MUSI 3137 | String Methods

Fall 2026

TR 3:30-4:25pm | Room TBD

Instructor: Anna Larson Office: FAC 2217 Email: alarson@uttyler.edu
Office Hours: M 9am-12pm or by appointment

Course Overview

In this course, students will gain hands-on experience playing and teaching each of the four string instruments – violin, viola, cello, and bass. The course will cover fundamentals of performance, essential pedagogy, maintenance of instruments, and teaching resources.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to

- Identify and define the various parts and equipment needed for each string instrument.
- Demonstrate and articulate knowledge of playing each string instrument at a fundamental level.
- Demonstrate appropriate instrument sizing and set-up for each string instrument.
- Have confidence in teaching beginning techniques for each string instrument.
- Locate standard repertoire and method books for beginning orchestra classes as well as additional resources and support for orchestra teachers.
- Properly maintain and care for any string instrument.

Required Materials

- Essential Elements for Strings, Book 1 (TEACHER MANUAL)
  - Digital Download
  - Physical Book
- Membership to Mimi Zweig StringPedagogy Online Edition (free)
- Instrument and materials (to be checked out to students)
- 1" binder to compile notes, assignments, and handouts **(due at the end of the semester)**

Grading Scale

A: 90-100	B: 80-89	C: 70-79	D: 69-69	F: below 60

Graded Course Requirements

Attendance & In-Class Participation	15%
Assignments & Quizzes	20%
Unit Exams	30%
Teaching Presentation	10%
Final Exam	25%

Attendance & In-Class Participation – 15%

- Includes coming prepared with Essential Elements Book and Instrument on the first day of each instrument rotation, with your instrument out and ready to go before class begins.
- Coming in on time without your instrument will still be counted as late.

Assignments & Quizzes – 20% (10 points each)

- 10 short quizzes reviewing the course material for the week. (on Thursdays)
- 8 short playing video assignments, 2 for each instrument. (turned in on Canvas by 11:59pm on the due date)
    - This assignment will receive feedback and the playing exam for each unit will be graded according to improvements made from that feedback. **Make sure you review the feedback on your playing assignments!**
- 4 random binder checks throughout the semester

Unit Exams – 30% (25 points each)

- Playing Exam – video submission
- Teaching Exam
    - One-on-one pairing with another student, teach key elements of the instrument you learned that rotation
    - Teaching Exam – will be returned with feedback that will help with future Teaching Exams and the Final Exam. **Make sure you review the feedback on your Teaching Exams!**

Teaching Presentation- 10% (50 points)

- 5-7 minute presentation of an assigned topic as if you were teaching in the classroom
- Written lesson plan (instructions and rubric on Canvas) due on your presentation date

Final Exam – 25% (100 points)

- Final Portfolio (50 points) – due Tuesday, December 1st in class, will be returned. See rubric on Canvas.
    - Include teaching exam prep sheet for all 4 instruments
    - Include classroom teaching presentation lesson plan
    - Reading notes and handouts from the class
- Written Exam (50 points) – Thursday**, December 10th from 3:30-5:30pm**
    - Can use final portfolio on written exam

Late Work and Make-up Exams

Late Work will be accepted with a 10% deduction for each day that it is late. Missing assignments must be turned in **by the end of each instrument rotation**, or they will receive a grade of 0.

Make-up Exams & Quizzes will be permitted in case of an excused absence on the day of the in-class exam. Students are responsible for scheduling make-up exams with the instructor.

Students experiencing extenuating circumstances preventing the completion of work must contact the instructor to find an alternate solution.

Attendance Policy

Attendance at scheduled class times is mandatory.

Grade penalties for absences and tardies:

Tardy (arrival after start of class)	50% grade for attendance that day.
2 tardies of 5 minutes or more	Counted as an unexcused absence.
1st & 2nd Unexcused Absence	Grade of "0" for attendance that day.
3rd Unexcused Absence, and each subsequent unexcused absence	Letter grade will be lowered one letter.

Excused absences will be considered under the following circumstances:

- serious or contagious illness,
- family emergency (limited to immediate family),
- participation in a UT Tyler-sanctioned event, if the instructor is informed at least four weeks in advance,
- observance of religious holy days,
- any other unavoidable circumstances in which the instructor deems an excuse is justified.

See University policies on Excused Absences and absences for pregnant and parenting students.

Except in emergency situations, students **must** contact the instructor prior to class time in order to receive consideration for an excused absence.

In case of injury preventing a student from playing an instrument in class, the student will still be expected to attend class and will be given an alternate assignment.

Course Calendar (subject to change)

Week – Date	Class Topics	Assignments and Exams
Week 1 – August 25	Review Syllabus and Introduction to Strings - history of string instruments - parts of the instruments and how they work - instrument set-up - instrument care (EE 259)	Reading: - pg. 34-36, 259 Essential Elements Teacher Manual Book 1 (EE) - 1.1 and 5.1, Mimi Zweig StringPedagogy (MZ) Check out instruments for Thursday
Week 1 – August 27	START ROTATION 1 Holding the instrument Learning by rote:	Quiz 1 – Instrument ranges, strings, and clefs Reading: - EE 37-38

	- open strings (ant song, CGC/GDG/DAD/AEA) Pencil Hold	- MZ 1.2, 4.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4
Week 2 – September 1	Setting up the bow hold & bow games Adding the bow: - Silent string crossings and DAD	*BRING A TOILET PAPER TUBE* Reading: - EE 52-53, 56-57, 93-94, 98 - Review EE 34-36, 259 - MZ 1.4, 4.2, 5.5, 5.6 Rotation 1 – Video 1 *due Wednesday September 2 at 11:59pm*
Week 2 – September 3	Setting up the Left Hand Fingerboard Ladder handout See Saw	Quiz 2 – Parts of the instrument & needed materials Reading: - EE 46-47 - MZ 1.5, 5.7
Week 3 – September 8	*Census Date* See a Little Monkey Bass Shifting to 3rd position SIGN UP FOR TEACHING PRESENTATIONS	Reading: - EE 46-47, 125 - MZ 1.5, 5.7 Rotation 1 – Video 2 *due Wednesday September 9 at 11:59pm*
Week 3 – September 10	Finger "Plop" D Major Scale Twinkle rhythms	Quiz 3 – Finger Tape Placements Reading: - Review EE 46-47 - MZ 1.6, review 5.7 "Twinkle" sections
Week 4 – September 15	Steps to Learning a New Piece Twinkle Notes	Reading: - MZ 5.8 - review MZ 1.6, 5.7 "Twinkle" sections
Week 4 – September 17	Teaching Exam 1 (15 minute rotations) See Saw, See a Little Monkey, and D Major Scale on new instruments	Teaching Exam 1 Check in/out instruments Playing Exam 1 *due Friday September 18 at 11:59pm*
Week 5 – September 22	START ROTATION 2 Classroom Teaching Presentations Day 1 - Ant Song - CGC/GDG/DAD/AEA Twinkle Theme Alto clef worksheet	Reading: - review MZ 1.6, and 5.7 "Twinkle" sections - review MZ 5.2, 5.3, 5.5 for your new instrument
Week 5 –	Transition to Reading EE # 2-22	Quiz 4 – Steps to Learning a New Piece

September 24		Reading/Apply: - EE 40-62 - review MZ 5.8
Week 6 – September 29	Classroom Teaching Presentations Day 2 - Bow hold - DAD with the bow Review shifting & 3rd position for the Bass EE# 23-36	Rotation 2 – Video 1 *due Wednesday September 30 at 11:59pm* Reading/Apply: - EE 64-80
Week 6 – October 1	Reading without note names EE #40-46 Reading with the Bow EE #37-39, 47-64	Quiz 5 – Notes & Fingerings on the Staff Reading/Apply: - EE 83-111, review 256-257
Week 7 – October 6	Classroom Teaching Presentations Day 3 - Left-Hand Set-up - See-Saw - D Major Scale Tuning the Instruments	Rotation 2 – Video 2 *due Wednesday October 7 at 11:59pm* Reading/Apply: - How to Tune Your Violin - Tuning your Cello - How to Tune a Double Bass
Week 7 – October 8	Low C# on Bass Reading Rhythms with the Bow EE #65-81 Bow Strokes - Martele - Detache - Legato	Quiz 6 – Tuning Techniques Reading/Apply: - EE 112-123 - Review MZ 5.6, 5.7 for descriptions of bow strokes
Week 8 – October 13	Teaching Exam 2 (15 minute rotations) D Major Scale (EE #64), Twinkle (EE #43) on new instruments	Teaching Exam 2 Check in/out instruments Playing Exam 2 *due Wednesday October 14 at 11:59pm*
Week 8 – October 15	START ROTATION 3 Review Bow Strokes & Shifting Violin/Viola 4th finger, Cello 2.5 position G Major EE #82-102	Reading/Apply: - EE 124-149 - Review MZ 5.2, 5.3, 5.5 for your new instrument
Week 9 – October 20	Classroom Teaching Presentations Day 4 - Twinkle Rhythms - Twinkle "Plop" - Twinkle Notes Bass 2.5 position Intro to Ties and Slurs EE # 106-110	Rotation 3 – Video 1 *due Wednesday October 21 at 11:59pm* Reading/Apply: - EE 152-156

Week 9 – October 22	Slurs, cont. EE #111-125	Quiz 7 – Bowing notation and parts of the bow Reading/Apply: - EE 156-172 - Review EE 35-36, 82, 100, 155-156
Week 10 – October 27	Classroom Teaching Presentations Day 5 - D String Notes - Reading on 2 strings, Bass A - Bass 3rd Position Violin/Viola Low 2, Cello 2nd finger EE #126-143 Review proper playing position	Rotation 3 – Video 2 *due Wednesday October 28 at 11:59pm* Reading/Apply: - EE 173-194 - Review MZ 5.2, 5.3
Week 10 – October 29	C Major / C String E String Extra Long Bows EE #144-166	Quiz 8 – Proper Playing Position Reading/Apply: - EE 195-217 - Review MZ 5.2, 5.3
October 30	*Last Day to Withdraw*	
Week 11 – November 3	Staccato (Martele) & Hooked Bows EE #167-179	Reading/Apply: - EE 218-228
Week 11 – November 5	Teaching Exam 3 (15 minute rotations) D Major Scale (EE #64), Twinkle (EE #43) on new instruments	Teaching Exam 3 Check in/out instruments Playing Exam 3 *due Friday November 6 at 11:59pm*
Week 12 – November 10	START ROTATION 4 Classroom Teaching Presentations Day 6 - Violin/Viola 4th finger, Cello 2.5 position - Violin/Viola Low 2, Cello 2nd finger - Beginning bow strokes and markings Skill Builders EE#169-173, 177-180, 183-187 Instrument Sizing	Reading/Apply: - EE 220-222, 227-228, 231-233 - MZ 5.1 for instrument sizing - Review MZ 5.2, 5.3, 5.5 for your new instrument
Week 12 – November 12	Dynamics EE # 181-182 Learning larger pieces EE #189	Quiz 9 – Proper Instrument Sizing Reading/Apply: - EE 229-231, 236-237 - review MZ 5.8 Rotation 4 – Video 1 *due Friday November 13 at 11:59pm*
Week 13 – November 17	Classroom Teaching Presentations Day 7 - Slur 2 notes - Slurs across strings	Reading/Apply: - EE 238-241, 244-249

	- Staccato & hooked bows Learning larger pieces EE # 190, 192	
Week 13 – November 19	Fun with advanced topics: - Shifting - Vibrato - Double stops	Quiz 10 – Classroom set-up Reading/Apply: - MZ Shifting Page - MZ Vibrato Page Rotation 4 – Video 1 *due Friday November 20 at 11:59pm*
November 23-27	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Week 14 – December 1	Classroom Teaching Presentations Day 8 - Dynamics - Learning larger pieces - #188 - Learning larger pieces - #191 Resources for Orchestra Teachers	Reading/Apply: - EE 234-235, 242-243 *REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM* *FINAL PORTFOLIO DUE*
Week 14 – December 3	Teaching Exam 4 (15 minute rotations) Hand back Final Portfolio Final questions and review – BRING QUESTIONS	Teaching Exam 4 Check in instruments *REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM* Playing Exam 4 *due Friday December 4 at 11:59pm*
Week 15 – December 10	Thursday, December 10 from 3:30-5:30pm	FINAL EXAM

UT Tyler AI Statement

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

For this course, AI is not permitted at all. To best support your learning, you must complete all graded assignments by yourself. This exclusion of other resources to help complete assignments

includes artificial intelligence (AI). Refrain from using AI tools to generate any course content (e.g., text, video, audio, images, code, etc.) for any assignment.