

String Techniques
MUS 2121
Spring 2025

Instructor: Clara Brill, MM

Email: clara.brill@sulross.edu

Course Schedule: T/TH 11:00 - 11:50 AM

Course Location: FAB 100 (Band Hall)

Office Hours: Thursdays 12:00 - 1:00 PM or by appointment

Office Location: FAB 206A

Course Description:

The study of string instrument performance, history, pedagogy and pedagogical resources.

Required Materials:

The Art of String Teaching by Michael Hopkins

Recommended resources:

- Stringpedagogy.com account (free)
- Musescore account (free)
- Alfred's Basic Guitar Method, Book 1

Student Learning Outcomes:

- 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 for recitals and performance pieces.
- SLO 3: All students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate and critique a musical performance.

Major Assignments aligned with SLOs:

1. Written and/or multiple choice quizzes and exams
2. Performance quizzes and exams

Marketable Skills:

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, resumes, websites, and digital portfolios.

Marketable Skills specifically addressed by this course indicated with *

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to demonstrate academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. 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; collaboration on a course assignment, examination, or quiz that is assigned for individuals.

Attendance, Tardiness & Cell Phone Policies:

Adherence to the following guidelines will be reflected in the participation portion of student's grade: Attendance is mandatory. Extenuating circumstances should be communicated to the instructor prior to an absence if the absence is anticipated, and as soon as possible if unanticipated. Written authorization or documentation may be required for an absence or tardiness to be excused. Please do not interact with cell phones during the class period.

ADA Statement:

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the 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 Mrs. Mary Schwartz Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartz@sulross.edu or ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

Student Responsibilities Statement:

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the [Student Handbook](#) and the [Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog](#) and for abiding by the [University rules and regulations](#). Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

Counseling:

Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/365 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](#). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

Libraries:

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offer 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 logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123).

No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/ or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu.

Mike Fernandez, SRSU Librarian, is based in Eagle Pass (Building D-129) to offer specialized library services to students, faculty, and staff. Utilize free services such as InterLibrary Loan (ILL), ScanIt, and Direct Mail to get materials delivered to you at home or via email.

Supportive Statement:

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports various perspectives and experiences. I understand that the recent pandemic, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events may 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 a supportive 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.

Grading Procedures:

Grades will be weighted in the following way:

35% Attendance and Participation

25% Written and Multiple Choice Tests

25% Playing Tests

15% Final Exam

Grading Scale:

90%-100% A

80-89% B

70-79% C

60-69% D

0-59% F

About String Techniques

Goals for Students in String Techniques Spring 2025:

1. Proficiency in string instrument performance, including:
 - a. Balanced posture
 - b. Left-right hand coordination and dexterity
 - c. Attention to tone and intonation
 - d. Bowing and fingering techniques
 - e. Intentional musical expression
2. Pedagogical preparation for string instrument instruction and ensemble leadership, including:
 - a. Listening skills and the ability to identify strengths and challenges
 - b. Iteration and implementation of solutions to challenges, including efficient and effective practice and rehearsal strategies, and assessment of capacity and priorities
 - c. An understanding of available and commonly used repertoire and resources
3. Awareness and practice of string instrument care
4. Knowledge of the historical development of string instruments, ensembles, and repertoire

General Remarks:

String techniques instruction often incorporates physical contact relating to the positioning of fingers, hands, wrists, and elbows. This is one tool among many, intended solely to support the student's technical progress. It is not a required element of string instruction. The instructor is to ask permission before engaging, and the student should respond at the discretion of their comfort

level: yes or no. If there are any concerns, please address them with the instructor directly, or with the Fine Arts Chair, Marjorie Scott.

Quizzes:

Students will be quizzed weekly on knowledge and technical skills.

Some quizzes will be open book. **Bring your book to every class.** If a student misses a quiz, they can make it up within 2 weeks of the missed quiz during office hours or a scheduled appointment.

Practice Guidelines:

Practice 3 days of the week, 20 to 30 minutes per practice session, for a minimum of 1h of weekly practice time outside of the course.

Instrument Locker: Locker 32, code 18 - 24 - 38

Course Content and Calendar (subject to change)

Course Content:

The course will typically be divided into two sections: a discussion section connected to assigned readings and video viewings, followed by a section that is hands-on.

Calendar:

The following information is subject to change.

WEEK 1: The Instruments (Ch. 1)

Jan. 16th

WEEK 2: Foundations of String Playing (Ch. 4 & 5) and review of Week 1 material

Jan. 21st & 23rd

WEEK 3: Historical Overview (Ch. 2) and review of Week 1 & 2 material

Jan. 28th & 30th

WEEK 4: Conceptualizing, Planning and Assessing String Instruction (Ch. 3) and review of Week 1 & 2 material

Feb. 4th & 6th

WEEK 5: The Developing Beginner - Part 1 (Ch. 6)

Feb. 11th & 13th

WEEK 6: In-class Projects & Review

Feb. 18th & 20th

WEEK 7: The Developing Beginner - Part 2 (Ch. 7), and review of Week 5 material

Feb. 25th & 27th

WEEK 8: In-class Projects & Review

Mar. 4th & 6th

WEEK 9: Intermediate Level Technique - Part 1 & 2 (Ch 8 & 9)

Mar. 11th & 13th

SPRING BREAK

WEEK 10: Intermediate Level Instruction (Ch 10) and review of Week 9

Mar. 25th & 27th

WEEK 11: Rehearsal Strategies (Ch 13)

Apr. 1st & 3rd

WEEK 13: Advanced Level Instruction (Ch 12) and Building and Maintaining and Orchestra Program (Ch 14)

Apr. 8th & 10th

WEEK 14: Guitar Pt. 1

Apr. 15th, 17th

WEEK 15: Guitar Pt. 2

Apr. 22nd, 24th

WEEK 16: Exam Review

Apr. 29th

May 1st: Dead day

FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 5 at 10:15 AM to 12:15 PM