

# Cornell University Steel Bands

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## Course Information

Music 3613  
Either 0 credits, S-U, or 1 credit, letter grade  
Prerequisite: successful audition

Tim Feeney  
Lincoln Hall B23  
607-254-8719  
tpf26@cornell.edu  
<http://percussion.music.cornell.edu>

## Text

Online texts, as requested, available via the Percussion Department webpage:  
<http://percussion.music.cornell.edu/materials.html>

## What we do

The Cornell Steel Bands perform music drawing on the musical traditions of Trinidad and Tobago, with attention paid to calypso and soca styles. We also perform music in other popular styles, compositions for the group, and arrangements of different pieces in different genres. Special attention is paid to the role of the steel band within Trinidadian history and culture, through readings and discussions.

## Projects

Our fall concert is **Thursday evening, November 19, at 8 p.m. at Willard Straight Hall**. Joining us will be the Cornell World Drum and Dance Ensemble, and CU Percussion Ensemble.

We are actively seeking additional performance opportunities – we are working on a December date at Risley College, for which more info will come as available. If members of the group have ideas for performances, we will follow them up as best is possible.

## Rehearsals

The ensemble rehearses weekly, **Wednesdays, at Bailey Hall. Sections rehearse from 4:40 to 6:40 and from 7 to 9**. Members are asked to be set up and ready to begin playing at the beginning of rehearsal – this means, for the early group, setting aside time BEFORE rehearsal to find, build, and set up pans. Likewise, members in the late section will help each other to pack up at the end of rehearsal. **If you are not set up for the beginning of rehearsal, you are late for that rehearsal.** Equipment for the Cornell Steel Bands is kept in Bailey Hall B13, where it must be neatly stored at all times when not in use.

Members are expected to prepare their own parts on their own practice time – rehearsal is not time to be learning parts. Practice time in B13 is available via ID coding, as outlined in the Cornell percussion guidelines.

Members are also expected to keep track of and to protect their parts and scores. Folders will be distributed at the first rehearsal, and stored with the pans in Bailey B13.

We are learning a significant amount of our repertoire by memory, reflecting the methodology of steelbands in Trinidad. Audio files will be available on the percussion department website, but a personal audio recorder might be a smart tool to bring to rehearsals, in addition to a notebook and folder for class handouts.

## **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.

There also may be assignments in addition to personal practice time, which will be related to some aspect of steelpan culture. For example, one might need to discuss, or write a reaction to, an article discussing steelband teaching in the United States. 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 Steel Bands. 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 pans and some mallets. Members are encouraged to purchase their own mallets, through an online auction site like eBay or a retailer such as Panyard (<http://www.panyard.com>)

## **Concert Dress**

Look good. Solid-color or multicolored top, solid pants or skirt. No jeans, sneakers, or hats.

## **Our name**

We need to come up with something more interesting than “Cornell University Steel Bands.”