

MUAG 1121 Strings Class

Molly Wang, Instructor

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Office: MU307

Office Hours: MWF 10-11 AM or by appointment

Course Information

Semester: Fall 2026

Class Location: Music Building 137

Class Time: MWF 9:05-9:55 AM (Section 500)

11:15 AM-12:05 PM (Section 502)

Teaching Assistant: Diana Riley, Diana.Riley@unt.edu

Office Hours: MU307, by appointment

Course Description:

Strings Class is a fundamental string techniques and pedagogy course designed to develop basic performance and teaching skills for violin, viola, cello, and/or bass. This course will help students learn beginner string playing techniques as well as best practices for teaching individuals and ensembles. This course is primarily an opportunity for you to learn how to teach yourself and others through thoughtful practice, reading, and reflection. There are no musical prerequisites for enrollment. Mastery of a string instrument is not expected by the end of this course. Regardless of prior experience, students should demonstrate a thorough understanding of course content, apply consistent and honest effort, and work effectively towards their own goals in the process. Success in this course will be determined by attending and participating in class, completing all assignments, working hard, integrating key skills, and practicing intention and awareness.

Course Objectives

- Acquire basic playing skills on violin, viola, cello, or bass.
- Understand the relationships between your playing, emotions, physicality, and choices.
- Develop diagnostic skills for teaching basic posture, position and performance in string playing.
- Explore and understand the features of popular string methods books.
- Comprehend instructional content and sequencing for teaching a string program.
- Any other objectives, topics, or content deemed necessary for inclusion in the course at the sole discretion of the Instructor.

Course Content, Readings, & Media

A 1-inch, 3 ring binder is required for your String Portfolio. You do not need to bring the binder to class every day. All content, readings, and media will be provided by the instructor.

Course Overview (subject to change)

Week 1: Syllabus, Survey, Assign Instruments, Set-Up

Week 2: Pizzicato, Posture, Pre-Bow Exercises

Week 3: Beginner Tunes, Tension-Free Playing, Pre-Bow Exercises

Week 4: Integration of Left/Right Hands

Week 5: Right Hand Technique and Tone, D Major Scale

Week 6: D Major Rounds, G Major Scale, Finger Pattern #1

Week 7: Articulation, Concert Preparation

Week 8: Dress Rehearsal and Concert, Mid-term check-in

Week 9: “Low 2,” C Major Scale, Finger Pattern #2

Week 10: Finger Patterns #3-4, More Scales, Pre-Shifting Exercises

Week 11: Shifting, Vibrato, Improvisation

Week 12: Rehearsal Techniques, Selecting a Method Book

Week 13: Repertoire Selection, Teaching Demo Day #1

Week 14: Teaching Demo Days #2, 3, 4, Portfolios due

Week 15: Specific Topics in String Ed

Week 16: Final Exam Week

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

Attendance & Participation 25%

Participation in class means actively engaging with the instruments, content, discussions, and classmates. You will receive a participation grade after every class. Careful listening, skillful playing, physical and emotional self-awareness, and integrating skills and ideas as needed are key. Using a laptop, tablet, or mobile device for any purpose unrelated to the conversation or the course will be construed as a lack of participation.

Assignments 10%

Students are expected to complete readings and writing assignments. These are designed to help you engage in critical and creative thinking as you explore your thoughts about teaching music.

Performance Assessment 10%

Throughout the semester we will have informal and formal performance assessments. These will be done in class. These performance checks are meant to be a positive, low-stakes way of checking for understanding. If you feel that performing in front of your classmates would adversely affect your mental health, please make arrangements with the course instructor for an alternate assignment. During your performance assessments, please demonstrate correct posture, intonation, rhythm, tempo, tone, and musicality.

Midterm Concert 20%

There are many considerations when it comes to planning a successful concert. This assignment will help guide you to put on your first orchestra concert, and serve as a helpful resource to you in the future later in your career. In addition to performing in the concert on your secondary instruments, you will also sign up for one or more roles to fulfill. There may be more than one person in the same role. The goal is to work together as a class to plan the concert.

Your concert will take place on Friday, October 9th, during your class time. Since it is a concert, you are welcome to invite whomever you'd like!

Program: We will need a digital program and a printable version. For the digital program, you will also need to create a QR code that audience members can scan. We will decide on the order for the program as a class. It is your job to include the names of each piece, the composers, the conductor's names for each piece, the names of all the musicians (and their instruments), and any other acknowledgements you think would be appropriate. You should also make the program aesthetically pleasing to look at, and proofread it for any errors.

Planning/Logistics: Your job is to develop a schedule for the concert. What is call time? What time does the concert begin? Where to unpack/leave phones and cases? Where should the reception happen? How/when will you set up for the concert? What does the concert seating chart look like? Where will the reception take place? What type of decorations, if any, are necessary? What should the students wear to the concert?

Narrator: You will prepare a script for the concert. You should include the following: Welcome the audience, go over audience etiquette, explain a little about the progress of the group, make any announcements about upcoming events, remind parents where to pick up students, and maybe invite them to the reception. Be sure you script out where in the program you want to say these things. For example, the welcome should be at the beginning, and reminders should be before the last song. You will also be making these announcements at the concert.

Conductors: You will lead one of the pieces for the group. You should be ready to rehearse the piece in class and lead the same piece at the concert.

Reception planning: This group will oversee planning and setting up the reception. What will you serve? Who will bring it? Napkins? Plates? Utensils? Drinks? How is it paid for?

Teaching Demos 25%

You will teach the class a 5- to 8-minute beginner orchestra lesson. You will submit a lesson plan to be approved by the instructor prior to the teaching demonstration. After the teaching demonstration, you will also submit a reflection assessing your own teaching in comparison to the lesson plan that they wrote. The teaching demonstration grade will reflect a combination of

the lesson plan, the teaching demonstration, the reflection, and an evaluation by the course instructor.

After your teaching demonstration, you will also submit a post-teaching reflection. I recommend this be done within at least 3 days from the day you teach, but it will be accepted up to 10 days after the last teaching demonstration is completed.

Teaching Demonstration Details

Objective: Create a 5–8-minute lesson to teach the class a specific string technique or concept appropriate for beginner orchestra students.

Guidelines:

1. Lessons should be clear, concise, and focused. Use the university lesson plan template as a guide to create your plan.
2. You must turn in your lesson plans one week before teaching demonstrations begin. This deadline will allow me time to review them and provide feedback.
3. You will know the order of your teaching demonstrations in advance. Several of you will teach each day. If you are absent on your day, you will receive a zero.
4. Due to limited class time, I will stop your lessons after 8 minutes.
5. You may pick a topic from the list below, or if you would like to teach something else, please get my approval before you submit your lesson plan. Remember, you must be able to teach your lesson to violin/viola/cello/bass students adequately and simultaneously. Be sure you understand the differences in your lesson.
6. Your lesson should include the following: Greeting/introduction, objective, warm-up, introduction of the skill, demonstration, guided practice, assessment, and closure.
7. You will be graded on your preparation, lesson plan, lesson delivery, assessment, and effectiveness.

Topic Choices: Make sure you are teaching these concepts in terms of the stringed instruments we are learning. If you would like to explore a different topic, you must get your idea approved before you turn in your lesson plan.

- Posture/Holding the instrument
- Open strings
- Holding the bow
- Shaping the left hand
- Hot Cross Buns
- Notes of the D string
- Notes of the A string (G string for bass)
- Bowing on the open strings

- Bowing combined with left hand
- Twinkle
- D major scale
- Pizzicato/arco
- Whole note/half note/quarter note rhythms
- Subdivided rhythms
- Any line or concept from the method book

String Ed Portfolio 10%

Throughout the semester you will receive various articles, guides/diagrams, music pieces, handouts, and more to help you in your future career. You are expected to keep these documents,

organize, and compile them into a portfolio. A 1-inch, 3-ring binder or comparable binding method is recommended. If you need assistance acquiring the proper materials, please email the instructor in advance. I will collect, check, and return it to you at the end of the semester. You are not expected to bring the portfolio to class every day. Even if you do not think you will teach strings in the future, you never know if and when this resource will be useful.

Your portfolio needs to be organized in a manner that is useful to you. There are however, specific parts that must be included:

1. **An introductory section** - A table of contents or something to describe how your portfolio is organized. This can be an annotated table of contents if that works for you.
2. **Organizational Tabs** - Tabs, colored paper, or another way to divide the sections of your portfolio clearly. These should be labeled with your sections from the introduction.
3. **Handouts/Readings** - Everything that your received as a handout in class, including all readings and resource materials.
4. **Music** - All sheet music you received, including beginner tunes, finger pattern charts, scales, repertoire, etc.
5. **Notes, Reflections, Lesson Plans** - Anything you created this semester should go into your portfolio. This includes any notes you took in class, any reflections you wrote, and your teaching final demo lesson plan.

Attendance Policy

Attendance at all class meetings is expected. Per the Division of Music Education policy, more than three absences result in a failing grade for the course. End-of-semester juries may not be scheduled during class time; any such absences will not be excused.

The instructor will take daily attendance. Please be on time. Three tardies equal one absence. All students are responsible for staying informed about in-class assignments, email or Canvas announcements, physical handouts, turning assignments in on time, and informing the instructor in writing (by email) of any circumstances affecting attendance or performance in class.

Note: If you have a disability that impacts your attendance, please carefully read the ODA statement in this syllabus and consider contacting the Office of Disability Access (disability.unt.edu) if you wish to engage the University Policy on making “reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities”.

University Required Syllabus Statements

Use of Generative AI (GenAI)

In this course, I want you to engage deeply with the materials and develop your own critical thinking and writing skills. For this reason, the use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools like [insert tool(s) here, e.g., Claude, ChatGPT, and Gemini] is not permitted. While these tools can be helpful in some contexts, they do not align with our goal of fostering the development of your independent thinking. Using GenAI to complete any part of an assignment, exam, or coursework will be considered a violation of academic integrity, as it prevents the development of your own skills, and will be addressed according to the Student Academic Integrity policy.

DEFIBRILLATORS IN THE COLLEGE OF MUSIC

- Music Building: Across from the west side of the Music Commons, directly across from the elevator
- Music Building: Third floor hallway, across from the staircase that comes up from the Copy Room. Next to Room 322
- Music Building: Across from the Copy Room next to Room 293
- Music Building: Voertman Lobby by the big double set of doors that lead out to the courtyard
- Music Building: Main Office (247) under the student worker's desk
- Music Annex: Next to room MA117, near the triple set of doors on the east side of the building
- Music Practice Building North: First floor on the Avenue C side
- Music Practice Building South: First floor on the Avenue C side
- Bain Hall: First floor by the restrooms
- Murchison Performing Arts Center: Located off the main lobby, beyond the grand staircase, across from the single occupancy restroom (next to the public water fountains)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam [or specify alternative sanction, such as course failure]. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students (Office of Academic Integrity), who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

See: Academic Integrity

LINK: <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

See: Student Code of Conduct

Link: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – EAGLE CONNECT

Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at my.unt.edu. All official communication from the university will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect.

See: Eagle Connect

LINK: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

ODA STATEMENT

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter. You can now request your Letters of Accommodation ONLINE and ODA will mail your Letters of Accommodation to your instructors. You may wish to begin a private discussion with your professors regarding your specific needs in a course. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access.

See: ODA

LINK: disability.unt.edu. (Phone: (940) 565-4323)

Health and Safety Information

Students can access information about health and safety at: <https://music.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness>

Registration Information for Students

See: [Fall Academic Calendar Information](#)

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html>

Semester Calendar, Fall 2026

See: Fall Semester Calendar

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/sites/default/files/fall-2026-academic-calendar.pdf>

Final Exam Schedule, Fall 2026

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/exams/final-exam-schedule/fall.html>

Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress

Undergraduates

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total hours registered. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

Students holding music scholarships must maintain a minimum 2.5 overall cumulative GPA and 3.0 cumulative GPA in music courses.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended that you to schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

See: Financial Aid

LINK: <http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

Graduates

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per term. Music scholarships require a 3.5 cumulative GPA. Students cannot exceed maximum timeframes established based on the published length of the graduate program. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended you schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college, an advisor in UNT-International or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course.

See: Financial Aid

LINK: <http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

RETENTION OF STUDENT RECORDS

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted

during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university's policy in accordance with those mandates.

See: FERPA

Link: <http://ferpa.unt.edu/>

COUNSELING AND TESTING

UNT's Center for Counseling and Testing has an available counselor for students in need. Please visit the Center's website for further information:

See: Counseling and Testing

Link: <http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>.

For more information on mental health resources, please visit:

See: Mental Health Resources

Link: <https://disparities.unt.edu/mental-health-resources>

ADD/DROP POLICY

Please be reminded that dropping classes or failing to complete and pass registered hours may make you ineligible for financial aid. In addition, if you drop below half-time enrollment, you may be required to begin paying back your student loans. See Academic Calendar (listed above) for additional add/drop Information.

Drop information: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html>

STUDENT RESOURCES

The University of North Texas has many resources available to students. For a complete list, go to:

See: Student Resources

Link: <https://success.unt.edu/aa-sa-resources>

CARE TEAM

The Care Team is a collaborative interdisciplinary committee of university officials that meets regularly to provide a response to student, staff, and faculty whose behavior could be harmful to themselves or others.

See: Care Team

Link: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care-team>