



Course Syllabus: String Instruments Class

Lamar D. Fain College of Fine Arts

MUSC 3181 Section 0101

Fall 2026 8/24 – 12/12

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Amanda Hamilton

Office hours: Available by appointment (virtual or in person)

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Course Description

The focus of this course is to prepare students with the fundamentals of technique, tone production, methods, pedagogical technique, and materials pertaining to teaching violin, viola, cello and string bass in the public schools.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Course Competencies

1. To provide each student with a firm foundation in the planning and instruction of a strings program. (SBEC 009:C)
2. To acquire appropriate knowledge, concepts, and diagnostic skills that facilitate the student's ability to successfully teach a beginning strings class in a public-school setting. (SBEC 009:A-B)
3. To gain an understanding and working knowledge of how to play one stringed instrument. (SBEC 009:A)
4. Emphasis will be placed on each student's diagnostic pedagogical ability of instruction. (SBEC 009:D-E)
5. Emphasis will be placed on each student's ability to demonstrate beginning level techniques of a string instrument. (SBEC 009:A-B)
6. The student will assemble a resource notebook with professional materials for future reference. (SBEC 009:C-E)

See Appendix A for a complete list of standards/competencies

Topics of Discussion

- Instrument/Bow Anatomy
- Instrument Care
- Instrument Sizing
- Proper Poster/Instrument Set up
- Bow Hold / Upper and Lower Strings
- Tone Production
- Left Hand Technique / Fingerboard geography

- Tuning
- String Pedagogy
- String Terminology
- Overview of string technique

Textbook & Instructional Materials

- Essential Elements for Strings: Teacher Manual Book 1 by Michael Allen, Robert Gilespe, and Pamela Tellejohn Hayes.
- Three Ring Binder
- 6 Tabs (in binder): 'Instrument Anatomy', 'String Terminology', 'String Care, Maintenance and Repair', 'Accessories', 'Pedagogical Materials', and 'Lesson Plans'.

Assignment Policy

Assignments:

- **Are expected to be on time.**
- Class activities will not be made up due to absences. (Playing tests, quizzes, exams, and peer teaching).
- There will be no extra credit assignments.
- **The only exception to making up missed assignments and tests is a written "excused" absence.**

Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance

The instructor is available to offer assistance over course materials by appointment and can meet virtually or in person in the MSU Music Department.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers

media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignment Type	Percentage
Participation	20%
Playing Quizzes	20%
Written Quizzes	10%
Midterm	20%
Teaching Demonstration/Final	20%
Notebook Completion	10%
Final Grade	100%

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Percentage
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	Below 60%

Homework

Students will submit videos of themselves playing their assigned instruments. The videos must allow the instructor to see both hands clearly while the student performs.

Quizzes

There will be written and playing quizzes, as described in the course schedule below.

Notebook Completion

Students will be filling in the six sections of their notebook with notes throughout the course, both in and out of class. Notebooks will be submitted on the final day of class for up to 10% of the student's grade.

Mid-Term Exam

The Mid-Term Exam will be a written exam that takes place during class time and can cover any material previously discussed in the course.

Final Exam

In lieu of a Final Exam, at the end of the semester, the student will submit a final playing video, present a ten-minute Teaching Demonstration, and submit their Notebook.

Extra Credit

There is no Extra Credit offered in this course.

Late Work

Late work will not be accepted in this course. Should extenuating circumstances arise, please contact the instructor to discuss the best course of action.

Important Dates

- Last day for term schedule changes: Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Deadline to file for graduation: Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

- Attendance is expected for each class as noted in this syllabus.
- Students are allowed 2 unexcused absences.
- 5% points will be deducted for each unexcused absence beyond the 2 allowable absences.
- **Students without all materials will be counted absent. (Instrument and notebook).**
- **Chronic Tardiness is unacceptable and disruptive to class.** Students arriving more than 20 minutes late will be considered absent.
- A student with more than 2 excused or unexcused absences, will be warned by faculty. If truancy continues, a referral will be made to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibility.

Online Computer Requirements

Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. ***Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!** There are many places to access your class! Our D2L course can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Recording Classes

****Recording classes is generally prohibited without the professor's explicit permission.*** Such recordings, when permitted, are for personal use only and may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published without the professor's prior consent. Some faculty may not permit recordings of their classes. When it is feasible and appropriate, students may record classes to accommodate disabilities under the Americans With Disabilities Act, with prior approval of Disability Support Services. Such recordings may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published.

Instructor Class Policies

- If you are having difficulties with any aspect of this course, please see the instructor as soon as possible.
- Professional, adult behavior is expected at all times.
- Be on time, prepared, and ready for work with all materials for class.
- No eating, texting, or any other distracting behaviors during class.
- You should be unpacked, ready to play, chair and stand in place, and music out before class begins.

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the

tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Emergency Aid Resources for Basic Needs

Unexpected life circumstances can affect anyone. If you are experiencing challenges meeting basic needs—such as housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, technology, textbooks or other life necessities, resources may be available to help. Visit the [Student Emergency Support and Resources webpage](#) to learn more, and explore emergency support opportunities through MSU and how to access them. For additional information, please contact the Office of Student Affairs: Clark Student Center #108, (940) 397-7500, student.affairs@mstuexas.edu.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful

possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 8/24 to 8/28	T-Syllabus, Instrument and Bow Anatomy, Instrument Sizing R-Instrument Care, Instrument Assignment, and Instrument Rental (SBEC 009:B)	N/A

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 2 8/31 to 9/4	T -Instrument Posture, Bow Posture, and Right Hand Set Up. Learn Open Strings. Beginning Bow Division R- Written Quiz 1 -Label Instrument and Bow, continue posture of Right Hand Set Up and Left Hand Set Up (SBEC 009:A-C)	N/A
Week 3 9/8 to 9/11	T- Reinforce Posture, Beginning Fingerboard Geography. Intro to EE Teacher Guide- Play EE pages 40-44, Playing Quiz 1 : Instrument Posture: Respective Instrument (hold instruments correctly) End of Class R-Play EE Pages Check Points on Page 47 (Learn to Tune your own instrument with fine tuners) Playing Quiz 2 Hold Bow Correctly (Grip): Respective Instrument (SBEC 009:A-C)	N/A
Week 4 9/14 to 9/18	T- Play Pages 49-63, (Bowing Techniques) (learn to tune your own instruments with the pegs) R- Review material, Playing Quiz 3 submit video for HW- Lightly Row (SBEC 009:A-C)	Video Submission by 11:59 pm 9/21
Week 5 9/21 to 9/25	T- Continued Fingerboard Geography -Intonation-Theory of Shifting Written Quiz 2 R-Play EE 66-80 Bowing Techniques Playing Quiz 4 submit video for HW - D major Scale (SBEC 009:A-C)	Video Submission by 11:59 pm 9/27
Week 6 9/28 to 10/2	T-Review material R- Play EE 83-101, Playing Quiz 5 Submit video for HW -Jingle Bells (SBEC 009:A-C)	Video Submission by 11:59 pm 10/4
Week 7 10/5 to 10/9	T-Rehearsal Techniques EE-101-115 R-Continue EE101-115 (SBEC 009:A-C)	N/A
Week 8 10/12 to 10/16	T-EE- 117-129 Written Quiz 3 String Terms R- Playing Quiz 6 Buckeye Salute Reinforce EE 117-129 (SBEC 009:D)	N/A

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 9 10/19 to 10/23	T- Midterm (Written Exam 1) R- Read and Play EE-130-150 Reinforce new bow techniques. Playing Quiz 7(Baa Baa Black Sheep) Submit Video for HW (SBEC 009:A-C)	Video Submission by 11:59 pm 10/26
Week 10 10/26 to 10/30	T-Overview of Strings Beginning and Middle School, and a brief introduction to string pedagogy. R- Essential Elements 151-175 (Playing Quiz 8 Banana Boat Song) Submit Video for HW (SBEC 009:E)	Video Submission by 11:59 pm 11/1
Week 11 11/2 to 11/6	T- Lesson Plans (format) R- EE- 151-185 Finger Patterns (bowing Patterns) (SBEC 009:A-B,E)	N/A
Week 12 11/9 to 11/13	T- EE 186-215 Playing Quiz 9 Monday's Melody Submit Video for HW R- Vibrato, Advanced bow Technique (hooked, detached slurs, dynamics) (SBEC 009:A-E)	Video Submission by 11:59 pm 11/12
Week 13 11/16 to 11/20	T- Review Lesson Plans R- Review Lesson Plans Written Quiz 4 (SBEC 009:E)	N/A
Week 14 11/23 to 11/24	T- Review material as needed	N/A
Week 15 11/30 to 12/4	Teaching Demonstrations (10 Minutes Each)	Notebooks turned in by the beginning of class 12/3
Final Exam Week 12/5 to 12/10	Playing Test Minuet No. 1 by Recording	Video Submission by 11:59 12/9

References/Scientifically-Based Research/Additional Readings:

Mozart, L. () A Treatise On The Fundamental Principles On Violin Playing

Auer, L. (1926) Graded Course of Violin Playing, Book 1 Preparatory Grade

Lamb, N., & Lamb Cook, S. (2002) Guide to Teaching Strings.

Potter, L. (1997) Kitchen Table Violin Repairs, An Emergency Handbook for String Players and Teachers.

Hamann, D., & Gillespie, R. (2009) Strategies for Teaching Strings.

Auer, L. (1926) Violin Playing As I Teach It.

Fischbach, G., & Frost, R. (1997) Viva Vibrato.

Appendix 1

TExES Domains and Competencies

Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES)

The Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for **String Instruments Class** link to the following TExES domains and competencies necessary to become a music educator in the state of Texas:

Domain 4: Music Classroom Performance

Competency 009: The teacher demonstrates knowledge of methods and techniques for playing musical instruments.

The beginning teacher:

- A. Understands performance skills and appropriate playing techniques (e.g. bowing, fingering, embouchure, rudiments) for a range of instruments (e.g. band, orchestral, classroom).
- B. Understands proper health techniques to use during instrumental rehearsals and performances (e.g. posture, hand position, instrument maintenance).
- C. Selects appropriate instrumental literature to enhance technical skills and provide musical challenges.
- D. Understands standard terminology used in communicating about students' musical skills and performances.
- E. Knows how to offer meaningful prescriptions for correcting performance problems and errors (e.g. intonation, vibrato, articulation, tone production) and understands the constructive use of criticism when evaluating musical skills or performances.

These competencies are referenced in this document as SBEC 009:A-E.

