



String Techniques
MUS 2121
Fall 2022

Instructor: Amanda C. Fisher, Ph.D.

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Class Meetings: Thursdays 6:00–9:00 pm

Location: FAB 100 (Band Hall)

Office hours: Thursdays 5:00–6:00 pm or by appointment (*appointments preferred*) in FAB 200

Course Description

This course is designed to give the student basic skills in playing string instruments and help prepare the student to be an effective teacher of string instruments. Emphasis will be placed on string pedagogy with supplemental historical context. This course will also familiarize the student with resources available to expand upon information presented in class.

Required Materials

Teaching the Fundamentals of Violin Playing by Jack M. Pernecky

Recommended Materials

Belwin Course for Strings, Book One—options for violin, viola, cello, bass, piano acc., and teacher's manual

Orchestra Expression—options for violin, viola, cello, bass

Alfred's Basic Guitar Method, Book One

Suzuki Method, Book One—options for violin, viola, cello, bass, piano acc.

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Recognize a characteristic sound of each of contemporary string instrument (*knowledge*).
- 2) Play each string instrument at an acceptable level commensurate with class instruction (*skill*).
- 3) Recognize and demonstrate bowing and fingering techniques at an acceptable level on violin and viola (*knowledge, skill*).
- 4) Explain solutions to instrument, playing, and pedagogical problems as they relate to string instruments (*knowledge, skill, disposition*).
- 5) Explain basic historical evolutions of string instruments (*knowledge*).

Major Assignments with Matched SLOs

- Written tests and exam (1, 4, 5)
- Playing tests and exam (2, 3)
- Written analysis of recorded performance(s) (1, 3, 5)

Music Program Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

- SLO 1: All students will demonstrate the ability to integrate appropriate musical expression into performance.
- SLO 2: All students will demonstrate the ability to research and prepare appropriate program notes.
- SLO 3: All students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate and critique a musical performance.

The music student graduating with a BM in music (instrumental or vocal performance; instrumental or vocal education; or music business) should have the following Marketable Skills:

1. Ability to collaborate and network with others to achieve a shared goal, utilizing problem solving, flexibility and improvisation, and consideration of others' thoughts and creative processes.
2. Proficiency in public speaking and writing about music, especially in teaching basic musical concepts to all ages and incorporating technology for presentation and production. *
3. Ability to prepare and perform a program of age-appropriate, relevant, and diverse repertoire, as an individual or part of an ensemble, to an audience, advocating for the arts through engaging with and serving the community. *
4. Experience using problem solving skills and abstract thinking to analyze compositions and examine their aesthetic through musical and extra-musical concepts, such as historical context and text setting. *
5. Ability to create and disseminate basic marketing and public relations materials, as well as resumes, websites, and digital portfolios.

Marketable Skills specifically addressed by this course indicated with *.

Attendance Policy

Simply put, attendance is mandatory. This course meets once a week, so just one absence results in a tremendous loss of essential information. Any extenuating circumstances should be discussed with the instructor prior to an absence, or as soon as possible following. Work conflicts are considered unexcused absences. Please review the SRSU attendance policy on unexcused absences in the Student Handbook.

Tardy Policy

Being late to class is disruptive to everyone. If you enter class after the instructor has started teaching, you are tardy. Your first tardy is excused; afterwards, every two tardies will be marked as an unexcused absence and will fall under the attendance policy. If you are tardy for what you believe to be an excusable reason, please speak with me in person after class. Written authorization may be required.

Practice and Class Preparation

Just as with your primary instrument, study of string instruments requires self-discipline and time management. Cramming to learn a string instrument will be ineffective, as muscle memory and musicality require time to develop. When preparing for a playing quiz or test, students should aim to practice 5–10 minutes a day on fundamentals and 15–20 minutes a day on exercises. Similarly, students are expected to complete any assigned readings on time so as to best participate in class discussions.

Cell Phone Policy

Cell phones are distracting, and class time is limited. Cell phone usage is prohibited in class, and repeated violation of this policy will influence your participation grade.

Grading Procedures

Grades will be weighted in the following way:

20% Attendance and Participation

20% Written Tests

20% Playing Tests

15% Written Analysis of Recorded Performance (midterm assignment)

25% Final Exam

Grading Scale:

90%-100% A

80-89% B

70-79% C

60-69% D

59% and lower F

Academic Integrity

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

Diversity Statement

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, socioeconomic class, age, nationality, etc.). I also understand that the crisis of COVID, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events could impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create an inclusive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is

being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

SRSU Library Services

The Sul Ross Library offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires your LoboID and password. Check out materials using your photo ID. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

SRSU Disability Services

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Rebecca Greathouse Wren, LPC-S, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203 (please leave a message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can during working hours), or email rebecca.wren@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall (Suite 112), and our mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

Course Content and Calendar (subject to change)

The course will typically be divided into two sections: a historical lecture and discussion section (connected to assigned readings TBD), followed by a section that is more hands on. Students will be expected to write about both sections on written tests and assignments; students will be expected to display knowledge of the second section on playing tests. The hands-on section will usually start with students demonstrating their hands-on knowledge from the previous week.

WEEK 1 (August 25)

Lecture topics: Introduction to violin family and general history

Hands-on topics: Identifying parts of violin and bow, tuning and basic care, violin range as heard and written, how to hold the violin and bow

WEEK 2 (September 1)

Lecture topics: Development of violin as a major instrument

Hands-on topics: Basic bowing and fingering techniques, beginning repertoire

WEEK 3 (September 8)

Lecture topics: Classical and Romantic Eras—violin heyday

Hands-on topics: Bowing control and flexibility

WEEK 4 (September 15)

Lecture topics: Violin in the 20th and 21st centuries

Hands-on topics: Left hand control and flexibility

WEEK 5 (September 22)

Lecture topics: Quintessential student and professional violin repertoire
Hands-on topics: Scales and etudes, changing positions

WEEK 6 (September 29)

Lecture topics: Viola, Cello, Bass in 20th and 21st centuries
Hands-on topics: Violin accessories, vibrato, quick instrument fixes

WEEK 7 (October 6)

Lecture topics: Chamber music vs. orchestral music
Hands-on topics: Bowing articulations

WEEK 8 (October 13)

Lecture topics: Student motivation and programming
Hands-on topics: Double-stops, pizzicato

WEEK 9 (October 20)—**Midterm assignment due beginning of class**

Lecture topics: Quintessential student and professional repertoire for viola
Hands-on topics: Viola bowing and fingering basics, viola range as heard and written, viola tuning and care

WEEK 10 (October 27)

Lecture topics: Philosophy of viola pedagogy
Hands-on topics: Viola scales and etudes, reading alto clef

WEEK 11 (November 3)

Lecture topics: Cello and bass terminology, repertoire
Hands-on topics: Cello and bass basic bowing and fingering techniques, bass clef

WEEK 12 (November 10)

Lecture topics: Guitar history and development
Hands-on topics: Guitar range, tuning, position, beginning repertoire

WEEK 13 (November 17)

Lecture topics: Genres of guitar music
Hands-on topics: Guitar student repertoire, chords

WEEK 14

November 24—Thanksgiving; no class

WEEK 15 (December 1)

Dead day. *Please note: I am available for review sessions of hands-on techniques if desired. Please get in touch with me to schedule.*

FINAL EXAMINATION: 6:00–8:00 pm, Wednesday, December 7