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# Fine Arts Center Percussion I 2009-2010 Course Syllabus

**School Name:** The Greenville Fine Arts Center  
**Course Name:** Percussion I  
**Instructor:** Gary A. Robinson, D.M.A.  
**Office Room Number:** Suite #126  
**Phone number and extension:** 355-2568  
**Email Address:** grobinso@greenville.k12.sc.us  
**Class Time/Room Number:** 9:15-10:10 and 10:10-11:05 m-f

## Course Description

Percussion I is an introductory course in which students develop a strong foundational technique on snare drum and drum set, and an insightful, intellectually based ability to read musical notation. Snare drum studies encompass both concert and rudimental styles, but focus uniquely on snare drum rudiments and their application to drum set. Drum set studies cover body alignment, four-way coordination, tone production, phrasing, and improvisation principally in rock and jazz styles.

Students enrolled in Percussion I are given small group and individual instruction as needed. Students also work with one another as teammates to master skills being studied. Each class period encompasses both instruction and team practice time. Our general objectives include:

### General Musicianship

- ability to read and to control the performance of written notation, especially rhythmic
- be able to apply understanding and control of rhythmic concepts and notation in all applicable performance areas

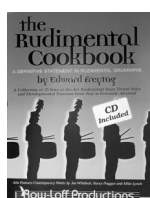
### Snare drum

- ability to perform, at a beginning competition level, all 40 standard snare drum rudiments
- ability to read standard snare drum notation through and including intermediate level
- ability to perform intermediate level concert snare drum etude
- ability to perform intermediate level rudimental snare drum etude

### Drum set

- ability to perform rock feel at moderate tempo demonstrating four-way independence
- ability to perform jazz feels at moderate tempo demonstrating four-way independence
- ability to perform basic samba and clave feels demonstrating four-way independence (time permitting)
- ability to perform a rudimentary drum solos in each style

## Required Textbooks



- Pickering, John: *The Drummer's Cookbook*, by Mel Bay Publications
- Reed, Ted: *Progressive Steps for Syncopation*, distributed by Alfred Publishing Company
- Whaley, Garwood: *Fundamental Studies for the Snare Drum*, Meredith Music Series. Hal Leonard Music Publishing

- Freytag, Edward: *The Rudimental Cookbook*, Row-Loff Productions
- *Drum Stuff*, the resource book I compiled for my class

The four method books required for Percussion I are texts that will be useful to my students for as long as they play or study drums. With the possible exception of the Whaley book, they can all be approached from a variety of levels. The Reed book can be used in so many ways as to make it literally inexhaustible. (Your students can always use the Whaley book when he/she has an opportunity to teach another student.) Palmetto Music, Pecknel Music, and other music stores in the area

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routinely carry these books, which are also readily available online. Taken individually and as a whole, the nominal, initial cost of owning these books represents a tremendous value.

#### Fee

There a \$25 fee expected from each participating student. This fee will come back to students in the form of materials purchased for them throughout the year.

#### Materials And Equipment Required For Students In Percussion I



- texts listed above
- regular access to a drum set
- a Remo practice pad and stand. The stand is mandatory, as all of our manual development is undertaken standing.
- a metronome and a set of earphones. The Boss DB-30 Dr. Beat Pocket Size Metronome is a terrific instrument and, selling at under \$50, an outstanding value. It has all of the features a drummer in my class will need to for detailed study and control of rhythm. The Boss also serves as a pitch generator, making it a useful tool in music theory studies.
- hearing protection (foam inserts or muffs)
- one pair of Cooperman Nick Petrella drum sticks. These are to be used on practice pad and snare drum ONLY. (Do NOT use these on the drum set!) Palmetto Music and Pecknel Music in Greenville carry the Cooperman's specifically for Fine Arts Center students. It is important for each student to audition several pairs before purchase, as each has a slightly different gram weight and feel. (My students and I tend to prefer a stick weight of 61-64



grams.)

- one pair of lightweight drum set sticks, such as Vic Firth SD4 Combo, almost any 5a or 7a or the equivalent stick with a **wooden** bead. Please do not buy nylon-tipped sticks for Percussion I class.

#### All Students Are Expected To Practice At Home

Progress and development as a musician always includes individual practice time. There are no exceptions to this “law” because the physical and neurological development that is a part of playing an instrument requires a great deal individual problem solving and repetition. Understanding that students have to balance many responsibilities and commitments, it is still vitally important that they find some time each day to practice. An hour is a good benchmark. (When I have the “liberty” of practicing as much as I need to, I personally find that three hours of practice a day insures that I will improve noticeably.) **Consistent and adequate practice may, in fact, require life style changes on the part of both the student and family.** Please be prepared for this! I can assure you, however, that the skill, poise, discipline, and intellectual acuity that is an outgrowth of regular and **correct** practice is well worth the time and effort.

#### Tentative Course Outline

The following will give my students and families an idea of what we will cover in a given year and when we will cover it. In reality, however, we will incorporate additional goals and resources as my students are able. Put simply, we will learn AS MUCH as we can AS FAST as we can without sacrificing proper concepts and technical foundations.

#### TERM I: AUGUST 19 THROUGH OCTOBER 23

- Fundamentals of snare drum playing: proper grip, posture, practice pad use, practice techniques, using a metronome, using exercises from my *Drum Stuff*
- Edward Freitag: *The Rudimental Drummer's Cookbook*: learn exercises 1 through 6 as class warm-ups; learn solos *Hot Licks* and *Accentuate*
- Single stroke roll exercises, double stroke and long roll exercises, short rolls 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15, 17; begin paradiddle rudiments
- Garwood Whaley: *Fundamental Studies for Snare Drum*, about 20 out of 80 exercises
- Four-way coordination, style, sound, and reading in rock drum set playing, using exercises from Ted Reed's *Syncopation for the Modern Drummer*

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- Improvisation in rock style

#### **TERM II: THROUGH JANUARY 15**

- Paradiddle rudiments and exercises; flam rudiments and exercises
- Garwood Whaley: *Fundamental Studies for Snare Drum*, about 20 more out of 80 exercises
- Continued work out of Edward Freitag's *The Rudimental Drummer's Cookbook*, especially solos 3 through 6; preparation of one of these solos for performance in Recital No. 1
- Continued four-way coordination rock drum set playing, using exercises from Ted Reed's *Syncopation for the Modern Drummer* and John Pickering's *Drummers Cookbook*; preparation of exercises for performance in Recital No. 1
- Improvisation in rock style
- Preparation of drum set demonstrations for recital
- (Winds & Percussion Recital No. 1; Wednesday, January 20, 2010, FAC Recital Hall, 7:30 PM)

#### **TERM III: THROUGH MARCH 22**

- Flam rudiments and exercises; drag rudiments and exercises; exercises using 6-stroke rolls, legato 3 and 5-stroke rolls
- Garwood Whaley: *Fundamental Studies for Snare Drum*, about 20 more out of 80 exercises
- Continued work out of Edward Freitag's *The Rudimental Drummer's Cookbook*, especially warm-ups 7 and 8 and solos 7 through 10
- Basic jazz coordination and time keeping using Ted Reed's *Syncopation for the Modern Drummer*
- Improvisation in jazz style

#### **TERM IV: THROUGH MAY 21 (LAST DAY FOR UNDERCLASSMEN AT FINE ARTS CENTER)**

- More work on advanced rudiments, especially those useful form drum set work, in *Drum Stuff*
- Garwood Whaley: *Fundamental Studies for Snare Drum*, finish the book
- Continued work out of Edward Freitag's *The Rudimental Drummer's Cookbook*, especially solos 11 through 14; preparation of Solo No. 14 (*Legend of a Two-Eyed Soldier*) for Recital No. 2
- Continued basic jazz coordination and time keeping using Ted Reed's *Syncopation for the Modern Drummer*; Improvisation in jazz style; preparation of *Syncopation Exercise No. 1* for performance in Recital No. 2
- Winds & Percussion Recital No. 2 Wednesday, May 12, 2010, FAC Recital Hall, 7:30 PM

<b>Other</b>
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#### **Major Assignments and Projects required:**

- Each week, students will perform parts of ongoing projects for each other, and will receive a grade based upon incremental achievements towards their goals.
- At the end of the first and third quarters, each student will be responsible to perform, for his/her peers, a program consisting of materials representative of the preceding nine weeks, and will receive a grade based upon their achievements. Performance in the quarterly recital may be substituted for this in-class performance.
- At the end of the second and fourth quarters, each student will be responsible to perform, for his/her peers, a program consisting of materials as representative of the preceding semester. This performance will be counted as a semester exam. Performance in the quarterly recital may be substituted for this in-class performance.

Grades are weighted as follows:

Term: weekly assignments = 80%, term test or recital performance = 20%

Semester I: Term I = 40%, Term II = 40%, semester or recital performance = 20%

Semester I: Term III = 40%, Term IV = 40%, semester or recital performance = 20%

Final: Semester I = 50% and Semester II = 50%

#### **Attendance and Tardy Policy: refer to Fine Arts Center handbook**

#### **Classroom Rules and Expectations:**

- Report on time to each class. Please let me know in advance if you must miss the class for any reason.
- each class, bring all appropriate sticks and mallets, your class anthology, other current class materials, and a pencil.
- if you are asked to work on your own or in a small group, use your time wisely and constructively.
- No food or beverages – with the exception of water – are allowed at the Fine Arts Center
- Be kind and thoughtful to your classmates.
- Strive always to do and to be your best

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**Assessment Information and Grading Scale, Percussion I:**

Students receive grades based upon their mastery of performance skills on the various instruments. "Playing checks" (quizzes) are usually given once each week, and a term playing examination is given at the end of each nine weeks. Students receive test grades for participation in recitals, showcases, and other class-related performances.

**Plan for Routine Communication With Parents:**

- Occasional e-letter sent to my students and families with assignments, schedules, and notices of events
- Posting of the above and additional information on my blog: <http://www.facorchestra.blogspot.com/>
- **Quarterly Fine Arts Center Newsletter is mailed to all parents of Fine Arts Center students.**
- Parents are contacted promptly in the event of academic or disciplinary problems.
- A log of parent phone calls is maintained in teacher's office.