



SCHOOL OF
Music

MUS 134-02E
String Methods
Course Syllabus: Fall 2025
Tuesday 5:00 PM – 6:50 PM

Instructor Information

Instructors:

Dr. Hollie Dzierzanowski
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Prof. RJ McDowell
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Preferred Form of Communication: Email
Communication Response Time: Give us 1-3 business days

Course Information

Course Description

This course is intended to provide a practical understanding of string performance and pedagogy. This understanding will encompass the actual performance and application of problems in teaching beginning string classes in public schools, private instruction and/or conducting a public school orchestra. Emphasis will be placed on playing ability and diagnostic techniques utilized as well as information from required. Regardless of prior experience, students are expected to learn the course content and show progress from their entry-level skill.

Student Learning Outcomes

In this course, students will:

- Demonstrate fundamental technical skills on one stringed instrument and be able to talk about the differences of all other stringed instruments.
- Develop accurate diagnostic and correctional skills for teaching basic posture, position and performance techniques in string playing.
- Develop effective strategies for group teaching at the beginning level as would normally be encountered in school settings.
- Acquire non-verbal teaching skills applicable to any string teaching situation.
- Develop confidence in the ability to play and teach stringed instruments in group settings at the beginning level.

Required Textbook

Allen, M., Gillespie, R. and Tellejohn-Hayes, P. *Essential Elements 2000 for Strings Book I* Teacher Edition. Milwaukee, Wi: Hal Leonard Publishing Co, 2002.

Course Requirements

Instructional Methods

Students will follow outlined activities for each week that include readings, performance tests, written tests and assignments. Class participation is crucial for success in understanding how to perform, demonstrate, and teach string classes. We will randomly choose students each week to do a performance test and then we will discuss as a class.

Assessments

Mini Performances: There will be weekly small performance evaluations that will demonstrate your skills learned. This is to ensure that you are practicing consistently and will be able to both demonstrate and articulate the skills you learned.

Written Quizzes Assignments: Will happen occasionally throughout the semester. Mostly to demonstrate that you know the parts of the instrument and you can read treble, bass, and alto clef fluently.

Midterm and Finals: Be able to demonstrate all course material up to the point of the exams.

Grading

Performance Tests	20%
Written Tests	20%
Class Participation	20%
Midterm	15%
Final Written Exam	15%
Final Playing Exam	10%

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

Course and University Procedures / Policies

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance

Attendance Policy

You must have **ALL** materials (instrument, Essential Elements Book I) with you to be considered present.

1 absence free – please let us know ahead of time if you have to miss class

2 tardies = 1 absence, beyond 1 absence, final grade lowered one letter grade. Excused absences are at the discretion of the instructor and require documentation. Excessive absences are grounds for being dropped regardless of the reason.

Procedures

- Each student will be assigned an instrument in useable condition for the semester.
- Students will have their instruments, chairs, and stands ready at the beginning of each class time.
- Each class period will include rote work, technical exercises and lectures.
- The class will be divided into sections of violins, violas, cellos, and basses. The students will switch instruments at midterm.

Late Assignments or Work

Assignments submitted within one week of the deadline will incur a 50% penalty. No assignments will be accepted beyond one week after the deadline.

Class Etiquette

Students are expected to be thoughtful and courteous in expressing their opinions and in responding to those of their classmates. We are here to learn and help one another so please be cautious and attentive because that will also help your teaching.

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures: [Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

AI Use in Course

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

NASM Statement

As an Institutional Member of the National Association of Schools of Music, East Texas State A&M University supports the Association's commitment to student health and wellness. The following web address provides links to information for resources related to physical and mental well-being, as well as assists in offering preventative measures that students can take to avoid serious and/or chronic conditions: [Musician Health and Safety - East Texas A&M University](#)

Students with Disabilities—ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, contact the Office of Student Disability Services at 903-886-5150, 903-886—5835; email studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu; online at [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#); or in-person in Room 162 of the Velma K. Waters Library.

Tenets of Common Behavior

All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See current Student Guidebook);

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Campus Concealed Carry - Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf> and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Technology Requirements

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements.

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universitymenu

Course Calendar

Week	Content
Week 1: 8/26/2025	Paper work, Syllabus, Classroom set up, Instrument Check out, posture, position, parts of the instrument (handout), left hand shape, bow hold.
Week 2: 9/2/2025	Advanced Reading EE (Essential Elements Manual) pp. 10-71 Tuning skills, instrument handling, open string work, bow hold, tone production, principles, read and play from EE lines 1-29. <i>Written Test I – Naming Parts of the Instrument</i>
Week 3: 9/9/2025	Advanced Reading EE pp. 71-92 Pizz. Practice – D major notes, left hand shape, finger patterns, reading notes (teaching), tunnels, bow hold, bowing open strings, open string cycle, 4 bows per string Read and play from EE 30-45
Week 4: 9/16/2025 Prof. McDowell	Advanced Reading EE pp. 93-102 8 th notes, bow speed, placement, 4 th finger, left hand pizz harmonics Read and play from EE 47 – 86 Note Reading Lecture
Week 5: 9/23/2025 Dr. Dzierzanowski	Advanced Reading EE pp. 130-161 G string, ties, slurs

Week	Content
	Read and play from EE: lines 87-115 <i>Playing Test I – Rolling Along from memory, with bow</i>
Week 6: 9/30/2025 Prof. McDowell	Advanced Reading EE pp. 130-161 Changing Finger patterns (low 2), slurring 3 notes, changing keys Read and play from EE lines 116-136
Week 7: 10/7/2025 Dr. Dzierzanowski	Advanced Reading EE pp. 34-101, plus lecture notes
Week 8: 10/14/2025	Advanced Reading EE pp. 162-185 Repair Class <i>Midterm</i>
Week 9: 10/21/2025	One-on-One Peer Lessons on different instruments Switch Instruments Review Lines 1-53 Principles of Bowing Lecture
Week 10: 10/28/2025	Advanced Reading EE pp. 195-231 Reading C string (vln and cello), Estring (vln and bass), staccato, hooked bows, dynamics Read and play from EE: lines 144-182 Teaching Evaluations
Week 11: 11/4/2025	Advanced Reading EE pp. 231-235 and 244-249 Skill builders- D, G, and C Major Scales Final Exam Piece- #188 Cripple Creek Teaching Evaluations
Week 12: 11/11/2025	Skill Builders- D, G, and C Major Scales #188 Cripple Creek Advanced Skills: Shifting, Extensions Teaching Evaluations
Week 13: 11/18/2025	Skill Builders- D, G, and C Major Scales #188 Cripple Creek Advanced Skills: Vibrato, Off-the String Bow Strokes Teaching Evaluations
Week 14: 11/25/2025 (Virtual Lecture on Zoom)	Skill Builders- D, G, and C Major Scales #188 Cripple Creek Advanced Skills: Vibrato, Off-the String Bow Strokes
Week 15: 12/2/2025	Final Playing Evaluation - #188 Cripple Creek, One Scale Repair Lecture Review for Final Exam
Finals Week Week 16: 12/9/2025	Final Exam