

SAXOPHONE STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
MVW1415, MVW 2425, MVW 3435, MVW 4445, MVO 6460, MVO7461

2025-2026 Academic Year – Spring Syllabus
Instructor: Dr. Jonathan Helton (jhelton@ufl.edu)
GTA: Lukas Sweeney (lukassweeney@ufl.edu)

Studio Class: Monday, 6th period in **MUB 101**.
Should we ever need to hold a class via Zoom: <http://bit.ly/SaxStudio>

Lessons: TBA. In-person, or online at <http://bit.ly/SaxophoneLessons>

Dr. Helton's Office Hours: As listed on the weekly lesson schedule, or by appointment. In-person, or online at <http://bit.ly/HeltonOfficeHours> Online meetings must be scheduled in advance.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Saxophone study at the University of Florida includes several components designed to prepare the student for the rigors of a teaching and performing career in music. Qualified music minors are also encouraged to participate. All students in the studio will take part in the following:

Private lessons with Dr. Helton (or in the case of music minors, with one of the graduate assistants) will take place weekly. If Dr. Helton is traveling, undergraduate lessons will be taught by graduate students. Individual instruction will include the development of a comprehensive saxophone technique to enable the student to progress most efficiently. The student will gain a broad knowledge of the saxophone repertoire in the preparation of several performances and recitals. Teaching techniques will also be studied, especially as related to teaching the technique of the saxophone and musical communication.

Studio classes will be held on Mondays throughout the semester. Studio class time will consist of student performances, master classes and pedagogical and performance-related presentations and discussion.

Performance examinations (juries) will take place at the end of each semester. You will be responsible for a program of repertoire and etudes studied during the current semester. Additional requirements will be added for the Pre-Professional Jury, and for recital permission juries.

Student recitals are required of all music majors in the junior and senior years. Additional non-required recitals are encouraged. Graduate students are encouraged to perform one recital during each year of residence.

Graduate pedagogy seminar will meet regularly to discuss teaching techniques, method books, repertoire, and job strategies. Graduate students will be expected to be active in teaching activities throughout their course of study.

Large ensemble participation is required during each semester of applied music registration, as space allows, and as assigned by the ensemble directors. It is expected that you will make a positive contribution to the ensemble to which you are assigned. Make the most of this opportunity.

OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course of study (four years for undergraduates, two years for MM students, and three years for DMA students), the student should have a solid command of the technique of the saxophone and be able to apply the practice and study techniques learned here in preparing new repertoire. The student should know a certain canon of saxophone repertoire well enough to: identify particular performance problems in the works, know a few details of the composer's life, know the form of the works, and be familiar with the musical language of the pieces. The student will also gain first-hand knowledge of a wide variety of performing situations. He/she should be able to anticipate problems which might be encountered in these situations and provide well thought-out approaches to solving these problems. The student will learn effective practice techniques and will know basic pedagogical approaches to teaching performance fundamentals.

MATERIALS

Students will be required to purchase etude books and music for use in lessons, as assigned. Reeds, mouthpieces, metronomes, and other equipment may also need to be purchased. A professional quality instrument (alto saxophone) is required for music majors and is strongly suggested for music minors. For online lessons, a computer and an external microphone will be needed.

MAKE-UP LESSON POLICY

If you must miss your lesson for any reason, make a concerted effort to swap times with someone else. Do not wait until the last minute to do this; no one will want to change to a lesson that is coming up very soon. If you cannot find anyone to change times with you, contact me well in advance and I will try to re-schedule your lesson for that week. I will make every effort to teach make-up lessons myself, but there is a chance that rescheduled lessons will be taught by grad students. Rescheduled lessons that are missed will not be rescheduled a second time. **Makeup lessons with me will only be offered via Zoom.** Contact Dr. Helton as soon as you know you will need to reschedule.

EVALUATION

Studio Grades will be based on the following weighting scale:

Preparation for lessons 70%

Studio class solo performance 10

Studio class/Area meeting attendance 10

Juried performance exam (jury) 10

Grading Scale: 94-100 A

91-93 A-

78-80 C+

61-67 D

88-90 B+

74-77 C

0-66 E

84-87 B

71-73 C-

81-83 B-

68-70 D+

Each lesson will be worth four points, awarded as follows:

4 – Excellent, well prepared

3 – Okay. Needed more practice this week

2 – Poorly prepared

1 – Not prepared to play

0 – Absent, no advanced notice, no attempt to communicate or to make it up

Points for attendance will be divided between all required events.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance lessons and studio classes is integral to the nature of applied music learning and is required. Occasionally, a lesson may be rescheduled at the discretion of the instructor and if time allows. Advance notice must be given for any rescheduling. Make-up and lessons rescheduled at the student's request that are missed will not be made up. Requests for unavoidable absences from lessons or studio classes must be submitted to the instructor in writing (email is fine) for prior approval. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES SUMMARY, ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

I. Performance

- * You must be prepared for your lessons. Daily practice is essential.
- * You must perform in studio class, as assigned. (Master classes, étude performance, etc.)

II. Attendance

- * Attendance at required concerts, studio classes, and lessons is mandatory.

III. Performance Exams/Juries will take place on Monday, April 27.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

Repertoire :: A minimum of two separate solo works for saxophone should be studied each semester. At least one of these should be a major work (sonata, concerto, or other extended work). During a year in which the student is preparing a recital, more repertoire will be required. Approximately 10 etudes should be perfected each semester. During semesters in which the student is preparing a recital, fewer etudes will be required.

Technique :: Scales should make marked improvement each semester. In order to stay on schedule, at least one set of twelve scales/intervals should be checked off (in sixteenth-notes at 152) each semester. Winter and summer breaks can be used to learn additional sets or to catch up, as needed.

Practice :: Regular practice will be required to meet the above expectations. Daily practice is best. Performance majors will want to practice at least 3 hours per day. Other music majors should plan on at least 2 hours per day. Music minors will need at least one hour per day to succeed in studio. Graduate students will want to practice more. Progress is made in the practice room. The more you practice the easier it is to play the instrument. Also remember, somewhere else there are saxophonists who are practicing. Don't let them pass you up.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLY FEE

MVW 1415, 2425, 3435, 4445: \$60; MVO 6460: \$1; 7461: \$5

COURSE EVALUATION

Course evaluations are very helpful. They can help professors tailor the class to meet student needs, and they can help good professors be recognized through promotion and tenure. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

To support consistent and accessible communication of university-wide student resources, the university has collected information on Academic Policies, Academic Resources, and Campus Health and Wellness Resources together at this link: <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

SAXOPHONE STUDIO CLASS

Meets every Monday at 12:50 pm in MUB 101

Spring 2026 Weekly Schedule *Attendance required*

Week 1 January 12 Introduction to the course, Syllabus overview

Week 2 January 19 *Holiday, no classes*

Week 3 January 26 Saxophone Equipment Testing and Repair Clinic – Bring your stuff

Week 4 February 2 Ask The Doctor: What do you want to know?

Week 5 February 9 *Area Recital*

Week 6 February 16 Getting Your Best Sound

Week 7 February 23 *Area Recital*

Week 8 March 2 Graduate Student Master Class

Week 9 March 9 *Area Recital*

----- March 16 *Spring Break*

Week 10 March 23 Technique Building on the Saxophone

Week 11 March 30 *Area Recital*

Week 12 April 6 Student Composer/Repertoire Presentations

Week 13 April 13 *Area Recital*

Week 14 April 20 *Saxophone Olympics*

Juries: April 27

Spring Required Concert/Event Attendance

February 12 7:20 pm, MUB 101, **UF Faculty Reed Quintet** concerto with the UF Wind Symphony

March 24, 4:05 pm, MUB 120, Lukas Sweeney, Doctoral Recital

April 4, 10:30-4:30, Lake Wauburg, **Saxophone Studio Retreat**. Ensemble rehearsals, games, food.

April 7, 7:20 pm, MUB 120, **Saxophone Ensembles Concert**

April 11, 3:00 pm, MUB 101, Alex Kaufman, Senior Recital

April 19, 3:00 pm, MUB 101, Benjamin Diaz, Doctoral Recital

Junior Recitals: TBA6

Other Events of Note

February 21, 7:30 pm, Alex Kaufman, concerto soloist with the First Coast Wind Symphony, Jacksonville, FL

April 12-15, North American Saxophone Alliance Biennial Conference, Columbus, Ohio

Summer A, UF Saxophones in Paris: Study abroad program in Paris, France

Dates and class content/requirements subject to change.

Syllabus updates will be communicated via email.

Rev 12.30.25