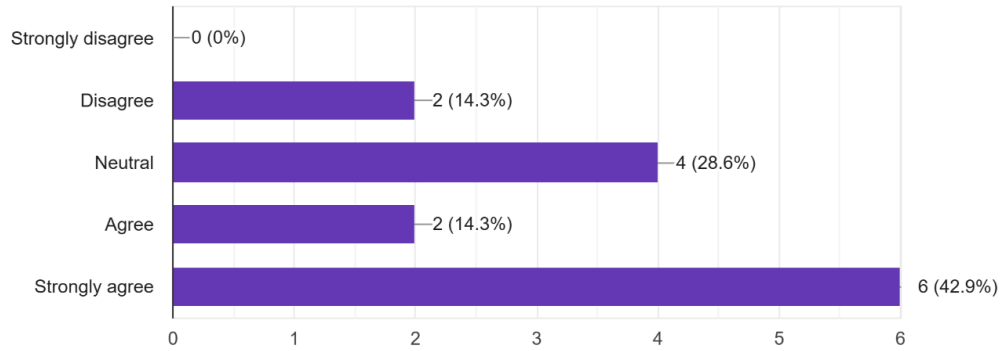
The instructor's approach to teaching was effective.

14 responses



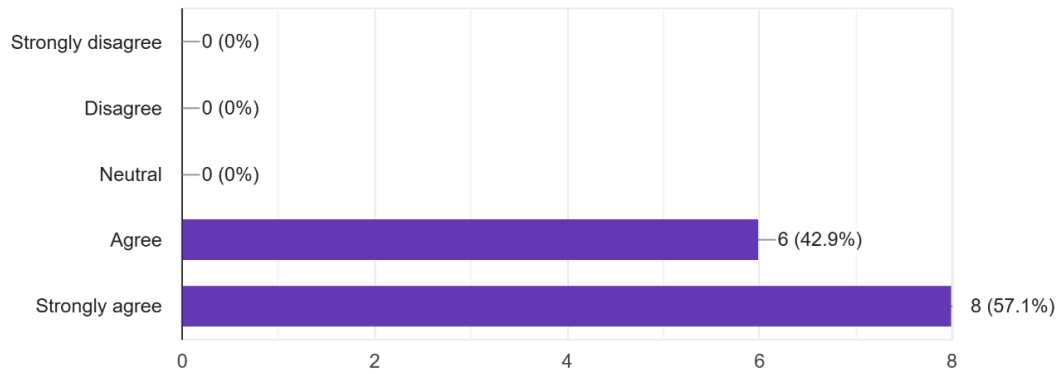
The instructor was available to respond to my course-related inquiries.

14 responses



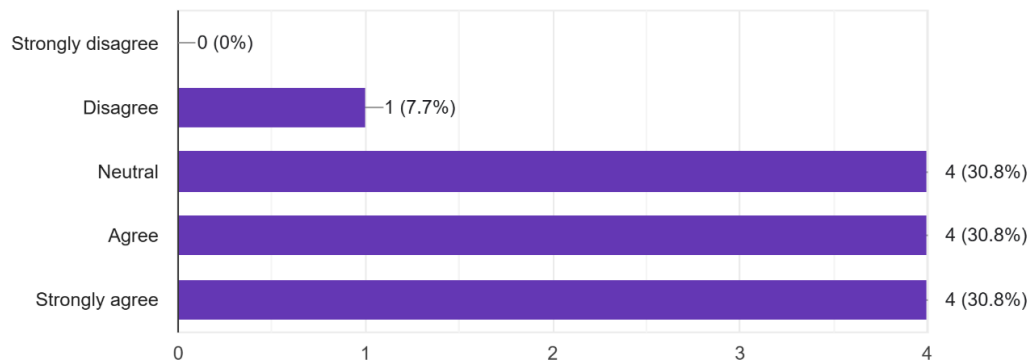
The instructor promoted a respectful learning environment.

14 responses



Overall, I am satisfied with my learning experience in this course.

13 responses



**Excerpts of student comments:**

***Indicate what you found beneficial regarding the instructor's teaching***

Krista always is super enthusiastic about anything she teaches and in a university that always stands out. She loves to give very detailed feed back and often encourages us.

Hands-on learning with the instruments. Clear demonstration and explanations in class. Focus on relevance to classroom teaching.

***Indicate what you think the instructor could have done differently to assist you in your learning.***

There is a pretty large workload compared to other 2 credit courses, but largely I didn't mind this as we've been able to cover more. Sometimes I've missed important written information just from how much info is in each email.

Sometimes it felt that we had too much to do and not enough time. I'd love if in the later half of the semester we slowed down.

SOTS Music 2460 Percussion Techniques 2

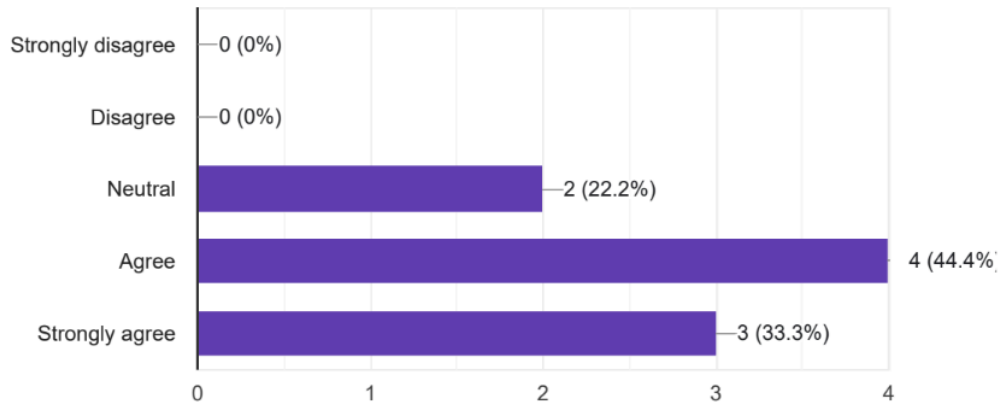
# Student Opinion of Teaching Survey

9 responses

MUS 2460 Percussion Techniques  
 Krista Bryson  
 Winter 2025

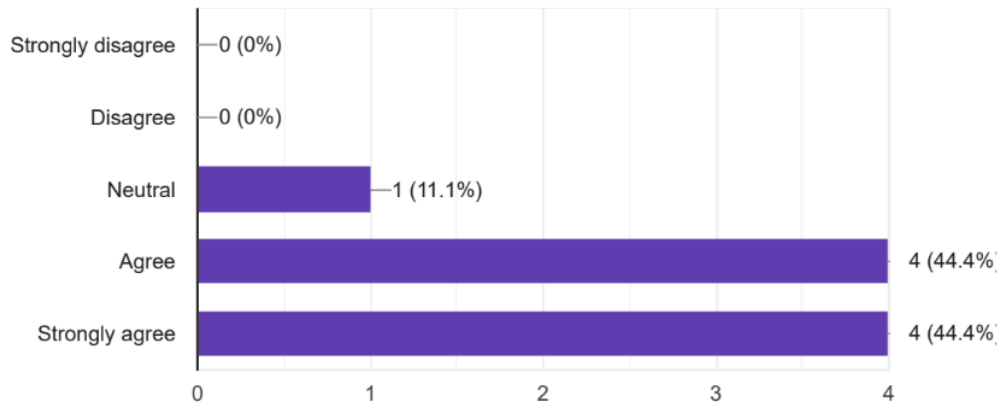
The instructor presented the course in an organized way that promoted my learning.

9 responses



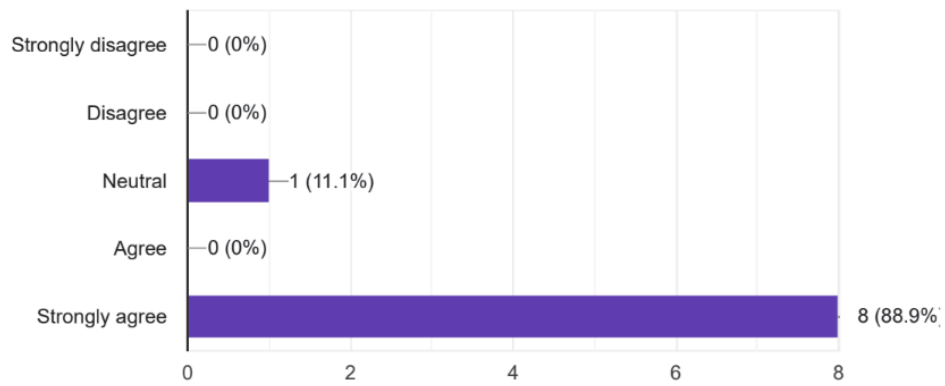
The course content was communicated in ways that helped me understand the subject matter.

9 responses



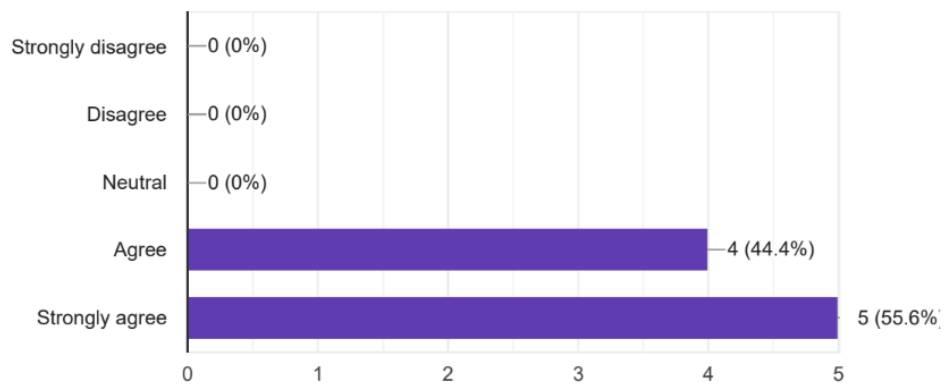
The course assessment and/or feedback provided helpful information about my understanding of the course material.

9 responses



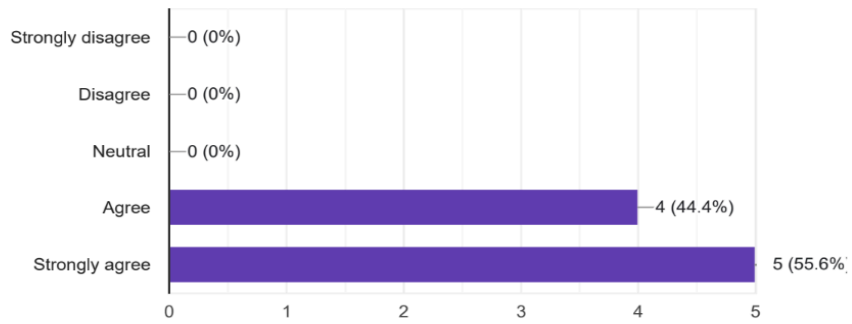
The instructor's approach to teaching was effective.

9 responses



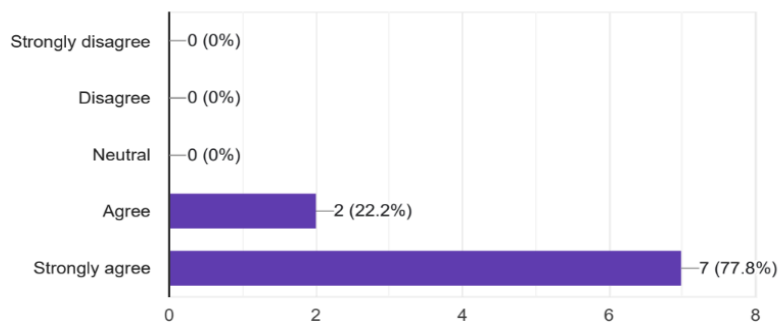
The instructor was available to respond to my course-related inquiries.

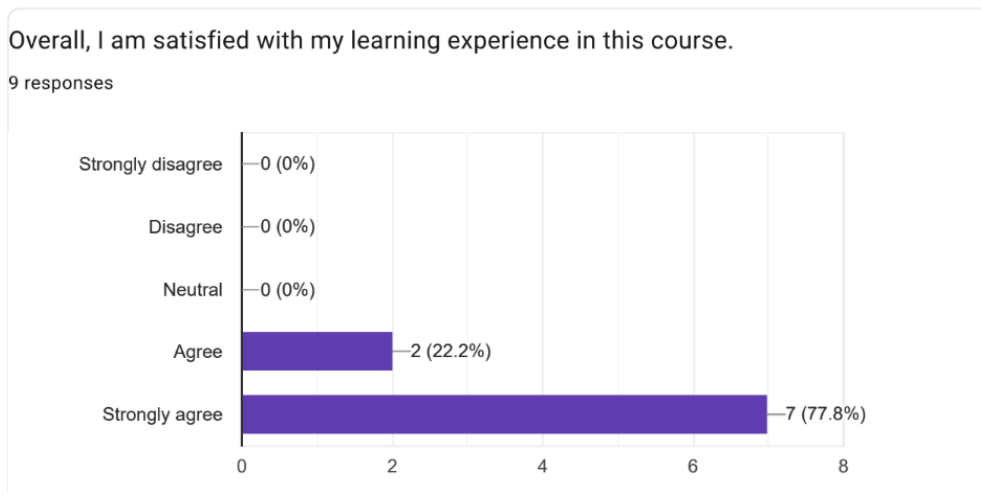
9 responses



The instructor promoted a respectful learning environment.

9 responses





**Excerpts from student comments:**

***Indicate what you found beneficial regarding the instructor's teaching***

Excellent understanding of the material (obviously) communicated clearly and often in various formats to meet different learning styles. Strong focus on how material can apply to many educational settings. Feedback is constructive and aimed at improving our understanding.

I found this semesters course load much more manageable and organized. It was never stressful.

Krista provided us with lots of resources, opportunities and learning experiences. Very understanding, kind and is aware of students' differences and needs.

***Indicate what you think the instructor could have done differently to assist you in your learning.***

I liked learning through percussion ensemble. I think it may have been more effective to do more pieces (play more instruments)

Maybe some one-on-one time when we were learning the instruments like snare, timpani etc