

CURRICULUM VITAE

Justin Balcor

Email: justincbalcor@gmail.com

I. Educational Background

- 2018– Ph.D. Candidate, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, Illinois, Ethnomusicology; EDC: 2026.
- 2016 M.A., University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, Musicology/Ethnomusicology.
- 2012 M.M., Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky, Music Education.
- 2010 B.A., Berea College, Berea, Kentucky, Music; Percussion Performance.

II. Professional Positions

- 2025–; Director, African Drum Ensemble, Centre College, Danville, Kentucky.
- 2015–18 – In this position, I lead one section of 8-15 students weekly for two hours. Each semester, we do a performance from a repertoire of music from Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Brazil, and other places.
- 2023– World Music Instructor, Fayette County Public Schools, Lexington, Kentucky.
 - In this position, I am teaching world music, primarily West African percussion, to K-12 students.
- 2022 Teaching Assistant and Instructor of Record, CMN 101, “Public Speaking,” Department of Communication, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (UIUC).
 - In this position, I served as the primary instructor for two sections of a course on public speaking. Throughout the fall semester of 2022, I taught students the preparation and delivery of various forms of speech and presentation.
- 2019–23 Graduate Assistant, Russian, East European and Eurasian Center, UIUC.
- 2018–23 Teaching Assistant, MUS 130, “Introduction to the Art of Music”; MUS 132, “Popular Music Studies”; MUS 133, “Introduction to World Music,” School of Music, UIUC.
 - Over the period of five years ranging from 2018 until 2023 I served as a teaching assistant for variants of three music courses. In this role, I led discussion sections that served as companion classes to the primary class section. Discussion sections were initially primarily in-person, but during the COVID-19 lockdowns were primarily virtual. In these discussion sections, we discussed and theorized musical traditions from around our world and worked to apply them to our own local contexts.
- 2017–18 Founding Director, SambaLex, Lexington, Kentucky.
 - In 2017, I won a Kresge Mini-Grant through the Bluegrass Community Foundation to purchase a collection of Brazilian Samba drums in order to start a youth drumming ensemble in the MLK/East End neighborhood. Over the next

- year, I would lead a group of five to six teens in the practice of Brazilian drumming with generously donated rehearsal space in the Living Arts and Science Center in Lexington.
- 2015–18 Director, Kentucky Refugee Ministries Children’s Choir, Lexington, Kentucky.
- Over the course of three years, I was the director of the Kentucky Refugee Ministries Children’s Choir. In this role, I led children of ages ranging from 4 years old to 12 years old in the performance of singing and drumming. With this group, we performed at a handful of fundraisers and events, as well as the 2018 Kentucky Bar Association Annual Convention.
- 2015–18 Percussion Instructor; Steel Band Director, Central Music Academy, Lexington, Kentucky.
- During my time with Central Music Academy, a non-profit organization that provides free music lessons to children and teens, I taught private percussion lessons to 4+ students per week. I also led summer percussion camps for up to 15 students. Additionally, I directed a small steel pan ensemble of roughly 6 students.
- 2015–16 Part-Time Instructor, University of Kentucky GEAR UP Program, Lexington, Kentucky.
- Over the course of two summers, I was the primary instructor for seven sections of a version of the college course, Performing World Music, adapted for high school students. In this capacity, I instructed a total of roughly 152 high school students. In the course we covered music from West Africa and the Caribbean.
- 2014–18 Part-Time Instructor, Lexington Parks and Recreation, Lexington, Kentucky.
- Between 2014 and 2018, I was an instructor for several African drumming classes provided by Lexington Parks and Recreation. These include Artworks, where I taught four weekly sections of 15-30 students; ArtKids Camp, where I taught two weekly sections of 15-30 students; and the Therapeutic Recreation Adult Summer Camp, where I taught one weekly section of about 30 students.
- 2014 Independent English Language Instructor, Tbilisi, Georgia.
- 2014–15 Teaching Assistant, MUS 130, “Performing World Music,” University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- I served as the secondary instructor for Performing World Music, which is a hybrid lecture/performance course that traces musical traditions on the African diasporic trail from Sub-Saharan Africa through the Atlantic passage, into the Americas.
- 2012–15 Teaching Assistant and Instructor of Record, MUS 100, “Introduction to Music”; MUS 222, “Creativity and Innovation in Rock Music,” University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

- I served as primary instructor for an introductory course of Western Classical music, as well as a music history course on the development of Rock and Roll music.

2011–12 Graduate Assistant, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky.

2009–10 Recording Engineer, Music Department, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky.

III. Honors and Awards

2022–23 American Councils Combined Research & Training Program, Tbilisi, Georgia.

- Title VIII scholarship to study the Georgian language and conduct up to nine months of dissertation field research in the Republic of Georgia.

2020–21 Foreign Language & Area Studies Academic Year Fellowship, UIUC.

- Fellowship to study the Georgian language.

2020 Foreign Language & Area Studies Summer Fellowship (deferred to Summer 2021), UIUC.

- Fellowship to study the Georgian language.

2019–20 Foreign Language & Area Studies Academic Year Fellowship, UIUC.

- Fellowship to study the Georgian language.

2019 Foreign Language & Area Studies Summer Fellowship, UIUC.

- Fellowship to study the Georgian language.

2018 Foreign Language & Area Studies Summer Fellowship, UIUC.

- Fellowship to study the Georgian language.

2016–17 Kresge Mini Grant, Lexington, Kentucky.

- Grant awarded to found a Brazilian drum group for teens.

2012–15 Lyman T. Johnson Fellowship, University of Kentucky.

- Academic fellowship to study music at the University of Kentucky.

IV. Scholarly Presentations

2023 “‘Is it Georgian?’: The Doli Drum as a Repository of Georgian National Identity.” 55th ASEES Annual Convention, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November.

2023 “‘Without doli, there can’t be ballet’: The Role of the Doli drum in Georgian Traditional Dance.” Works-in-Progress (WiP). Tbilisi, Georgia.

2023 “Introduction to Georgian Music and Musical Instruments.” South Caucasus Overseas Program for Educators. Tbilisi, Georgia.

2022 “Georgian Perspectives on the War in Ukraine.” SEM Roundtable: Music and War in Ukraine: Regional Perspectives. 67th Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, New Orleans, Louisiana, November.

2020 “The Dangers of Racism for Scholars of Color in Eastern Europe and Eurasia.” European Special Interest Group Meeting. 67th Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, held virtually, October.

- 2020 “The Dangers of Racism for Scholars of Color in Eastern Europe and Eurasia.” Race and Racism in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies: A Roundtable, University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign, Champaign, Illinois, held virtually, September.
- 2015 “Nature, Place, and Culture: An Eco-Critical Look at Georgian Popular Musical Text.” Georgia at the Crossroads Symposium, Baylor University, Waco, TX.

V. Performance Experience

- 2015– Drum set, Damned African Descendants, Lexington, Kentucky.
- 2023 Drum set, Hairspray: The Broadway Musical, Jessamine County Arts, Nicholasville, Kentucky.
- 2019–23 Percussion; Bass Guitar, Balkanalia Ensemble, UIUC.
- 2015–18 Mbira; Hosho, MbiraCats, University of Kentucky.
- 2012–18 Snare Drum, March Madness Marching Band, Lexington, Kentucky.
- 2017 Drum set, Green Day’s “American Idiot,” Berea College Theatre Laboratory, Berea, Kentucky.
- 2017 Drum set, “Dreamgirls,” Winter Fest, Lexington, Kentucky.
- 2016–17 Drum set, Frustrate, Lexington, Kentucky.
- 2015–16 Gamelan Ensemble, University of Kentucky.
- 2016 Drum set, “Jesus Christ Superstar,” Summer Fest, Lexington, Kentucky.
- 2016 Drum set, Ponce, Lexington, Kentucky.
- 2012–16 Percussion, SOGO Drums, Berea, Kentucky.
- 2012–14 Korean Percussion Ensemble, University of Kentucky.
- 2012 Drum set, “The Great American Trailer Park Musical,” Studio Players, Lexington, Kentucky.
- 2012 Steel Band, Eastern Kentucky University.
- 2007–10 African–Latin Percussion Ensemble, Berea College.
- 2007–10 Fusion Ensemble, Berea College.
- 2006–10 Jazz Band, Berea College.
- 2006–10 Wind Ensemble, Berea College.

VI. Community Engagement

- 2018 President, North Martin Luther King Neighborhood Association, Lexington, Kentucky.
- 2018 Board Member, North Limestone Community Development Corporation, Lexington, Kentucky.

VII. Language Proficiency

English, fluent.

Georgian, intermediate.

Russian, novice.

VIII. Current Professional Society Memberships

American Musicological Society

Association for Slavic, East European, & Eurasian Studies

International Council for Traditional Music and Dance

Society for Ethnomusicology