

Core Foundations for Drum Set Practice

Reading, coordination, practice habits, and the learning focus of Music Skill 3

Course focus

Music Skill 3 is a practical drum set course. The course specification emphasizes basic drum set performance skills, reading drum notation on the five-line staff, basic rhythm exercises, and coordination of both hands with the right and left feet.

1. Essential Learning Areas

- Read drum-set notation on the five-line staff and follow assigned rhythmic material accurately.
- Perform basic rhythm exercises from beginning to end while maintaining the details required in the exercise or song.
- Coordinate the right hand, left hand, right foot, and left foot during drum-set performance.
- Practice assigned material consistently outside class and show measurable improvement over time.
- Apply knowledge learned in class to the assigned repertoire and practical exercises.

2. Recommended Practice Sequence

The course repeatedly uses a part-to-whole approach: isolate each limb, combine selected limbs, then play the complete coordination pattern.

1. Read the assigned notation before playing.
2. Practice the right-hand part alone, then the left-hand part alone.
3. Practice the right-foot and left-foot parts separately when required.
4. Combine both hands at a slow, controlled tempo.
5. Add the feet and perform the complete pattern.
6. Review the material and repeat until the pattern can be performed continuously.

3. Practice Discipline

- Keep a progress notebook for assigned practice after each lesson.
- Practice regularly rather than attempting all preparation immediately before an assessment.
- Focus on accuracy first; increase fluency only after the coordination is stable.

Key standard

Progress in this course is evaluated not only by examination performance, but also by attendance, punctuality, regular practice, and development across the semester.

Bossa Nova: Groove and Coordination

Weeks 1-3 and additional Bossa Nova repertoire after the midterm

1. Bossa Nova Study in This Course

- Bossa Nova rhythm exercises are introduced as practical coordination studies.
- The material requires coordination of both hands together with the right and left feet.
- Students first practice individual parts, then combine the limbs, and finally perform the complete drum-set pattern.
- The course also applies Bossa Nova coordination to assigned songs, not only to isolated exercises.

2. Learning Process for an Assigned Bossa Nova Exercise

1. Identify the notation assigned to each limb in the exercise.
2. Practice one hand at a time until the movement is secure.
3. Practice the foot parts separately when the exercise requires them.
4. Combine both hands, maintaining the written rhythm accurately.
5. Add right foot and left foot, keeping the entire coordination pattern controlled.
6. Repeat the full exercise without stopping, then review any unstable section.

3. Bossa Nova in Repertoire

- When the pattern is used in a song, follow the assigned notation and the structure of the piece.
- Maintain the coordination pattern while moving through the musical form.
- Use the same step-by-step correction process when a specific measure or section becomes unstable.

Practice Check	Can I do it?	Evidence
Read the assigned Bossa Nova notation	Yes / Not yet	Correct notes and rhythm
Play each limb separately	Yes / Not yet	Controlled movement
Combine both hands	Yes / Not yet	No loss of pulse
Add both feet	Yes / Not yet	Stable four-limb coordination
Perform the complete exercise/song section	Yes / Not yet	Continuous performance

Important

This handout does not replace the exact notated Bossa Nova exercises assigned in class. Practice the specific notation provided by the instructor.

Bossa Nova Fill-In and Musical Application

Developing transitions while preserving the assigned groove and coordination

1. Fill-In Practice in the Course

- The teaching plan includes Bossa Nova fill-in exercises as a continuation of the basic Bossa Nova rhythm work.
- Fill-in material should be practiced with the same limb-by-limb method used for the basic groove.
- The goal is to complete the written exercise accurately and to connect the fill-in with the surrounding rhythm without losing coordination.

2. Step-by-Step Fill-In Practice

1. Read the written fill-in carefully before playing.
2. Practice the hand pattern alone until it can be performed accurately.
3. Add the required foot part(s) only after the hand pattern is secure.
4. Practice the measure immediately before the fill-in and the fill-in itself as one unit.
5. Practice the fill-in and the first measure after it as one unit.
6. Connect the entire phrase: groove -> fill-in -> return to groove.

3. Problem-Solving During Practice

- If the fill-in causes the pulse to become unstable, reduce the tempo and isolate the transition.
- If one limb causes the breakdown, remove the other limbs and rebuild the coordination gradually.
- Review the assigned notation rather than guessing the pattern from memory.
- Repeat the transition until it can be performed continuously before moving on.

4. Applying Bossa Nova to Assigned Songs

- Use the learned coordination in the additional Bossa Nova songs assigned after the midterm.
- Recognize where the exercise material appears or can be applied in the repertoire.
- Demonstrate that technique learned in exercises can be transferred to musical performance.

Practice target

A successful fill-in should function as part of the musical phrase. The course expects students to complete the assigned exercise or song while maintaining the written details and continuity.

Samba: Groove, Fill-In, and Four-Limb Coordination

Weeks 4-7 and additional Samba study later in the semester

1. Samba Study in This Course

- The course introduces Samba rhythm exercises followed by Samba fill-in exercises.
- Students practice the movement of the written notes in both hands, right foot, and left foot.
- The same teaching sequence is used: individual limbs -> combined limbs -> full drum-set coordination.
- Additional Samba practice is revisited later in the semester for further development.

2. Samba Practice Method

1. Read the assigned Samba notation and identify each limb part.
2. Practice right hand and left hand separately.
3. Practice the right-foot and left-foot parts separately when required.
4. Combine both hands while maintaining the written rhythm.
5. Add the feet gradually until all four limbs can perform together.
6. Review the complete exercise and repeat it continuously.

3. Samba Fill-In Practice

- Treat the fill-in as a written coordination problem, not as an improvised pattern unless the instructor assigns improvisation.
- Practice the fill-in independently before connecting it to the Samba rhythm exercise.
- Use short repeated sections to stabilize the transition into and out of the fill-in.
- Return to the assigned Samba rhythm immediately after the fill-in without stopping.

Skill Area	Minimum Expected Practice
Notation	Read and follow the assigned drum-set notes.
Hands	Control right and left hand parts separately and together.
Feet	Perform assigned right- and left-foot parts accurately.
Coordination	Combine hands and feet without breaking the written rhythm.
Continuity	Complete the Samba exercise or assigned section without stopping.
Review	Identify errors and repeat unstable sections.

Course emphasis

The course specification repeatedly requires students to review earlier material and demonstrate improvement, so Samba practice should include both new material and systematic review.

Two-Hand Exercises, Review, and Assessment Readiness

Basic-to-intermediate right-hand and left-hand note exercises

1. Right-Hand and Left-Hand Note Exercises

- Weeks 14-16 focus on different right-hand and left-hand note exercises at basic-to-intermediate level.
- Students first understand the movement of the written notes for both hands.
- Practice each hand separately, then combine both hands.
- The teaching plan then connects the hand exercises back to full drum-set playing with hands and feet.
- All previously learned material is reviewed before the final examination.

2. Final Review Plan

1. Review Bossa Nova rhythm exercises.
2. Review Bossa Nova fill-in exercises and assigned Bossa Nova repertoire.
3. Review Samba rhythm exercises.
4. Review Samba fill-in exercises.
5. Review right-hand and left-hand note exercises at basic-to-intermediate level.
6. Practice complete coordination with both hands and both feet wherever required by the assigned material.

3. Assessment and Progress

- Continuous course performance includes attendance, dress, learning development, regular practice, and interaction during class.
- The course includes a midterm practical assessment and a final practical assessment.
- Students are expected to demonstrate progress in reading, rhythm performance, coordination, and the ability to apply learned material to assigned music.

Self-Assessment Question	Ready / Needs Work
Can I read the assigned drum-set notation accurately?	
Can I perform the Bossa Nova exercises continuously?	
Can I perform the Bossa Nova fill-in transitions?	
Can I perform the Samba exercises continuously?	
Can I perform the Samba fill-in transitions?	
Can I coordinate both hands and both feet as assigned?	
Can I complete the assigned exercise or song with all required details?	

Final principle

Practice should move from reading -> isolated limb control -> combined coordination -> full performance -> review. This sequence reflects the practical learning process described throughout the MUS2309 course plan.