

University of Florida
School of Music

Teaching String Instruments

MUE 2440 (1 credit hour)

Fall 2025
T/R 7:25 – 8:15 am
MUB 121

Professor: Dr. Elizabeth Schultz (she/her)
Office: MUB 331
Office Hours: T/R 9 – 11 am, or by
appointment

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Course Description

The purpose of this course is to help pre-service music educators to develop foundational strings performance and teaching skills. Students will develop skills, knowledge, and techniques needed to both play and teach stringed instruments.

Course Objectives

Through full participation in this course, students should be able to achieve the following objectives:

- Develop an understanding of proper fundamental performance skills on violin and viola.
- Develop appropriate pedagogical approaches to teaching posture, left hand technique, bow hold, beginning to intermediate bow technique, and common error fixes for beginning strings techniques.
- Demonstrate an understanding of beginning to intermediate positions, shifting, bow strokes, and repertoire.
- Reflect on their experiences with both performing and teaching to improve pedagogical and performance skills.

Textbooks

REQUIRED

- Essential Elements Teacher Manual; Book 1

RECOMMENDED

Strings Students

- MacLeod, R. (2019). Teaching Strings in Today's Classroom: A Guide for Group Instruction. ISBN: 9780815368670

Band Students

- Benham, S. (2018). Yes, You Can! Survival Guide for Teaching Strings. ISBN: 978-1491151181

Assignments

All assignments are due at the start of class time unless otherwise noted. Assignment extension requests should be sent PRIOR to the start of class. If you need an extension, I will do my best to accommodate any reasonable extension request. Without an extension request, late work will not be accepted beyond 14 days from the initial due date.

Assignment	Weight of Assignment
Introduction & Reflection Paper	5%
Llama Picture Assignment	5%
Informal Teaching (2)	10%
Rote Teaching Assignment	10%
Fingering Charts (2)	15%
Individual Playing Tests (4)	15%
Paired Playing Test (Midterm)	10%
Other Assignments (5)	10%
Paired Playing Test (Final)	15%
Digital Resource "Binder"	5%

Introduction & Reflection Paper: Introduce yourself to Dr. Schultz and talk about previous experience, fears or anxiety related to this course, etc. Additional details can be found in Canvas.

Llama Picture Assignment: You will apply what you have learned about bow-hand shape by taking a series of pictures showing off your Llama with "ears up," with food in its mouth, and relaxed into the bow hold shape for violin/viola. Find somewhere creative on campus and have fun with this! Additional details can be found in Canvas.

Informal Teaching: These assignments will be completed in class and will provide you with an opportunity to teach skills previously covered in class. Additional details can be found in Canvas.

Rote Teaching: You will have an opportunity to teach a simple 3-5 note tune by ear to your peers. This teaching demonstration will take place in class. Additional details can be found in Canvas.

Fingering Charts: You will submit a fingering chart for each instrument (violin & viola) that shows what notes are in each position on each string for positions I – VII. This can either be done ‘by hand’ or electronically. Look at a few different available examples and find a chart that makes sense for you. Make this as clear as possible so that with time away you can still understand the geography of the instrument’s fingerboard. Additional details can be found in Canvas.

Individual Playing Tests: You will complete 4 skill checks over the semester (2 per instrument) going over basic fundamental skills learned in class. Additional details can be found in Canvas.

Paired Playing Test (Midterm): This assignment will serve as your midterm. You will find a partner or two from class and demonstrate performance skills and error detection skills on trumpet/cornet OR trombone/euphonium. Additional details can be found in Canvas.

Other Assignments: Over the course of the semester, you will be completing 5 small assignments that are meant to supplement what we are doing in class. These assignments are identifying the open strings on the violin, identifying the open strings on the viola, completing a note reading assignment to gain comfort with alto clef, finger position tutorial for violin and viola on teachingstrings.online (online resource for the recommended MacLeod book), and a progress plan for your selected solo you will perform as a part of your Final Exam. Additional details for each of these assignments can be found in Canvas.

Paired Playing Test (Final): This assignment will serve as your final. Additional details can be found in Canvas.

Digital Resource “Binder:” By the end of this course, you will have created or collected a number of materials that will help you in teaching these instruments to students in schools. To complete this assignment, you will submit an active cloud-based link to your collected materials. Additional details can be found in Canvas.

Grading Scale

93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
0-59	F

Attendance Policy

Although you may not plan to teach strings, I ask that you take this class seriously by not just coming o class but showing up on time and ready to learn. You will be allowed **TWO** absences throughout the semester. Each absence beyond two will result in lowering your grade by **two points per unexcused absence**. You must notify the instructor of your absence prior to the start of class for an absence to be excused. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on an individual basis.

You are expected to be prompt and ready to begin at the designated start time. This includes having your instrument and other materials out and ready for class to start. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class and those arriving after the start of class will be marked as tardy. **Three late arrivals will equal one unexcused absence.**

If you are experiencing a physical or emotional health episode, I ask that you reach out as soon as you are able to do so to excuse your absence and get the information you need so that you will not fall behind.

Make-Up Policy

Students are expected to submit all coursework on time. However, if an extension is needed, clear communication must occur **before** the date listed in Canvas or the syllabus. Without communicating with Dr. Schultz before submitting, late work will not be graded two weeks beyond a posted deadline.

Communication

Please use your UF email for all communication. If you are experiencing an emergency, please reach out at your earliest convenience.

All communication is expected to be professional and courteous. Please begin your email with a greeting and sign your name at the conclusion of the message. If you send an email to me during the week (M-F), you can expect a reply within 24 hours (barring any extenuating circumstances). I will not reply to emails on weekends.

Cell Phone & Technology Policy

All mobile, laptop, or other smart devices are to be used for class-related purposes. Please turn off ringers and alarms during class. You should not be texting, surfing the web, listening to personal music, or using apps in class without communicating with Dr. Schultz.

I understand that some of you may be using AI to complete some parts of your assignments, but it is expected that any work you submit is not to be created beyond the planning stages using AI. If you have any questions or are unclear about what tasks can be completed using AI, please reach out to Dr. Schultz. Assume that your AI usage should be a starting point or outline rather than the completed product.

Students Requesting Accommodations Due to Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Academic Honor Policy

Students are expected to do their own work, use their own words, and provide proper citations when using outside sources. Failure to uphold the standards of academic honesty will result in the appropriate disciplinary action.

It is expected that you are not using Generative AI to complete any substantial portion of a written assignment or any of an audio assignment. Unless you are given permission to use AI to complete an assignment, you should not be using AI.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code."

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the professor or TAs in this class.

Course Evaluation

Students in this class are participating in the pilot evaluation of the new course evaluation system called GatorEvals. The new evaluation system is designed to be more informative to instructors so that teaching effectiveness is enhanced and to be more seamlessly linked to UF's CANVAS learning management system. Students can complete their evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Thank you for serving as a partner in this important effort.

Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

All of University of Florida's [policy and resources can be viewed here](#).

COURSE CALENDAR

The course schedule is posted on Blackboard and should be consulted on a regular basis, as it will reflect any changes in content.

	Topic	Assignments
Week 1	Introduction & Getting Started	
		Thursday 8/21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Getting violins/violas! - Posture and setup - Open strings - Syllabus Overview
Week 2	Left Hand	Tuesday 8/26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parts of the instrument - Open strings playing - Posture for sitting and standing Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction & Reflection Paper due by 7:25 am
		Thursday 8/28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rote teaching - Aural skills and singing in the string classroom - Common left hand issues and their fixes Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual Playing Test 1 (Violin/Viola) completed by class on 9/4
Week 3	Right Hand	Tuesday 9/2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-Bow hold exercises - Bowing with PVC pipes - Tuning your violin and viola Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open String Location Assignment for violin and viola due by 7:25 am

		Thursday 9/4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bowing exercises review - Bowing on the instrument
Week 4	Combining Hands	Tuesday 9/9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rhythm and tonal patterns - Refining bow technique Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alto Clef Note Identification assignment due by 7:25 am
		Thursday 9/11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common right hand issues and fixes - Bow lanes Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Llama Picture Assignment due by 7:25 am
Week 5	Slurs & 4 th Finger	Tuesday 9/16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playing out of method books - Warm-ups with and without slurs
		Thursday 9/18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adding the 4th finger - Informal Teaching 1 (in-class) Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal Teaching 1 reflection lesson and reflection due by 11:59 pm on Sunday, 9/21 - Individual Playing Test 2 (Violin/Viola) completed by class on 9/25
Week 6	Finger Patterns & Pre-Shifting Exercises	Tuesday 9/23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beginning shifting exercises - Finger Patterns Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal Teaching 1 lesson plan and reflection due by 11:59 pm on Sunday, 10/8. You should have your lesson plan with you in class on 10/3.

		Thursday 9/25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playing tunes with accidentals Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finger Position Tutorial for violin & viola due by 7:25 am - Submit Fingering Chart (positions I, II, III, IV, V, and VI) for BOTH violin and viola by 7:25 am
Week 7	Shifting & Midterm	Tuesday 9/30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paired Playing Test (midterm) to be complete during your group's time - Shifting exercise video complete during class time
		Thursday 10/2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paired Playing Test (midterm) to be complete during your group's time - Shifting exercise video complete during class time DUE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paired Playing Test (Midterm) self-reflection due by 11:59 pm on Friday, 10/3
Week 8	Intermediate Bowings	Tuesday 10/7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - String Crossing - Bowings
		Thursday 10/9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common bowing issues and fixes (WASP)
Week 9	Building Range & Refining Technique	Tuesday 10/14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playing tunes in new keys - Playing tunes for technique building
		Thursday 10/16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playing tunes in new keys - Playing tunes for technique building
Week 10	Shifting Technique & Vibrato	Tuesday 10/21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playing familiar tunes in new positions - Vibrato Basics

		Thursday 10/23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal Teaching 2 (in-class) Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal Teaching 2 lesson plan and reflection due by 11:59 pm on Sunday, 10/26.
Week 11	Double Stops & Vibrato	Tuesday 10/28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vibrato review & refinement - Double Stops - Playing tunes! Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual Playing Test 3 (violin/viola) completed by class on 11/6
		Thursday 10/30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playing tunes with intermediate technique in mind
Week 12	Solo Piece & Troubleshooting Techniques	Tuesday 11/4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose your piece for your Final - Error detection and technique builders for your violin / viola
		Thursday 11/6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building musicality with playing
Week 13	Solo Piece & Confidence Building with Fingerboard Geography	Tuesday 11/11 <p style="text-align: center;">NO CLASS University Holiday (Veteran's Day)</p>
		Thursday 11/13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vibrato, shifting, and intermediate skill development Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual Playing Test 4 (violin/viola) completed by class on 11/20 - Final Solo Progress Plan Assignment

Week 14	Rote Teaching	Tuesday 11/18 - Rote Teaching (Group I) Due: - Rote Teaching Assignment Lesson Plan due by 9:10 am
		Thursday 11/20 - Rote Teaching (Group II) Due: - Rote Teaching Assignment Reflection due BEFORE class on 12/5
Week 15	Thanksgiving Holiday	Tuesday 11/25 & Thursday 11/27 NO CLASSES Thanksgiving Holiday
Week 16	Solo vs. Section Technique	Tuesday 12/2 - Playing tunes! - Developing your violin / viola sections Due: - Digital Resource "Binder" due by 7:25 am
		Thursday 12/4 NO CLASSES Reading Day
FINALS WEEK	Final Exam	Paired Playing Test (Final) completed by December 9th at 10 pm. <i>Please return your instrument as soon as you complete your final!!</i>

****This syllabus is a guide and may be adjusted if needed during the semester****