



School of Music

Department of Music Education

MUSE 355: Instrumental Methods I (String Methods)

2026 Spring Term Syllabus

T, Th 8:00-9:15 AM

Room MU 401

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Course Description (from catalog)

This course focuses on developing the knowledge, performances, and dispositions required of school instrumental music educators in elementary, middle school, and high school string/orchestra settings. Topics include administration, curriculum development, literature selections, instructional planning, and teaching strategies.

Course Objectives

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe recruiting procedures useful for the school instrumental program
- Discuss the content and sequencing of curricula in instrumental music
- Exhibit growth in classroom teaching skills by completing brief field teaching and peerteaching episodes
- List and evaluate materials used for instrumental music instruction
- Write lesson plans for instrumental music instruction
- Demonstrate techniques for teaching/rehearsing elementary and secondary instrumental music classes and ensembles
- Describe ways to implement the National Music Standards in instrumental music education through the principles of comprehensive musicianship
- Describe techniques for assessment in instrumental music
- Prepare an orchestral score with appropriate annotations for string instruments
- Identify and analyze issues in a string performance and give an appropriate pedagogical remedy

Required Materials

Hamann, D.L., & Gillespie, R. (2018). *Strategies for teaching strings: Building a successful string and orchestra program*, 4th ed. New York: Oxford.

Articles provided in Canvas

String instrument as determined in class

Attendance/Punctuality

As a pre-service teacher, you are expected to show an exemplary commitment to education and your personal growth as a professional music educator. Attendance at all class meetings is required. Students are required to provide the instructor with **prior** notice for all absences, just as you will be required to notify your future school and/or principal of an absence. Prior notification may be done via email. Lack of prior notification will constitute an unexcused absence. Any course requirements, expectations, or assignments that are missed because of an unexcused absence will receive no credit or a score of zero.

If an absence is the result of a last-minute emergency, please contact the instructor at the earliest opportunity. If the earliest opportunity to contact the instructor occurs after the start of class, and prior notice was not possible, the nature of the absence, i.e., whether it be considered excused or unexcused, will be at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Excessive absence from class, even when excused with prior notification, is considered unprofessional. As such, three (3) absences may be excused by the instructor if prior notification is provided. The fourth and subsequent absences from class will require medical documentation. Please note, medical documentation will be required for both **physical** and **mental** health absences. Informal mental health days are not recognized by our profession.

Tardy is defined as arriving to class after its official start time, regardless of what is going on in the class. Three (3) tardies, for any reason, will result in one unexcused absence. These expectations for attendance and punctuality are outlined in the revised Music Education Disposition Rubric. Failing to meet attendance and punctuality expectations will prevent a student from earning a passing grade and will result in the need to retake the course.

Electronics Policy

Smart phones, iPads, smart watches, and laptop computers are only to be used in class when needed; otherwise, these devices are NOT permitted. If such a device is needed to meet a specific learning accommodation, please make sure this is officially documented with Disabled Student Development (see the **Disability Accommodations** sections of the syllabus). Students who cannot disconnect from technology during class time will be asked to leave, resulting in an unexcused absence.

Engagement

Students are expected to engage in all classes during the semester. Engagement means actively participating in discussions by adding insightful comments or asking thoughtful questions. Engagement also means all assignments, (e.g., readings, papers, presentations etc.) are completed on time, and presented well, according to the student's best ability. It is not appropriate to be passive either in class or when preparing for class. Students are also expected to regularly check their messages, via email or Canvas, as a variety of things may happen during the course of the semester, (e.g., adjustments to assignments, canceled class due to weather, etc.) in which electronic messaging needs to be used.

Ball State University's Statement Regarding Diversity and Inclusion

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our [Beneficence Pledge](#) and through university resources found at [Multicultural Center | Ball State University \(bsu.edu\)](#). Bias Incident Response information can be found at [Report a Bias Incident | Ball State University \(bsu.edu\)](#) or by emailing reportbias@bsu.edu.

Student Academic Ethics Policy

Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Visit the Vice President for Academic Affairs' [academic integrity website](#) (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. The website also includes information on Title IX and the University Grade Appeal Policy. To learn about Ball State University's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#).

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself. Check with the instructor if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty. Examples of academic integrity violations include, but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the faculty member (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books).
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).
- Without the instructor's written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments, class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.
- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing).
- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

Degree Progress and Licensure

All music education students should know and understand current program and licensure requirements, suggested 4-year plans, course sequencing options and limitations, and Decision Point criteria. To do so, students should regularly meet with advisors, particularly the School of Music academic advisor, and review information provided by the [Office of Teacher Education Services and Clinical Practice](#) and [Teachers College](#). Specifically, in addition to university requirements, MUSE students must:

1. Successfully complete Decision Point 1: Admission to Teacher Candidacy and qualify for applying for student teaching and registering for 300- and 400-level MUSE and Professional Education courses by:
 - Earning grades of C or better and satisfying all course and assessment requirements in COMM 210, MUSE 100, MUSE 150, EDMU 205, EDPS 250, MUSE 291, and MUSE 293;
 - Earning and maintaining an overall GPA of at least 2.50; and
 - Exhibiting the Dispositions expected of and by the teaching profession.
- ⇒ Decision Point 1 can and should be completed by the end of the sophomore year (4 semesters) to ensure on-time program completion and graduation.

2. Successfully complete Decision Point 2: Admission to Student Teaching, by:

- Earning grades of C or better and satisfying all course and assessment requirements in MUSE 356, MUSE 376, MUSE 457, EDPS 390, EDFO 420, and MUSE 350 (V&G majors);
- Earning grades of C or better and satisfying all course and assessment requirements in MUSE 355, MUSE 375, EDPS 390, EDFO 420, and MUSE 350 (I&G majors);
- Earning and maintaining a GPA of at least 2.50 in all Professional Education courses;
- Earning and maintaining a GPA of at least 2.50 in all Music Education major courses;
- Earning and maintaining an overall GPA of at least 2.50;
- Exhibiting the Dispositions expected of and by the teaching profession; and
- Submit an application for student teaching and have your eligibility confirmed by passing a student teaching interview with the MUSE faculty.

⇒ Decision Point 2 can and should be completed by the end of the Fall semester of the senior year (7 semesters) to ensure on-time program completion and graduation.

3. Successfully complete Decision Point 3: Recommendation for Graduation and Licensure.

⇒ It is important to note that students SHOULD complete all [Decision Point 3 requirements](#) to become licensed in the State of Indiana, regardless of whether they plan to teach out of State or not at all. Choosing to bypass an Indiana Teaching license drastically reduces the likelihood of achieving licensure in other states and limits future possibilities.

MUSE Two-Attempt Policy

All MUSE courses are subject to a two-attempt limit. This policy applies to all current Music Education majors and any students participating in MUSE courses with the intent of gaining admission to the Music Education major. Students who do not successfully complete a MUSE course within 2 attempts will become ineligible to complete the Music Education program at Ball State. **An attempt is defined as any registration resulting in a letter grade less than "C"**. A copy of the complete policy, as well as the appeal process for a third attempt and program continuation, can be obtained from the Coordinator of Music Education.

Disposition Assessment

Becoming an effective teacher includes demonstrating professional dispositions, which include attitudes, habits of action, and commitments that foster student learning and assist in elevating the education profession, as well as in interacting with families, community members, and colleagues. The Ball State Disposition Assessment System is a systematic, consistent approach to assessing and supporting teacher candidates' disposition growth throughout their preparation. This system has two components: (1) a disposition rubric system, and (2) a disposition alert system, which provide opportunities for deliberate feedback and guidance regarding teacher candidates' disposition development. Information about the rubric, procedures, and alert policy are available on the Student Teaching page of the OTES website, found [HERE](#).

Professional Membership

It is expected that all Music Education students at Ball State University be members of at least one professional music education organization: NAFME/IMEA, ASTA, ACDA, MTNA, NBA, AOSA, OAKE, etc. To ensure appropriate credit for professional membership, students should pay all registration dues and be listed on the chosen organization's membership roster by midterm. It is recommended that students strongly consider national membership in NAFME/IMEA, not just local membership in NAFME @ Ball State. Included in national NAFME/IMEA membership is access to three journals that are sources for continued professional development, i.e., Teaching Music, Music Educators Journal, and Inform, access to live and archived webinars on a variety of topics, and special collegiate pricing for conference registrations and merchandise. Membership in a professional organization remains an expectation for students' professional dispositions.

University Statement

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's [Disability Services Office](#) coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Freedom of Expression

In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's [Statement on Freedom of Expression](#), the resources on Ball State's [Freedom of Expression webpage](#), and [Ball State's Beneficence Pledge](#).

The Learning Center

The Learning Center offers free Tutoring and Academic Coaching for many courses at Ball State. Students can make appointments for online (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit myballstate.bsu.edu and click on "Navigate" in the Academic Tools section, or go directly to bsu.navigate.eab.com

Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are available for students who have received the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Tests may be administered in the Learning Center.

Supplemental Instruction is available in select courses. If you have a student instructor (SI) for your course, that person will provide you with information the first week of school regarding weekly study sessions. For more information about Learning Center programming, call 765-285-1006, or visit bsu.edu/learningcenter

The Writing Center

All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center (in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays, Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings, or online during any of our regularly scheduled hours) to get additional feedback on your writing.

The Writing Center offers free planning, feedback, and accountability sessions (in person and online) to all students composing essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. To schedule a free appointment to discuss your writing, go to bsu.edu/writingcenter. Online and in-person appointments are available; however, plan ahead because appointments book quickly.

The Speaking Center

The [Speaking Center](#) is a free resource available to all members of the BSU community wanting to improve their public speaking abilities. We offer personalized coaching designed to help you become a more confident and effective speaker. Our trained coaches provide constructive feedback and support throughout the entire speech preparation process, whether you are in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and organizing your thoughts, or you need to practice your delivery and refine your message.

The Center is in the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, room 302. To schedule an appointment, please access us through your Navigate app or use this [direct link](#) to sign up for a time. Appointments are available both in person and on Zoom. Appointments are available in person, on

Zoom, and in virtual reality (VR) for those interested in practicing in an immersive speaking environment.

The Basic Needs Hub

If you are having difficulty affording enough food, do not have a safe and reliable place to sleep, and/or experiencing an emergency or crisis, help is available through the [Basic Needs Hub](#). The Basic Needs Hub has information and resources and provides individualized support to students. To talk with a supportive staff member about your experience, receive one on one assistance, or learn more about resources, you can submit a [Basic Needs Assistance Form](#).

The Counseling Center

The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). The Crisis Line is a mental health resource for those who are struggling with any mental health concerns, including thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide.

At the Ball State Counseling Center, we see students for a variety of reasons, some of which include homesickness, relationship concerns, anxiety, and depression. At your first appointment, you will work with a therapist to create a plan that will connect you with resources that best fit your needs. We assist students with getting connected to therapy at our Center as well as connecting students to self-help resources, other on-campus resources, and community-based resources. All Ball State students also have access to several on-demand, self-help resources through a variety of different platforms. All of these resources, including a direct link to our website, can be found [here](#).

Class Schedule

The instructor reserves the right to modify the following schedule as needed. If this occurs, it will be done in a timely manner giving students ample opportunity to adjust.

Application for Student Teaching

Application for student teaching occurs in the academic year prior to the student teaching year. Students must attend the Application for Student Teaching in Music Education Orientation Meeting held in October. At this meeting, students will receive important information about student teaching, the application process, and the required interview with the music education faculty. Students must have achieved [Admission to Teacher Candidacy](#) (passed Decision Point 1) to be eligible to apply; there are no exceptions.

Engagement Expectations

To support a respectful and engaging classroom environment that encourages the free exchange of ideas and civil discourse, we will follow these ground rules:

1. Respect different perspectives. Share your ideas and let others share theirs.
2. Challenge ideas, not people. Disagree respectfully. No personal attacks or put-downs. Focus on exploring ideas critically and constructively.
3. Listen to understand. Stay curious, ask questions, and give others space to speak.
4. Assume good intentions. Approach discussions with curiosity and compassion.
5. Keep it private. What is shared in class should stay in class. Do not share others' words or work without their permission.
6. Be respectful. Avoid hurtful language, stereotypes, or content that may demean others. Keep feedback constructive.

Course Grade Qualifier

Because effective music teaching is the baseline requirement for being an effective music educator, students' performance with regard to teaching will have an increased effect on students' final grades. Students can only earn a grade of:

- A: if they earn at least 90% of the total points possible in the teaching components listed in the syllabus.
- B: if they earn at least 80% of the total points possible in the teaching components listed in the syllabus.
- C: if they earn at least 70% of the total points possible in the teaching components listed in the syllabus.

In addition, a minimum of a C is needed on all assignments indicated by an asterisk in order to earn a course grade of C or higher. Failure to complete all assignments will result in an automatic grade of C- or lower. See course calendar for final deadline for all course assignments to be submitted to be eligible to pass the course.

Grading

Grades are based on the following percentages and in accordance with the university + and -system.

	B+	87-89.9%	C+	77-79.9%	D+	67-69.9%			
A	94-100%	B	84-86.9%	C	74-76.9%	D	64-66.9%	F	0-59.9%
A-	90-93.9%	B-	80-83.9%	C-	70-73.9%	D-	60-63.9%		

Grades will be earned through the completion of the following assignments and projects in accordance with the grade weight designations:

- Final Exam: 20%
- String Pedagogical Handbook Project: 20%
 - Must receive a C or better to pass the class.
- HAT Journals: 15%
- Micro-teaching: 15%
 - Peer teaching must receive a C or better to pass the class.
- Field Observations: 15%
- Professional Development and Disposition: 10%
- e-Portfolio: 5%

All late work will receive a grade of zero. All assignments MUST be turned in and failure to complete any assignment by the end of the semester, even if it receives a zero for being late, will result in an unsatisfactory marking on the Disposition Rubric, making the final grade a failing grade, (meaning a C- or less).

String Pedagogical Handbook Project: (20% of the Final Grade)

Students will complete a String Pedagogy Handbook. This is designed to solidify string technique issues for the student and it is preserved in a format that can be used as a future resource. Details will be discussed in class and specified on Canvas. The Handbook Project must receive a C or better to pass the course.

Final Exam: (20% of the Final Grade)

The final exam is cumulative and will be given on the specified date during finals week. A final will not be given early to accommodate a student who wishes to finish the semester early. Make all travel/vacation plans accordingly.

HAT Journals: (15% of the Final Grade)

Each student will complete HAT Journals in MUSE 355. Writing is an important skill for educators as it is the most common way to communicate with parents, colleagues, and administrators. Writing is also an effective way to learn as it gives the student an opportunity to "wrestle" with the material or the experience. To wrestle, in this context, is to slow down and take the time to think deeply about issues.

HAT Journals serve three purposes: (a) to encourage use of critical thinking and transfer skills with respect to abilities, habits, and techniques of effective teachers; (b) to demonstrate you have read the assigned material; (c) to spark conversation in class. These are designed, in part, so you can have something to say in class. The adage is true, thoughts untangle themselves through pencil tips and peoples' lips. It is my hope that journaling becomes a skill for you as it is an effective way to develop as a professional. Please take these seriously. It is inappropriate to embed comments about anything other than the topic at hand.

HAT Journals, specifically, are due before class begins on the date specified in the Course Topic Schedule. Only use the template given in Canvas. Any changes in the format results in a grade of zero. Your discussion in the journal must be clear and your writing must evidence thoughtful engagement with the readings/discussions/activities of the class. I may respond to your journal in Canvas but it is more likely responses will be in class. After completing your HAT Journal, **Copy and Paste, into Canvas, only the pertinent HAT Journal for that day.** HAT Journals are then graded based on a rubric found in Canvas. Only full credit is given to a HAT Journal that is complete and shows evidence of effort given to it.

HAT Journals are 12 points each and consist of a summary (3 points) and an H, A, and T (3 points each). There needs to be a minimum of three salient points per letter.

H = Huh? "I'm not sure about....." What specific questions do you have from the assigned reading? What items/skills are you still fuzzy about? Perhaps your questions are more like **inquiry** such as how the content is relevant to your teaching, i.e. how can you make the concept practical. Maybe the question is more theoretical in nature,

i.e. maybe you think the idea is not valid. Asking good questions is paramount to quality higher education experience and to the field of education itself.

A = Aha! "I did not know that." What light bulbs turned on while you read the material? What did you learn that was new? (Note: Do not use this Aha section to answer questions you raised in the immediate Huh section above).

T = Transfer. "I can use these particular concepts/techniques (name them) in my teaching in the follow way (explain how?)." Also, what implications might particular ideas/techniques have for your professional life and for life in general? The ability to transfer concepts, or parts of understanding, into "real world" settings is important. If the information is not applicable then it is useless.

Micro-teaching: (15% of the Final Grade)

Students will have Micro-teaching opportunities to practice the art of teaching. These are:

Random Teaching Episode (10 pts): Random Teaching Episode is an opportunity for students to teach five minutes during MUSE 355 class time. Topics will be a review on something that was discussed during previous classes. This is an informal teaching episode with one student chosen, randomly, at the beginning of class.

Peer Teaching (100 pts): Peer Teaching is an opportunity for students to show musical discrimination skills and to demonstrate knowledge and application of string pedagogy. One formal, 20-minute lesson will occur during class and around mid-term. A video must be made as it will be a part of your reflection. Peer Teaching must receive a C or better to pass the class.

Classroom Support (15 pts): Classroom Support is an opportunity for students to work with a string ensemble, or individual string students in the community, in an informal, "real world" setting, (i.e. playing in a section or giving individual/sectional help). Two, one hour, Classroom Support episodes are required. One hour of elementary and one hour of secondary. A signed reflection form is required to receive credit.

Classroom Teaching (35 pts): Classroom Teaching is an opportunity for students to work with a string ensemble in the community in a formal, “real world” setting, (i.e. podium time). One formal, ten-minute Classroom Teaching episode is required and it can be either an elementary or secondary setting. A video must be made of the event as it will be a part of your reflection. If a video is not created then no points will be awarded. A video and reflection journal are required for credit.

Field Observations: (15% of the Final Grade)

Students will participate in six hours of Field Observations of instrumental string teaching in the community. Each student will be placed in a school, or related setting, to observe “real world” teaching. These observations are divided into two sets of three-hour experiences, one is elementary (three hours total) and one is secondary (three hours total). A signed reflection form is required to receive credit.

Professional Development and Disposition: (10% of the Final Grade)

Continual growth and development as a musician and teacher throughout a career are essential so during each term of study, as a music education major, you will exhibit a commitment to professional growth and development by completing professional development hours through several activities. Complete details of this assignment will be discussed in class and will be posted in Canvas along with a rubric to determine the grade, you may also visit the music education webpage for details as well as upcoming events.

<https://www.bsu.edu/academics/collegesanddepartments/music/degrees-and-programs/undergraduate-majors/music-education/current-music-education-students>

Note: membership in a professional organization is mandatory to achieve a basic level of professionalism.

You will also be evaluated in the area of professional disposition. Please review the rubric (posted on Canvas and the Music Education website) for more information. You must achieve at least a Basic level of professionalism on the disposition rubric to pass the course. **An Unsatisfactory in any category will automatically cause a maximum of a C- grade which means you must retake the course.** Note: membership in a professional organization is mandatory to achieve a basic level of professionalism.

E-Portfolio: (5% of the Final Grade)

All students will continue to progress on their E-Portfolio. This portfolio, based on the InTASC standards, should document students’ development as a teacher. With each InTASC standard, a paragraph of what they learned in this class must be stated. Most students use the course number (MUSE 355) as a heading and start the statement with, “In MUSE 355, String Methods, we learned...” E-Portfolios must contain new artifacts from the class; String Pedagogy Handbook, some pertinent HAT Journals, and articles or handouts the student found to be exceptionally useful. Each artifact must be a link that is associated with the appropriate InTASC standard. E-Portfolios are turned in to Canvas as a link to the website.