

# Course Syllabus

**School Name: The Greenville County Schools Fine Arts Center**

**Course Name: Strings Chamber Music I**

**Instructor: John Ravnar**

**Office Room Number: Room 213**

**Phone number: 355-2566**

**E-mail Address: jrvanar@greenville.k12.sc.us**

**Class Time: 9:15 - 10:10 AM, 1:15 - 2:10 PM**

## **Required Textbook:**

Each student maintains a notebook of sheet music, scales, scores, and articles supplied by the Fine Arts Center. This is used every day in class. Supplemental texts and instructional materials include:

The Galamian Scale System for Violin (Viola and Cello transcribed by Olsen, and Jensen)

Carl Flesch Scale System (arranged for Double Bass by Reinke)

Rhythmic Training (Starer)

Essential Technique for Strings, and Advanced Technique for Strings (Allen, Gillespie, Tellejohn Hayes)

Variables (Klotman)

All-State Orchestra solo and etude literature

Standard works of the chamber music literature (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Bloch, Grier, etc.)

Ensemble! (Loft)

Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (Sadie)

Strad, Strings, and Chamber Music America (various contributor articles).

## **Course Description:**

The Fine Arts Center offers a unique approach to string education in the United States. A daily chamber music class is offered to develop individual technical proficiency, rehearsal technique, performance, communication, advanced musicianship, and musical decision making skills. Students perform several formal public concerts at the school and in the community, and participate in guest master classes.

An advanced technical regimen, solo and chamber music of professional caliber comprise the musical literature of the course. Students participate in a variety of chamber ensembles performing works ranging from the baroque era to premieres of works by contemporary composers.

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**Objectives** At the conclusion of this course, the student will:

- demonstrate correct positioning and posture with their instrument;
- develop correct bowing and left hand techniques;
- demonstrate a variety of characteristic timbres, intonation, and phrasing;
- perform as a soloist and ensemble member;
- correctly interpret rhythms, pitches, and other notational symbols and terms;
- interact with ensemble members and audience;
- perform the literature assigned to the expected level of competency;
- demonstrate improved skill at sight-reading and growth in musicianship;
- perform major and minor scales in 3 octaves with a variety of bowing styles and patterns;
- demonstrate knowledge of current and historical performers and stylistic practices;
- demonstrate knowledge of the biographical facts about the composers of music performed;
- write authoritative program notes for works performed;
- discuss the historical and cultural context of works performed;
- analyze the works performed in terms of the fundamental elements of music, structure and character;
- demonstrate proper stage manners and etiquette.

## Course Requirements

### A. Attendance and Tardy Policy:

**\*REFER TO FINE ARTS CENTER HANDBOOK\***

### B. Classroom Rules and Expectations:

- Students should have their instruments unpacked and tuned at the beginning of each class.
- All students should bring a pencil, instruments, and chamber music notebook to class every day.
- As with any arts class emphasizing skill acquisition, regular attendance is vital. If you are absent, it is expected that you will ask for the make-up work.
- The instructor is available on *most* days for extra help from 8:15 - 9:15 AM, 11:05-11:40, and 3:05-4:00 PM. It is expected that any student requiring extra help will ask for it. Appointments are recommended whenever possible.
- Mature behavior, respectful of colleagues and instructors, is expected at all times.

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### C. Supplies Necessary for Course:

Stringed instruments (in good working order), pencils and a notebook. Students may be asked to purchase a methods book.

### Assessment Information and Grading Scale:

Student performance is graded using the mandated South Carolina state grading scale. Specifics of student evaluation:

**Performance skills:** Students will perform a minimum of 8 chamber pieces, in addition to solo pieces, etudes, and scales. Four class concerts will be held at the Fine Arts Center with additional opportunities for public and professional engagements possible.

**Analytical skills:** Generally short papers, a lecture-demonstration, critiques, and written and performing quizzes.

Grading is weighted 40% Minor Assessments (homework, class work, quizzes, minor individual or group projects, evaluation of skill development, written or performed tasks, ensemble cooperation and on task skills) of which there will be a minimum of 12 grades per quarter, and 60% Major Assessments (Public Performances, In Class Performances, Playing tests, Individual research projects), 3 or 4 per quarter.

### Major Assignments and Projects required:

Four formal concerts, and a comprehensive and cumulative final exam are given. Once each semester the students will complete a short paper and a brief lecture. In addition, a weekly listening log is required.

### Tentative Course Outline

Week 1	Introduction to Chamber Music; Ensemble exercises; warm-up routine; Rehearsal and practice techniques.
Week 2	Solo and sight-reading evaluations; First group assignments/rehearse; String terms/definitions; Physical form/Technical set-up.
Week 3	All-State pieces; Intro to scales with accelerated rhythms series; C Major/ G Major; Second group assignments; Tone production.
Week 4	Review string terms and bow stroke definitions; Terms quiz; Bb Major/ D Major; Scale quiz; All-State pieces.
Week 5	Sounding point; F Major/a minor; Intro. To concert critiques; Perform/critique first pieces; group study, rework pieces; All-State pieces.
Week 6	Collé; g minor/d minor; College discussion; Scale quiz; Perform/critique second pieces.
Week 7	Martelé; e minor/C Major; Videotaping; groups rehearse; All-State audition.
Week 8	Spiccato; Bb Major/D Major; Double stops; groups rehearse.
Week 9	Bow, speed and weight; F Major/g minor; Dress rehearsals.
Week 10	Sevcik finger pattern exercises; Scale quiz; a minor/d minor; CONCERT #1; Mix & match ensembles (sight-reading); new group assignments.
Week 11	Mock auditions; Double stops; e minor/ b minor; second group assignments.
Week 12	Regional Orchestra pieces; Major and minor scale review.

Week 13	String crossing; Performance practice (period instruments) discussion; In-class performances; Regional Orchestra Festival.
Week 14	Legato; Program notes/Stage remarks; groups rehearse.
Week 15	Chords; In-class performances; Program notes due; Sight-reading.
Week 16	Etude class; videotape ensemble; review bow strokes; reading assignment.
Week 17	Eb Major; Vibrato; Dress rehearsal; CONCERT #2; Reading reports due.
Week 18	Showcase performance; Solo class; Sight-reading; A Major; Compare recordings.
Week 19	Eb Major / f# minor; Sight-reading; New group assignments.
Week 20	Intro. To research sources; Lecture topics; Rehearsal.
Week 21	B Major / c minor; Warm-up techniques; Rhythmic reading.
Week 22	Student lectures delivered; Rehearsal; Scale quiz.
Week 23	E Major / f minor; Rehearsal; Videotape in-class performances.
Week 24	Shaping consonant and vowel sounds with the bow; Rehearsal.
Week 25	Ab Major / c# minor; All-State Orchestra excerpts.
Week 26	All-State Orchestra excerpts; Rehearsal; All-State Orchestra weekend.
Week 27	A Major; Rehearsal; Dotted and triplet rhythm exercises.
Week 28	Shifting exercises; CONCERT #3; New group assignments.
Week 29	Scale review, parallel keys; Rehearsal.
Week 30	Contemporary compositions; Sight-reading.
Week 31	Scale review, parallel keys; Rehearsal
Week 32	Improvisation; Program notes due.
Week 33	Rehearsal; Concert critique due.
Week 34	Scale review, parallel keys; Scale Quiz.
Week 35	Rehearsal; SHOWCASE.
Week 36	New scale systems; CONCERT #4.

This course is cumulative: the majority of these topics are referenced repeatedly after they are introduced. Thus, this schedule lists the approximate points at which each topic is introduced, but not necessarily the points at which they are finished.

### **Plan for Routine Communication With Parents**

- quarterly Fine Arts Center Newsletter is mailed to all parents of Fine Arts Center students.
- parents are contacted promptly in the event of academic or disciplinary problems.
- a log of parent phone calls is maintained in teacher's office.

### **Prerequisites and Audition Requirements**

Experience and training in strings, as demonstrated in an audition is required. Audition requirements consist of a 3 octave scale (2 octave scale for double bass), two contrasting pieces, rhythmic sight-reading, and sight-reading from the standard chamber music literature.