

Texas A&M University - Central Texas
MUSI 3138 - 110: String Methods
1 credit
Spring Semester 2020 Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Alexander Corbett
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OFFICE: PAC 3530 (Temple College)
OFFICE HOURS: by appointment.

COURSE OBJECTIVE: This course will provide students with a foundation for teaching beginning strings, particularly as it relates to leading string ensembles as music teachers. Students will develop teaching skills on the violin, viola, cello, and double bass, gaining an understanding of bowing, fingering, and posture. Students will also become familiar with score reading, tuning, sizing, accessories, and basic maintenance specific to string instruments. It is the goal of this course that, by the end of the semester, students will feel confident teaching a classroom of beginning string students.

MATERIALS: Students will have access to Temple College's string instrument collection.

NOTE: Instruments must always be stored in room temperature environments. To prevent damage and/or theft, **never leave an instrument in a parked car.**

COURSE FORMAT: To prevent the spread of COVID-19, the remaining six weeks (weeks 10-15) of this course will be taught online. The final examination, which takes place in week 16, will also take place online. There will be two components to the course:

1. Six weekly online private lessons
 - These will take place over Skype or FaceTime (whichever is more convenient to the student).
 - The instructor will contact students to arrange a weekly lesson time.
2. Self-study on Canvas using a variety of resources that the instructor will post.
 - Materials will include videos and readings about pedagogy, maintenance, fractional-size instruments, etc.
 - You will see new modules pop up on Canvas for each week (the modules will be titled Week 10, Week 11, etc.). Each of those modules will contain the resources that you will need to study for that week. Keep up with them, as the material will appear on your Final Examination. Each new module will become available the first day of that week (for the purposes of this course, each week starts on Monday and ends on Sunday).

RECOMMENDED TEXT: Donald L. Hamann & Robert Gillespie, *Strategies for Teaching Strings: Building a Successful String and Orchestra Program*, any edition (1st-4th). Published by Oxford.

- Although this text is only recommended, I strongly encourage students to purchase it, as it will serve as an invaluable resource for future string educators.

PARTICIPATION: Because this is an experience-based course, **regular participation is a must.** Because this class has transitioned online, your participation grade will now be based on your attendance and preparedness at your online private lessons. If you absolutely must miss a lesson, be sure to inform the instructor in advance of the lesson in question.

All absences will lower the final grade according to the point system below (see "GRADING"). The only exception is if the absence is deemed legitimate per TAMUCT policy (i.e. illness or family emergency).

ASSIGNMENTS:

Individual Practice (not graded):

- As a musician, you are well aware that practice is essential to maintaining and improving one's level of playing. Students are expected to adhere to this universal truth and practice their instruments however long it takes to become comfortable with the techniques discussed in lessons. For some, this is 30 minutes daily. For others, it is 60 minutes daily. **You** are responsible for determining the amount of practice time needed to adequately learn the required techniques.
- Although individual practice is not graded, **preparedness** is. Show up to lessons prepared. Take out your instrument **daily** to review what we've discussed.

Concert Reaction Paper (graded):

- Locate a video of a classical music concert that contains string players. Watch the **entire** concert from beginning to end.
 - Because of COVID-19, many wonderful performing organizations from around the world are live streaming their performances free of charge. If you are interested in watching one of these performances, you may choose a concert from the list at this link: <https://www.classicfm.com/music-news/live-streamed-classical-music-concerts-coronaviruses/>
 - You can also check YouTube, Netflix, or a public library for concert videos.
- Write a 2-page reaction paper (typed, size 12 font, double-spaced, PDF format) summarizing the concert logistics (performers, venue, date, time, etc.), the program, the techniques used by the string players, and how the use of these techniques contributed to the musical aspects of the performance (color, phrasing, dynamics, etc.). During your discussion, cite specific examples from the pieces. Draw parallels between your observations and our class discussions. If something does not line up with what we've discussed, address it. If you have questions about certain concepts, feel free to pose them in your paper.
 - **The paper is due on Canvas by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 1, 2020**

Midterm Examination (graded):

- **Wednesday, March 4, 2020** during class time
- Two portions:
 1. Performance: You will play individually in front of the instructor. The instructor will assign performance material during the weeks leading up to the examination.
 2. Written: This will consist of material discussed during class. Examples include string instrument parts, pedagogy for posture, and string-related musical terminology.

Final Examination (graded):

- Two portions:
 1. Performance: You will video record yourself playing the cello/bass. The instructor will assign performance material during the weeks leading up to the examination.
 2. Written: This online test will appear on Canvas and will consist of material discussed during class. Examples include string instrument parts, pedagogy for posture, and string-related musical terminology.
- **The performance video is due on Thursday, May 7, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.**
 - Please email the video to the instructor (alexander.corbett@templejc.edu)
 - The video does not have to be professionally recorded. A video recorded with your phone is acceptable.
- **The written portion will be made available on Thursday, May 7, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. and be due that same day at 5:00 p.m.**

GRADING: A-F. Final grades for the course will be based on the following 1000-point system:

- 380 points for class participation (January 13-March 22), broken up as follows:
 - attendance (17 classes x 10 points each)
 - preparedness (17 classes x 10 points each)
- 240 points for lesson participation (March 23-May 1), broken up as follows:
 - attendance (6 lessons x 20 points each)
 - preparedness (6 lessons x 20 points each)
- 100 points for concert reaction paper
- 100 points for midterm examination
- 180 points for final examination

(NOTE: Items turned in late will receive a 10% deduction per day.)

Letter grades will be determined as follows:

A	900 - 1000 points
B	800 - 899 points
C	700 - 799 points
D	650 - 699 points
F	0 - 649 points

SCHEDULE (subject to necessary adjustment):

Week 1	Introductions, Violin
Week 2	Violin
Week 3	Violin
Week 4	Violin
Week 5	Violin
Week 6	Viola
Week 7	Viola, Midterm
Week 8	No class (Spring Break)
Week 9	No class (COVID-19)
Week 10	Cello/Bass
Week 11	Cello/Bass
Week 12	Cello/Bass
Week 13	Cello/Bass
Week 14	Cello/Bass
Week 15	Cello/Bass
Week 16	Final Examination

MARKETABLE SKILLS REQUIRED BY THIS COURSE (use these for building your resume):

- Critical Thinking
 - Creative thinking
 - Evaluation and synthesis of information
 - Problem solving
 - Set realistic goals
 - Set priorities
- Communication Skills
 - Perceiving nonverbal messages
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills
 - Goal setting
 - Extracting important information
 - Analyze information
 - Detail oriented
- Teamwork
 - Work effectively with others
 - Consider differing opinions
 - Advise/counsel/encourage
 - Negotiate priorities
- Social Responsibility
 - Intercultural competence
 - Knowledge of civic responsibility
 - Community development
 - Cultural arts development
- Personal Responsibility
 - Flexibility
 - Finish projects on time
 - Follow instructions
 - Time management