

Syllabus - Spring 2026

MVS 1413 - Cello Performance (2 credits)

Instructor: Dr. Steven Thomas (273-3169 - cellist@ufl.edu)
Office hours: by appointment / Class schedule: TBA

1. Prerequisites for all cello study

Students must pass an audition before at least three members of the string faculty. Students may audition during one of the regularly scheduled School of Music audition days or must arrange an audition before the end of the ADD/DROP period at the beginning of the semester in which they wish to enroll. Auditionees must prepare two contrasting pieces or movements representing different musical styles, and sight-reading will be given. Students who are neither music majors nor minors will only be accepted if space is available in the studio.

All students accepted for undergraduate cello study must register and play in the University Symphony Orchestra or other approved ensemble.

2. Prerequisites for MVS 1413

Students must demonstrate control and fluency in the first four positions and solid reading skills. They should also know 7 major and 4 minor 2-octave scales and arpeggios and at least 1 3-octave scale.

3. Objectives

- a) Begin to develop an approach to the cello which is healthy for mind and body
- b) Establish consistent and effective work habits
- c) Build fundamental technical skills as follows:
 - i) Good posture
 - ii) A bow hold which can be used in all situations, and based on control and balance
 - iii) An understanding of how the right arm works
 - iv) A left hand that plays in well-defined positions
- d) Set the highest standard of musicianship for the performance of all repertoire

Confidence and consistency in these areas must be demonstrated at a mid-term presentation and at a final end-of-semester promotional jury to be performed to members of the School of Music Faculty.

Mid-term: one movement from a solo Bach Suite played from memory – 2/24/2026 (12:50pm)

Final: a ten-minute performance which can include mid-term piece – 4/28/2026 (time TBA)

4. Course Content

The following materials and repertoire must be learned and performed with a level of proficiency and fluency deemed appropriate by the School of Music Faculty. These materials will be studied in their entirety on a weekly basis until the instructor deems them of acceptable quality.

a) Warm-up routine - students will receive a suggested, customizable plan designed by the instructor which will include left hand exercises and scales

b) Scales and Arpeggios – assigned according to individual students' needs

c) Etudes - assigned according to individual students' needs

d) Bach: 2 movements from Suite No. 1, which must be memorized

e) 1 movement of a standard concerto (memorized) or **sonata** - sample concerti: Haydn C, Saint-Saens, Kabalevsky; sample sonatas: Beethoven Op 5, Brahms Op. 33

The technical objectives identified above will be developed through the warm-up routine, scales and arpeggios, and etudes. Performing skills and interpretation will be regularly evaluated in

studio lessons and at weekly studio classes.

Additionally:

- f)** Students must perform an end-of-semester jury which will feature 2 different works for 10 minutes of playing
- g)** Students are required to attend and participate in a weekly studio class, performing twice during each semester and making one one-minute verbal "performance introduction" of a work to be performed

NOTE: These are MINIMUM requirements. Adjustments may be made depending on each individual's experience and needs.

GRADING

Semester grades are assigned according to the following elements:

- 1) Attendance (20%)
- 2) Weekly performance in cello lessons (35%)
- 3) Mid-term presentation grade (15%)
- 4) Final jury grade (30%)

Weekly progress may be discussed at weekly lessons and will be made available in writing upon request.

CELLO STUDIO POLICIES

1. Attendance

- (a) Students are expected to attend weekly lessons as scheduled. The schedule will be posted on the studio door.
- (b) Requests for excused absences must be made by e-mail as soon as the necessity for absence is known, and at least 3 days prior to the requested date. This includes absences for ALL religious observances (note: you must be a practicing member of the religion for which you are requesting an absence).
- (c) The legitimacy of excused absence requests will be determined solely by the Instructor.
- (d) No-shows will result in automatic lowering of a student's grade, unless the no-show is caused by medical emergency requiring an immediate visit to a medical facility or by a catastrophic personal event.

2. Punctuality

Students must be ready to begin their lessons at the scheduled time. Following the first instance of lateness each semester, which does not carry a penalty, any subsequent occurrence from 5 to 15 minutes will be counted as ½ a no-show. Lateness of more than 15 minutes will be considered a no-show. Excuses for and consequences of lateness follow the guidelines of 1(d) above.

3. Demeanor, dress code, etc

- (a) Students are expected to dress appropriately for all cello lessons and studio classes. Tank tops and mini-skirts are not permitted. Knee-length (or longer) clothing is recommended.
- (b) Cell phones must be turned off prior to entering the classroom.

(c) Gum chewing is not permitted during any performance related activity, including orchestra and chamber music

4. Studio class

Attendance at weekly studio classes is mandatory. Students are expected to perform at least twice each semester during studio class.

5. School of Music cello-related events

Students are required to attend all cello recitals by fellow students enrolled in the cello studio, faculty or visiting artists, cello masterclasses, string chamber music masterclasses and other cello-related events. All events under this rule will be announced by e-mail by the instructor and posted on the studio door. In case of a conflict with a legitimate prior commitment, the instructor must be informed of the conflict within 24 hours of the announcement of the event. Legitimate prior commitments include academic obligations to the University and/or School of Music, religious observances, critical personal events that cannot be rescheduled and non-refundable travel.

6. Communication

The primary form of communication outside the studio and classroom is e-mail. Students must check their UF e-mail address every day and have a 24-hour window to respond. Text messaging should be used for urgent messages. Calls to the instructor's cell phone should only be made when necessary and urgent.

7. Course materials

(a) Students are expected to purchase printed sheet music as required and recommended by the Instructor. Exact materials are determined by each individual student's semester assignment. Xeroxed copies are not permitted if in violation of copyright law. The total average annual cost of required sheet music should not exceed \$100.

(b) Recordings used for research and study must also be obtained in compliance with copyright laws.

8. General

The cello studio adheres to all university-wide policies which may be accessed following this link: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>