San José State University
School of Music & Dance
MUSC 127 A, Fundamental Techniques and Literature: Instrumental
(Strings: Viola and Bass), Fall, 2016

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Jones
Office Location: School of Music, RM 204
Email: sarah.jones-hayes@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: TH 9-11am
Class Days/Time: T,TH 8:00-8:50am
Classroom: Music Building, 150
Prerequisites: Upper division standing.

Course Description

Upper and Lower Strings. Required for credential. Instrumental emphasis in music education must take two units including upper and lower strings. Choral/general emphasis must take a minimum of one unit of strings. Prerequisite: Upper division standing. Misc/Lab: Activity 4 hours.

Learning Outcomes

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

1. Demonstrate a basic technical proficiency in viola and bass including correct posture, good tone, and accurate intonation.
2. Identify, discuss and effectively use different methods, techniques and literature for beginning string pedagogy covered in class.

Required Texts/Readings:

Textbook: “Sound Innovations for String Orchestra A Revolutionary Method for Beginning Musicians”
TEACHER’S SCORE/BOOK 1
Phillips, Boonshaft, and Sheldon,

Other Readings:
Handouts to be distributed in class and electronically.

**Other requirements:**
Students are required to have a loose leaf binder to organize handouts, take notes and use for practice journal entries and written assignments. Journal entries will be collected weekly.

Students must complete papers on a computer and submit the printed copy at the beginning of the class on the day it is due.

**Course Requirements and Assignments**
Students must practice a minimum of a half hour EVERY DAY. The amount of daily practice is directly related to the amount of progress a student makes. Written assignments will reinforce fundamentals discussed in class. Daily journal entries are required. These help both teacher and student track individual progress.

As future string teachers, students need to develop the ability to identify and address problems in posture, technique and playing. Practice journals help students identify their strengths and weakness and help them plan their practice time effectively.

Two papers reviewing specific teaching methods will give students an overview of two common teaching methods used in both public schools and private teaching settings across the United States. The text for this course, “Sound Innovations” is a popular method used in many public schools in the U.S. It gives the students access to all instrument parts in the orchestra and includes tips and examples of how to introduce various techniques.

One public school string/orchestra rehearsal observation is required during the semester. Dates and Times TBD. Student observation forms will need to be signed by the group director of the school program being observed. All observation forms are due by the last day of class.

Playing exams will be given four times during the semester (two exams on each instrument). Students are expected to show up on time and have their instruments out and ready to be played at the start of the exam. Because string teachers and directors are expected to demonstrate in their classes, playing exams are performed by the entire class, in front of the entire class.

**Tentative Course Calendar**
Below is a tentative course calendar including all major playing exams, papers and the final written and playing exam. This does not include quizzes, pop quizzes or short assignments.

- Playing Exam No.1 - 9/13
- Suzuki Paper Due - 9/20
- Playing Exam No.2 - 10/4
- Peer Teaching - 10/6 & 10/11
- Rolland Paper Due - 10/18
- Playing Exam No.3 - 10/25
- Playing Exam No.4 - 11/15
- Final Playing and Written Exam: 12/14
Final Examination

The final exam for this course consists of both a playing portion and a written portion. The playing exam is performed on the student’s primary instrument and will cover scales, articulations covered in class as well as a short piece. The written portion will cover (but is not limited to) the topics discussed in both written papers, terms and articulations discussed in class as well as fingerboard and score labeling.

Grading Information

I expect and recommend that you practice a minimum of 30 minutes a day if you intend to pass the playing exams and be prepared for class. Your practice journals will be collected weekly. In them you will briefly describe what you practiced each day, how long you practiced and any difficulties you may be having. Feel free to share your successes as well.

Late assignments will not be accepted. If you miss an exam you will receive a zero unless you present a doctor’s note. As future string teachers you will need to develop the ability to demonstrate in front of your own class. For this purpose, playing exams are conducted in class, in front of the entire class. Peer teaching demonstrations allow you the opportunity to practice introducing concepts we have worked on in class to your classmates. You will be graded on your ability to demonstrate, speak clearly and concisely and manage your time wisely. You are expected to treat these as if you were introducing a concept to a beginning strings class.

Participation Policy

This course covers a great deal of information in one semester. Because learning a new instrument requires time practicing, adjusting and correcting, participation is crucial. The participation portion of your grade is based on timely arrivals, promptness in getting your instruments out of their cases and tuned, care of your instrument, as well as preparedness and professionalism. Fingernails MUST be short. Please see Classroom Protocol for more information. The use of cell phones in class is prohibited as well as the use of any other computer or electronic device.

Determination of Grades

Participation: 20%
Average of written assignments, including weekly practice journals 10%
Teaching Observations: 10%
Average of in class playing tests/pop quizzes: 20%
Final Playing and Written Exam: 40%

Late Assignments are not accepted. The option to complete a missed exam will only be considered with the presentation of a doctor’s note. If an exam was missed for a reason other than a medical emergency, the student will need to provide at least 24 hour notice and a teacher’s note for the option of taking the missed exam to be considered.
Classroom Protocol

String playing requires short fingernails. Using correct posture and technique is impossible with long fingernails. If a student comes to class with fingernails that are too long (determined by the teacher), the student will receive a warning. The next time the student comes to class with long fingernails, he/she will receive a zero in participation for the day.

Students are responsible for the care of their instruments in and out of the classroom. Students should not leave instruments on the floor or out of their closed case when not being used. Bows are very breakable and should never be used to poke or hit anything or anyone and should never be dropped.

If an accident occurs or a student is concerned about the condition of their instrument, it is their responsibility to contact the teacher immediately.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/