

# Cornell University Percussion Ensemble

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## Course Information

Music 3634

Either 0 credits, S-U, or 1 credit, letter grade

Prerequisite: successful audition; participation in a large ensemble if registered for credit

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<http://percussion.music.cornell.edu>

## What we do

The Cornell Percussion Ensemble is dedicated to finding the new. We explore new ways of hearing sounds and new ways of making music, performing historical pieces for percussion group, pieces written for us, and music using improvisation, “group composition,” and compositions by the group’s members. What these words “composition” and “improvisation” mean is itself an important question, and will be discovered as the group plays together.

## Performances

Our first fall concert is **Thursday, November 19, at 8 p.m. in Willard Straight Hall**. We will be performing small chamber pieces, and are joined on the concert by the Cornell Steel Band and World Drum and Dance Ensemble.

We are also collaborating with the Cornell Wind Symphony for performance on **Sunday, November 22, at 8 p.m. in Bailey Hall**. More details will be available as the date approaches. **Please reserve both dates – our members will be performing at both events.**

If members of the group have additional ideas for performances, we will do our best to make them happen.

## Other Events

Marimbist **Gwen Burgett Thrasher** from Michigan State University will be here to perform on our Lunchtime Concert Series on **Thursday, November 5**, at 12 p.m. She will work with us later that afternoon, discussing solo pieces and chamber music for marimba. **Please reserve this date as well.**

## Rehearsals

The ensemble rehearses weekly, Tuesdays, from 7 to 9 p.m. Members are asked to be set up and ready to begin playing at 7 each week – this means setting aside time BEFORE rehearsal to find, build, and set up instruments. Likewise, members will help each other to pack up at the end of rehearsal. **If you are not set up for a rehearsal at 7 p.m., you are late for that rehearsal.**

Extra rehearsals or different rehearsal times will be scheduled as necessary.

Members are expected to prepare their own parts on their own practice time – rehearsal is not time to be learning parts. Practice facilities are available, as outlined in the Cornell percussion guidelines.

Members are also expected to keep track of and to protect their parts and scores. A notebook, folder, and pencils are required materials at every rehearsal.

## **Assignments and Grading**

Grades reflect attendance and effort in rehearsal and assignments. Our work consists mainly of rehearsing together; therefore, attendance is of the highest importance. There are no free or unexcused absences. If you are sick, I need a medical excuse form at the following class session. If you have a meeting, out-of town excursion, or other unavoidable, **once-in-a-lifetime activity** coming up that might cause you to miss a class, I need to know about it via email by FRIDAY BEFORE the coming meeting. Classes missed without either contact will result in the reduction of one letter grade. **Students will fail the course with a third unexcused absence.** Two late appearances to rehearsal will also result in the reduction of one letter grade.

Most weeks there will be some sort of assignment, which will almost always be some problem to think about or prepare a solution for rehearsal the next week. For example, one might need to choose several different “junk sounds,” or think of a rule the group could follow in making an improvisation. These assignments are graded “all or nothing” – if a member is prepared, great. If not, it will be evident in rehearsal.

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any written work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student’s own work.

Grading also reflects commitment to the work of the Cornell Percussion Ensemble. A committed musician is on time and prepared for rehearsals, hungry for and enthusiastic about music, and intent on contributing to the group and to realize their own potential. Intermittent or inadequate preparation and attitude will result in low grades, as well as an unhappy ensemble.

All relevant rehearsal information, including schedules, audio, and video files will be posted to the percussion department website, under “Course materials:”  
<http://percussion.music.cornell.edu/materials.html>

## **Equipment**

Cornell will supply large instruments (drums, mallet percussion, metals, etc.). Members are responsible for building their own collection of sticks, mallets, and beaters, as appropriate to our repertoire. Members may be asked to find their own instruments and different implements as part of a weekly assignment.

## **Concert Dress**

Look good. No jeans, sneakers, or hats. Solid-colored shirts, dark pants or skirts preferable.

## **Our name**

We need to come up with something more interesting than “Cornell University Percussion Ensemble.”