

Penn State School of Music

APPLIED BASSOON LESSONS

(WWNDS122, 172, 222, 272, 322, 372, 422, 472, 129, 182, 232, 282, 332, 383, 432, 482, 532)

FALL 2025 SYLLABUS

Professor:	Dr. Margaret P. Fay (mfay@psu.edu)
Office:	212 Music Building II
Office Hours:	By appointment
Studio Class:	Fridays, 1:00-2:15 p.m.
Classroom:	122 Music Building II

Course Description

Students receive weekly 50-minute private lessons in bassoon playing and reed making, and attend a weekly studio class. The focus of private lessons is achieving mastery of the bassoon through playing technical exercises, etudes, solo repertoire, and orchestral excerpts. Students will work on repertoire in a variety of styles and from different time periods. Individual weekly lesson times are coordinated with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

Studio class will be held on Fridays from 1:00-2:15 p.m. in room 122, Music Building II. All students registered in bassoon lessons are expected to attend and participate, unless they have a direct course conflict. The purpose of the studio class is to provide further performance opportunities, to create a support network amongst the bassoonists, and to be exposed to the knowledge, performance skills, musical interpretations, and opinions of other bassoon students. In addition to performances by students, topics will include practice techniques, injury prevention, group listening, orchestral excerpts, ensemble playing, and mock auditions.

Course Objectives

Undergraduate Students

By the end of undergraduate studies, bassoon majors will be expected to have achieved the outcomes listed below.

1. Practice Skills

- The ability to assess what needs to be improved.
- An awareness of several practice strategies that will help facilitate the improvement of a passage.
- The ability to listen critically at every stage of the practicing process, to avoid mindless repetition.
- The ability to analyze factors that contribute to the successful execution of a passage.
- The means of creating clear short-term and long-term goals.
- The means of generating self-motivation.

2. Performance Skills

- The ability to perform confidently and without mental distraction.
- The knowledge of the amount and type of work necessary to achieve a high level of performance.
- The ability to communicate to an audience a musical interpretation that is clear and artistic.
- The ability to accommodate changing variables such as acoustics, time of day, energy level, and other external distractions.

3. Scales and Arpeggios

- The ability to play scales and arpeggios fluidly in every key across the full range of the instrument, in sixteenth notes, with a variety of articulations, at quarter note=100.
- The knowledge of alternate fingerings necessary in order to smoothly play scales and arpeggios in more difficult keys.

4. Repertoire

- The ability to play several solo works in a variety of different styles and from different time periods.
- The ability to distinguish and describe some of the defining features of music in different styles and from different time periods.
- An awareness of a wide breadth of bassoon repertoire, including solo, chamber, orchestra, and band repertoire.
- The knowledge of different mental, physical, and technical demands of different genres of music (solo vs. chamber music vs. orchestral, etc.)

5. Orchestral Excerpts

- A solid foundation in the performance of the most often requested excerpts on bassoon auditions.
- An awareness of practice strategies that will allow the student to further refine their orchestral excerpt performance.
- A sense of the audition process through participating in end-of-semester mock auditions as both member of the committee and a mock auditioner. Upper-level undergraduate, graduate bassoon majors, and PPC bassoonists are required to perform a mock audition at the end of every semester during the second last studio class of the semester.

6. Reed Making

- The ability to consistently create usable bassoon reeds without the aid of an instructor.
- An understanding of how different bassoon reed adjustments will affect different aspects of the reed.

- The ability to test and accurately assess the strengths and weaknesses of a reed.

Graduate and PPC Students

Graduate and Professional Performance Certificate (PPC) students will build on the skills they have already developed and further refine their bassoon technique, reed making, and tools of musical expression. Repertoire (solo, etudes, orchestral excerpts) will be selected with special attention to the student's specific musical goals and projects. Graduate and PPC bassoonists are required to perform a mock audition during the second last studio class of the semester.

Required Course Materials

1. Etude/Technique Books

Over the course of undergraduate studies, students will work on etudes from the book listed below. Incoming students should consult Dr. Fay before buying any new books.

- Kovar, Simon. *Twenty-Four Daily Exercises for Bassoon*. New York: Simon Kovar, 1951.
- Milde, Ludwig. *Fifty Concert Studies*, Op. 26, Volumes 1 and 2. New York: International Music Company, 1948.
- Milde, Ludwig. *Twenty-Five Studies in Scales and Chords*, Op. 24. New York: International Music Company, 1950.
- Weissenborn, Julius. *Bassoon Studies*, Op. 8, Volume 2. New York: International Music Company, 1952.
- Jackson, Nadina Mackie. *Solitary Refinement: Chromatics, Chords & Scales - Concepts for the Committed Bassoonist*. Friesen Press, 2020.

Graduate students, PPC students, and advanced undergraduate students may work on etudes not shown in this list, such as those by Piard, Jancourt, Ozi, Orefici, and Satzenhofer, and Bernard Garfield.

2. Solo Repertoire

Solo repertoire to be determined in consultation with the instructor.

3. Reed Making Tools

All bassoon students will need the following tools in order to embark on bassoon reed making studies.

Tools that should be purchased from a double reed supply specialist, such as Miller Marketing, Midwest Musical Imports, and Forrest's Music:

- Reed knife
- Plaque
- Forming mandrel
- Holding mandrel
- Reamer
- 22-gauge brass wire

- Three files (triangle, rat-tail, knife-edge; also available at a woodworking specialty store such as Lee Valley.)
- Bassoon reed drying rack

Tools that can be purchased from a non-specialized store (Hardware store, Lee Valley, craft supply store, drugstore):

- Wet/dry sandpaper (220 and 400 grit)
- String
- Small needle-nose pliers
- Wire cutters
- Small zippered bag to hold all of your tools (Toiletry bags or large pencil cases work well!)
- Ruler that shows millimetres and begins measurements from the bottom of the ruler, i.e. no gap before measurements begin
- 1.25" Dowel
- Duco cement or beeswax

Method of Evaluation

Grade Breakdown

Weekly Lessons	50%
Studio Class (attendance and performance)	10%
➤ Majors and Minors must perform in at least two studio classes.	
Solo Performance(s)	10%
➤ (Studio Recital/Common Hour)	
End-of-semester Jury	10%
➤ Required for majors and minors only	
◦ Reed Making (Required for Majors only)	10%
◦ Concert Attendance (New this year!)	10%

1. Weekly Lessons (50%)

Students will be evaluated based on weekly preparation and progress demonstrated in lessons over the course of each term. Lesson attendance, promptness, and general attitude may also contribute to a student's lesson grade.

Lesson Attendance

- A minimum of 12 lessons will be required in order to earn a grade of B or higher in the course.
- Having said that, please don't come to your lesson if you are sick. With 15 weeks in the semester, attending at least 12 of your lessons should be quite reasonable.
- My schedule is extremely dense this semester, and likely so is yours! If you are unable to attend a lesson, please let me know as soon as possible. I will reschedule if my schedule allows, but this is much more likely to be an option if you let me know well in advance.

- I will be able to do some make-up lessons during exam week.
- If you have not reached 12 lessons by the end of the semester, options will include:
 - **No extenuating circumstances:** Receiving a grade lower than a B.
 - **Extenuating Circumstances:** Receiving a deferred grade, and making up the lessons at the very beginning of the Winter Semester.

2. Studio Class (10%)

Students will be evaluated based on participation, engagement, and performance in weekly studio classes. Attendance at every studio class is expected regardless of whether or not the student is performing on that day. All bassoonists are expected to perform as a soloist (with or without piano, depending on the repertoire) in studio class at least twice per semester. Please notify the instructor in advance of any foreseeable conflicts. Unexcused absences will result in a **2-point deduction per absence**.

3. Studio Recital Performance (10%)

Every semester, all bassoon students will perform a solo work and/or as part of an ensemble in our studio recital.

- Fall 2025 Double Reed Studio Recital: Friday, November 7, 2025, 7:30 p.m., Recital Hall

4. Reed Making (10%)

Reed making is required for bassoon majors only. Reed making requirements will vary depending on your year in the program and experience in the program. Reed making expectations for the semester will be determined for each student within the first two weeks of lessons.

5. End-of-Semester Jury (10%)

At the end of the semester, bassoon majors and minors will perform a solo jury during the final exam week. Students who perform a solo recital in a given semester will not be required to play a jury.

6. Concert Attendance (10%)

Bassoon majors are required to attend all PSU solo bassoon recitals and woodwind faculty recitals in a given semester, as well as one large ensemble concert featuring bassoon, that they are not playing in. Fall 2025 concerts are listed below. Bassoon minors registered in lessons in a given semester are required to attend HALF of the concerts listed below.

Required Concerts/Events

Dr. Fay Faculty Recital	September 24, 2025, 7:30 p.m., RH
Dr. Stambler Faculty Recital	October 4, 2025, 7:30 p.m., RH
Woodwind Day/Rhapsody Series	October 12, 2025, 12:00-5:00 p.m. RH
Peter Liu Junior Recital	October 2025, date TBD

Attend At Least One of the Following:

Philharmonic Orchestra	October 4, 2025, 4:00 p.m., Eisenhower
Chamber Orchestra/SWE	October 17, 2025, 7:30 p.m., RH
Symphonic Band/Campus Band	October 19, 2025, 2:00 p.m., Eisenhower

Campus and Philharmonic Orchestras	November 9, 2025, 7:00 p.m., Eisenhower
Chamber Orchestra/SWE	November 19, 2025, 7:30 p.m., RH
Mosaic	December 7, 2025, 4:00 p.m., Eisenhower
Symphonic Band/Concert Band	December 10, 2025, 7:30 p.m., Eisenhower

Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage
A	93–100%
A-	90–92%
B+	87–89%
B	83–86%
B-	80–82%
C+	77–79%
C	70–76%
D	60–69%
F	0–59%

Expectations of the Student

1. Practicing

Students are expected to practice a minimum of two hours per day, ideally split over two or more sessions. All students are expected to establish and maintain a practice schedule that fits around their academic, ensemble, work, and community obligations. If needed, the instructor will help students create a plan for achieving practicing goals.

2. The Warm Up

Students will be expected to begin the first practice session of the day with a bassoon warm-up of approximately 20–45 minutes. During this time, students will play long tones, scales, arpeggios, articulation exercises, and interval exercises, as assigned by the instructor. Please consult Appendices A through F (pp. 6–16) for more detailed information.

3. Solo Repertoire

In a given year, students should learn at least one work from each of the following three categories: Baroque, Classical and Romantic, and Twentieth and Twenty-First Century.

4. Orchestral Excerpts

All performance majors and students aspiring to become performance majors are expected to study the excerpts throughout the entire academic year and receive regular feedback on the progress of excerpts in lessons. Students who do not aspire to become performance majors may also choose to study orchestral excerpts.

5. Reed Making

By the end of undergraduate studies, all bassoon majors are expected to be capable of creating usable bassoon reeds without the aid of an instructor. The study of reed making is

generally considered a life-long pursuit, and it is not reasonable to expect mastery of the craft after only a few years. Though finished reeds are available commercially, they are rarely of acceptable quality for refined playing in all of the registers. The ability to make reeds not only ensures that the player can not only control the quality of the reeds, but that they can also adjust the reed to fit individual performance needs and preferences. Additionally, the details of the process are ever-changing, as bassoonists alter their concept of sound, move to geographic locations with a different climates and altitudes, and experience new demands from repertoire under study.

Most bassoon students have not had much exposure to reed making before beginning undergraduate studies. For this reason, the minimum “reed quota” is quite low for these students. The year-specific minimum reed requirements are outlined in the table below. Students are expected to bring new reeds to lessons over the course of the semester and number their reeds on the tube using pen or permanent marker. The instructor will keep a record of the students’ reed production. Reed making is worth 10% of the student’s final mark in this course.

Important Dates

Thursday, Sept. 15	Pennsylvania Quintet/Graduate Concert 6:30 p.m., School of Music Terrace
Thursday, Sept. 22	Wellness Day (No classes/lessons)
Sunday, Sept. 25	Reeds ‘n Stuff Workshop
Wed., Oct. 12	Wellness Day (No classes/lessons)
Friday, Nov. 11	Double Reed Studio Recital 7:30 p.m., Recital Hall, Penn State School of Music
Friday, Nov. 18	Wellness Day (No classes/lessons)

Academic Integrity Statement

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University’s Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students’ dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

Disability Accommodation Statement

Since many students have disabilities not readily noticeable, this announcement or statement encourages students to identify their needs early in the semester so timely adaptations can be made. Per the [Academic Administrative Policies and Procedures R-5: Syllabus](#), all University syllabi must include a disability statement modeled after the statement below, offered from the SRD website:

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. The Student Disability Resources (SDR) website provides contact information for every Penn State campus: <http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/campus-contacts>. For further information, please visit Student Disability Resources: <http://equity.psu.edu/sdr>.

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus' disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Counseling and Psychological Services Statement

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park (CAPS)
(<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>): 814-863-0395

Counseling and Psychological Services at Commonwealth Campuses
(<https://senate.psu.edu/faculty/counseling-services-at-commonwealth-campuses/>)

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400

Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

Educational Equity/Report Bias Statement

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the Report Bias webpage found at the following link:
(<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>).