

APPLIED JAZZ & COMMERCIAL STRINGS LESSONS

Jazz Violin / Viola / Cello / Harp • Spring 2026

Scott Tixier • University of North Texas

Course Numbers	MUAS 1504 / MUAS 5504
Location	Office 333
Instructor	Scott Tixier
Office Hours	By Appointment
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Course Description

Applied Jazz & Commercial Strings Lessons is an individualized conservatory-style private instruction course focused on the artistic, technical, and professional development of jazz string musicians. The course combines traditional one-on-one conservatory instruction with contemporary jazz pedagogy and real-world performance practices.

Course Philosophy

This course is designed around individualized artistic development. Because every student enters with different technical backgrounds, musical goals, artistic interests, and levels of improvisational experience, lesson content may vary significantly from student to student. Instruction is intentionally adaptive and tailored to each student's artistic and technical development.

Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate increased fluency in jazz improvisation.
- Apply advanced harmonic and rhythmic concepts in performance.
- Perform jazz repertoire with stylistic awareness and musical maturity.
- Develop stronger listening, transcription, and ear-training skills.
- Demonstrate growth in instrumental technique and sound production.
- Develop effective individual practice strategies and routines.

Areas of Study

Topics may include jazz standards and repertoire, harmonic analysis, bebop language, modal improvisation, melodic minor applications, altered harmony, rhythm and phrasing, advanced scales and arpeggios, jazz articulation and bow technique, amplification concepts, transcription, ear training, composition, arranging, and artistic development.

Recommended Listening & Artist Study

Students are strongly encouraged to regularly listen to and study recordings by influential jazz string artists and improvisers, including:

- Stéphane Grappelli
- Jean-Luc Ponty
- Regina Carter
- Didier Lockwood
- Stuff Smith
- Eddie South
- Mark Feldman
- Svend Asmussen
- Joe Venuti
- Ray Nance
- Johnny Frigo
- Michael Urbaniak

Representative albums and recordings may include:

- *Live at the Blue Note* – Stéphane Grappelli
- *Enigmatic Ocean* – Jean-Luc Ponty
- *Tribute to Stéphane Grappelli* – Didier Lockwood
- *Rhythms of the Heart* – Regina Carter
- *Black Violin* – Stuff Smith
- *The Chronological Classics* – Eddie South
- *Hot Club de France Recordings* – Django Reinhardt & Stéphane Grappelli

Students are also encouraged to study recordings by major jazz artists outside the string tradition, including:

- Ella Fitzgerald
- Charlie Parker
- Alice Coltrane
- Miles Davis
- John Coltrane
- Dexter Gordon
- Herbie Hancock
- Kenny Garrett
- Sonny Rollins
- Wayne Shorter
- Bill Evans
- Thelonious Monk
- Joe Henderson
- Chick Corea

Listening, transcription, stylistic analysis, and historical awareness are considered essential components of artistic development.

Lesson Structure

Students are expected to complete a minimum of twelve lessons during the semester. Lessons may include technical work, repertoire coaching, improvisation exercises, transcription review, harmonic discussion, listening assignments, performance simulation, and artistic mentorship.

Practice Expectations

Consistent individual practice is essential. Students are expected to maintain regular practice habits outside of lessons and demonstrate measurable progress throughout the semester.

Professionalism Expectations

Students are expected to arrive on time, communicate professionally, respond to scheduling communication in a timely manner, demonstrate preparedness, and maintain respectful and collaborative interaction. Constructive artistic feedback is a central part of advanced musical training and professional artistic development.

Attendance Policy

Because this is an individualized private instruction course, attendance is essential. Students are expected to attend all scheduled lessons, communicate absences professionally and proactively, and remain accountable for assigned material.

Jury Requirements

Students may be required to perform a final jury, performance evaluation, recording project, or equivalent semester assessment depending on degree program requirements.

Grading Breakdown

25%	Technical Development
25%	Preparation & Assignments
25%	Musical Growth & Improvisation
25%	Jury / Final Performance Evaluation

Technology & Studio Policies

Phones, tablets, and laptops may be used for approved musical purposes only. Food and beverages other than water are not permitted in the studio.

Final Statement

Applied Jazz Strings Lessons is designed to help students develop both the technical discipline and artistic individuality necessary for professional musical growth. The course emphasizes artistic identity, improvisation, creativity, professionalism, stylistic versatility, and long-term musical development.