

University of Florida  
School of Music

# **Teaching String Instruments**

**MUE 2442 (1 credit hour)**

Spring 2026  
T/R 7:25 – 8:15 am  
MUB 121

Professor: Dr. Wendy Gunther  
Office: TBD  
Office Hours: TBD

Phone: TBD  
Email: TBD

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## **Course Description**

Basic technical competency and pedagogical techniques for the lower string instruments: cello and double bass.

## **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 cello and double bass.
- Develop appropriate pedagogical approaches to teaching posture, left hand technique, bow hold, beginning to intermediate bow technique, and common problems for beginning to intermediate cello and double bass students.
- Demonstrate competency with beginning to intermediate positions, shifting, bow strokes, and repertoire for lower string instruments.
- Reflect on their experiences with both performing and teaching to improve pedagogical and performance skills in a beginning to intermediate string orchestra playing.

## **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.

| <b>Assignment</b>                             | <b>Weight of Assignment</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Introduction & Reflection Paper               | 5%                          |
| German vs. French Bow Hold 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 (4)                         | 10%                         |
| Final Playing Test (2 Assignments)            | 15%                         |
| Digital Resource "Binder"                     | 5%                          |

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

**German vs. French Bow Hold Picture Assignment:** You will apply what you have learned about bow-hand shape by taking a series of pictures showing off your string bass bow hold technique for both French and German bow holds. 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 (cello and double bass) 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 (3 for cello and/or bass and 1 for your selected ensemble instrument) going over 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 group 3 – 4 of your peers from class and demonstrate performance skills and error detection skills on cello and string bass. Additional details can be found in Canvas.

**Other Assignments:** Over the course of the semester, you will be completing a number of small assignments that are meant to supplement what we are doing in class. These assignments are identifying the open strings on the cello, identifying the open strings on the double bass, finger position tutorial for cello and double bass on [teachingstrings.online](http://teachingstrings.online) (online resource for the recommended MacLeod book). Additional details for each of these assignments can be found in Canvas.

**Final Playing Test (Final):** There will be 2 assignments for you to complete that 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. You may combine new information into your Digital Binder from String Skills I. 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 to 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 Work 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 your instructor 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 Usage 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 your instructor.

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 your instructor. 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/](http://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 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/>

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

## COURSE CALENDAR

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

Please take note of your cello & bass days! You will play cello and bass once per week through to week

|               | Topic                                | Assignments  |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Week 1</b> | Introduction<br>&<br>Getting Started | <b>Tuesday 1/13</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Getting instrument days (Cello/Bass numbers &amp; days)</li> <li>- Posture and setup</li> <li>- Open strings</li> <li>- Syllabus Overview</li> </ul>  |
|               |                                      | <b>Thursday 1/15</b> <p style="text-align: center;">NO CLASS<br/>Please attend FMEA if you are able to do so!</p>  |
| <b>Week 2</b> | Left Hand                            | <b>Tuesday 1/20</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parts of the instrument</li> <li>- Open strings pizz.</li> <li>- Posture for sitting and standing</li> <li>- Common left hand issues and their fixes</li> <li>- Singing and playing in 1<sup>st</sup> position</li> </ul> <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction &amp; Reflection Paper due by 7:25 am</li> </ul>                                  |
|               |                                      | <b>Thursday 1/22</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parts of the instrument</li> <li>- Open strings pizz. (&amp; singing)</li> <li>- Posture for sitting and standing</li> <li>- Common left hand issues and their fixes</li> <li>- Singing and playing in 1<sup>st</sup> position</li> </ul> <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individual Playing Test 1 (Cello / Bass) completed by class on 2/3</li> </ul> |

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| <b>Week 3</b> | Right Hand                  | <b>Tuesday 1/27</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tuning Review</li> <li>- Pre-Bow hold exercises</li> <li>- Bowing with PVC pipes</li> <li>- Bowing on the instrument</li> </ul> <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Open String Location Assignment for cello and bass due by 7:25 am</li> </ul> |
|               |                             | <b>Thursday 1/29</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-Bow hold exercises</li> <li>- Bowing with PVC pipes</li> <li>- Bowing on the instrument</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Week 4</b> | Combining Hands             | <b>Tuesday 2/3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Common right hand issues and fixes</li> <li>- Bow lanes</li> <li>- Shifting Review</li> <li>- German vs. French Bow Hold</li> </ul>  |
|               |                             | <b>Thursday 2/5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Common right hand issues and fixes</li> <li>- Bow lanes</li> <li>- Shifting Review</li> <li>- German vs. French Bow Hold</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Week 5</b> | Slurs & Informal Teaching 1 | <b>Tuesday 2/10</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Playing out of method books</li> <li>- Warm-ups with and without slurs</li> <li>- Informal Teaching 1 (in-class)</li> </ul> <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- German vs. French Bow Hold Picture Assignment due by 7:25 am</li> </ul>          |
|               |                             | <b>Thursday 2/12</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Playing out of method books</li> <li>- Warm-ups with and without slurs</li> <li>- Informal Teaching 1 (in-class)</li> </ul>  |



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|               |                                       | <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Informal Teaching 1 lesson plan and reflection due by 11:59 pm on Sunday, 2/15</li> <li>- Individual Playing Test 2 (Cello/Bass) completed by class on 2/19</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Week 6</b> | Finger Patterns & Playing in New Keys | <b>Tuesday 2/17</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finger Patterns</li> <li>- Playing Tunes with accidentals</li> </ul>  |
|               |                                       | <b>Thursday 2/19</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finger Patterns</li> <li>- Playing tunes with accidentals</li> </ul> <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finger Position Tutorial for cello &amp; bass due by 7:25 am</li> <li>- Submit Fingering Chart (positions I, II, III, IV, V, and VI) for BOTH cello and bass by 7:25 am</li> </ul> |
| <b>Week 7</b> | Shifting & Midterm                    | <b>Tuesday 2/24</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Paired Playing Test (midterm) to be complete during your group's time</li> <li>- Shifting exercise video complete during class time</li> </ul>  |
|               |                                       | <b>Thursday 2/26</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Paired Playing Test (midterm) to be complete during your group's time</li> <li>- Shifting exercise video complete during class time</li> </ul> <b>DUE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Paired Playing Test (Midterm) self-reflection due by 11:59 pm on Friday, 10/3</li> </ul>                  |
| <b>Week 8</b> | Intermediate Bowings                  | <b>Tuesday 3/3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- String Crossing</li> <li>- Bowings and common fixes (WASP)</li> </ul>  |
|               |                                       | <b>Thursday 3/5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- String Crossing</li> <li>- Bowings and common fixes (WASP)</li> </ul>   |

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| <b>Week 9</b>  | Building Range<br>&<br>Refining Technique | <b>Tuesday 3/10</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Playing tunes in new keys</li> <li>- Playing tunes for technique building</li> <li>- Informal Teaching 2 (in-class)</li> </ul>  |
|                |   | <b>Thursday 3/12</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Playing tunes in new keys</li> <li>- Playing tunes for technique building</li> <li>- Informal Teaching 2 (in-class)</li> </ul> <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Informal Teaching 2 lesson plan and reflection due by 7:25 am on Tuesday, 3/24 (after Spring Break!!)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Week 10</b> | Shifting Technique<br>&<br>Vibrato        | <b>Tuesday 3/17</b> <p>NO CLASS<br/>UF Spring Break!</p>   |
|                |   | <b>Thursday 3/19</b> <p>NO CLASS<br/>UF Spring Break!</p>  |
| <b>Week 11</b> | Full Ensemble<br>Week 1                   | <b>Tuesday 3/24</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review day for full ensemble</li> <li>- Playing tunes!</li> </ul> <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individual Playing Test 3 (cello OR bass) completed by class on 3/31</li> </ul>  |
|                |   | <b>Thursday 3/26</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Playing tunes with intermediate technique in mind</li> <li>- Reviewing vibrato, double stops, and playing with dynamics</li> </ul>   |

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| <b>Week<br/>12</b> | Full Ensemble<br>Week 2 | <b>Tuesday 3/31</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vibrato, Double Stops, and other Intermediate Skills for the full ensemble</li> <li>- Error detection and technique builders</li> </ul>   |
|                    |                         | <b>Thursday 4/2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building musicality with playing (bow lanes for dynamics)</li> <li>- Building skills with bowings</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Week<br/>13</b> | Full Ensemble<br>Week 3 | <b>Tuesday 4/7</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rote Teaching (Group I)</li> </ul> <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rote Teaching Assignment Lesson Plan due by 7:25 am</li> </ul>   |
|                    |                         | <b>Thursday 4/9</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rote Teaching (Group II)</li> </ul> <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rote Teaching Assignment Reflection due BEFORE class on 4/14</li> <li>- Individual Playing Test 4 (selected ensemble instrument) completed by class on 4/16</li> </ul> |
| <b>Week<br/>14</b> | Full Ensemble<br>Week 4 | <b>Tuesday 4/14</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building Ensemble Technique</li> <li>- Playing Tunes!</li> </ul> <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Final; Progress Plan Assignment</li> </ul>  |
|                    |                         | <b>Thursday 4/16</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building Ensemble Technique</li> <li>- Playing Tunes!</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Week<br/>15</b> | Final;<br>Performance   | <b>Tuesday 4/21</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Final Class!</li> <li>- Error Detection</li> <li>- Performing Final!</li> </ul> <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Digital Resource "Binder" due by 7:25 am</li> </ul>  |

|                    |                      |  |
|--------------------|----------------------|--|
|                    |                      | <b>Thursday 4/23</b><br><br>NO CLASSES<br><br>Reading Day  |
| <b>FINALS WEEK</b> | Final;<br>Reflection | Final Playing Test Reflection completed by<br>Tuesday, April 28th at 11:59 pm.<br><br><i>Please return everything to the skills class<br/> instrument storage room!!</i> |

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