

2020-2021 Modern Strings/ Music Technology Handbook & Syllabus

Welcome

Welcome to Modern Strings/Music Tech! This is a 2-part course which will teach you methods of performing modern music using modern instruments, as well as the ins and outs of sound technology. My ultimate goal for this course is to get you familiar with modern music practices in order to help you tap into your own creativity! This year will be strange, to say the least, but this handbook will hopefully answer many of the questions you may have, and contains department policies and expectations. Please be sure to read completely and carefully.

Facilities

Class will take place daily in A105. Students will also have periodic practice/recording sessions in the individual practice rooms in the music suite. Materials such as instruments, microphones, cables, etc. will be kept in the tech office. Students will also be assigned materials such as instruments, equipment, etc. that will be theirs to use for the duration of this class.

Due to limited materials and concerns about sanitation/storage, you currently are not able to take school equipment home with you. Students will be given ample time each week to experiment with what we have learned. If a student does have an instrument at home, they may use them at home for practice or bring them in to use for class! Instruments from home can be safely stored in the tech office and will not be used by anyone but the student who brought it.

It is expected that students will take care of their shared space, keeping it clean and neat, as well as the equipment in that space. Misuse of the space or equipment can result in the loss of certain privileges as well as appropriate disciplinary action.

NO FOOD OR DRINK IS ALLOWED IN THE MUSIC SUITE.

Class Expectations

- Come prepared to class with all necessary materials (Folder, device, notebook, pencil, etc.)
- Gum, food, and drinks are prohibited during class
- Be attentive, listen to/follow instruction, participate fully in all class activities
- Participate in class discussion and practice to the best of your ability
- There will be specific times you are asked to use phones/laptops in class. Otherwise - KEEP CELL PHONES AWAY.
- Apply musical concepts and skills to the best of ability

Behavior Expectations

Music students tend to be the cream of the crop, and are often assumed to be well behaved. As members of the music department, students are expected to behave in the following manner:

- Serve as positive examples for the rest of the student body
- Cooperate with your classmates and work as a team
- Act respectfully towards fellow students and faculty
- Show respect for property and equipment of others and of the school
- Be responsible and dependable
- Come to class ready to learn
- Follow through with your commitments year-round

Additionally, smoking or use of any drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited at any Music Department function. Violations may result in the immediate expulsion of the student from the program and/or the loss of any awards, festival/trip participation, etc. The high school principal will be notified and apply any further disciplinary action required.

Class Overview

This is a tentative schedule of what we will be doing through the course of this class. Keep in mind how fluid things will be this year, so this schedule may change as we get a feel for what does and doesn't work.

First Semester – Modern Strings

Week 1-3: History of Stringed Instruments and the Basics of Playing & Reading for Acoustic Guitar

Week 4-6: Practical playing for Guitar

Week 7-8: Advanced playing concepts, Electronics, & Further Practice

Week 9: Dedicated Practice & QP1

Week 10-11: Basics of Playing & Reading for Bass Guitar

Week 12-14: Basics of Playing & Reading for Ukulele

Week 15-16: Practical Playing in a Modern Band

Week 17-18: Dedicated Practice & QP2

Second Semester – Music Technology

Week 1-3: The Science, History, & Basic Equipment of Sound Technology

Week 4-6: Basic use & Application of Music Software – DAWs and MIDI

Week 7: Music Software – Beyond the Basics

Week 8-9: Dedicated Practice & QP3

Week 10-12: The Basics of Recording & Mixing

Week 13-15: The Basics of Songwriting & the Modern Music Industry

Week 16: Dedicated Practice & QP4

Week 17-18: Finals probably – Continued Practice & QP4

Quarterly Projects

In lieu of midterms or finals, progress in this course will be judged by periodic projects, including 4 major projects – one to finish each marking period of school. Each of these projects will apply what you have learned so far in a practical way – the way you would use these skills in the real world.

QP1 – Individual: You will be asked to learn and perform a song's rhythm part along with a recording on your guitar.

QP2 – Groups: You will be asked to learn and perform a song in a group of 2 or 3. At the very least, your small group must consist of one Rhythm player (guitar or ukulele) and one Bass player. Groups of 3 should have one of each instrument (guitar, ukulele, & bass).

QP3 – Individual: You will be asked to create your own original piece of music to fit a theme. At the minimum, you must have at least 4 tracks: 1 drum track, 1 bass track, 1 rhythm track, and 1 melody track. Of these tracks, at least 1 must be written using MIDI controls, and at least 1 must be assembled from GarageBand Loops. You may add additional tracks or loops as you deem necessary.

QP4 – Groups: You and your group will be asked to cover and record a song using any and all of your musical skills. The song can be of any genre, and can have any instrumentation beyond the minimum requirements of Drums, Bass, Rhythm, and Melody. Of these tracks, at least 1 track must be recorded, 1 must be written with Midi, and 1 must be assembled from GarageBand Loops. You may add additional tracks or loops as necessary to make the cover your own. You may play the song exactly as it goes, or you may change the style or genre as you see fit, but it must be recognizable.

Homework/Practicing

In any creative medium, the best way to learn is through practical experience. This can mean reviewing what you already know, or experimenting and trying new ways to apply your skills. Students will be given plenty of in-class time to practice and experiment in both halves of the year. Practicing in class will only do so much however, therefore there are a couple options available for additional practice for class.

In-school practicing:

For extra practice time, students may only come to the music suite during a study hall, and MUST have a pass from a music teacher (it doesn't necessarily need to be Mr. H). Getting the 'ok' from teachers elsewhere is not acceptable. While you are in the music suite during a study hall, you are expected to WORK. You will be asked to return to study hall if you cannot stay on task. Students wanting extra practice time may also utilize the practice rooms in the music suite after dismissal until 3PM.

Modern Music Club:

Modern Strings students are encouraged, though not required, to become part of the school Modern Music club. This club gathers to practice 1-2 times weekly, and puts on several shows throughout the year, performing anything from rock, to folk, to jazz, to modern pop. Keep in mind – if you join Modern Music Club, you *will* be expected to participate in performances.

**PLEASE NOTE: as after-school activities have been temporarily suspended, there will be no Modern Music Club for at least the first part of the year. I am currently exploring virtual options for Modern Music.*

At-home practicing:

Although I am currently exploring options of providing instruments to students for home use in the event of a school closure, unfortunately students may not currently take home school instruments or equipment. If you do have an instrument at home, daily practice will only help you progress faster and farther – perhaps even beyond what is planned for this class. If you do not have equipment at home, but are interested in purchasing your own, talk to Mr. H about what to look for – purchasing an instrument (especially virtually) is not easy.

Some practicing tips:

1. Practice in a place where you will not be distracted.
2. Practicing more often for less time will yield better results than practicing less often for more time. (i.e. practicing 20 minutes every day vs. practicing 2 hours every Saturday)
3. Start with clear goals in mind. Do not just play through your music in 'autopilot mode.' Say to yourself what you intend to improve or accomplish, and work towards that goal.
4. If you are having difficulty with a certain part of your music, break it up into smaller bits and slow it down. If it keeps giving you trouble, move on to something else, but be sure to come back to it.
5. Vary your practice session by working on several different things. Working on a single passage or even a single piece for half an hour can be hindering and frustrating.
6. Do not just practice what you already know how to do. Try new techniques, work on what you have been struggling with. Try to make some intentional progress, rather than just regurgitate what we've done in class.
7. Practice how you would perform! Play with correct technique, proper posture, etc.

Grading Policy

MS/Music Tech grades are tentatively based on the following:

- Daily class attendance/participation: 5 points daily
 - To earn full credit, students must follow all class & behavior expectations listed above
- District-required quarterly writing samples: 15 points each
- Concept Checkpoint Assignments: 15 points
- Classroom/Homework assignments: 10-25 points
- Quarterly Projects: 100 points

COVID changes in the classroom

There are a lot of things to consider this year, and while we will be largely working towards our same classroom goals and major projects, there are obviously things that need to change.

Unfortunately, this year is a waiting game. All evidence points to it not being a question of *if* things shut down again, but rather a question of *when*. The difference is that last year we did not have the benefit of experience. This year we do.

My main goal this year is to make the transition between in-person, blended, and virtual teaching as seamless as possible. I am exploring options that will take full advantage of our devices for distance learning as well as providing each student with the means to practice and participate in our activities.

On the following pages I've listed a few major changes that will be taking place this year.

Room & Teacher changes:

- The music teachers have worked out a system to arrange our classrooms that ensures only string and music technology classes will be taught in A105 to reduce aerosol exposure.
- For the first half of the year, I have opted to not have wind instruments in the 1st period orchestra to reduce aerosol exposure. I will revisit this decision after our winter performance date.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom and in the hall outside A105.
- Seating may need to be flexible as students transition between virtual and in-person.
- Mr. H will wear gloves if he needs to handle any student's instrument.
- Mr. H will be wearing a mask at all times due to his own health risks.

Student changes:

- As of Aug. 17, all students must wear a mask in class unless specified otherwise by a 504 plan.
- Students will be asked to wash/sanitize hands before & after handling instruments or equipment.
- Students will be asked not to handle another student's materials or instruments.
- Students must remember to **bring devices to school fully charged each day**, as much of the material in this class (especially in the second half of the year) relies on using devices.

Google Classroom: join code 3Z5LYIP

Teachers have been told to utilize the Google suite to smooth the potential switch between in-person, blended, and virtual instruction. Some of you have already opted to remain virtual for this first part of the year.

Due to the nature of internet latency and the *nearly* (but not quite) instant speed which information travels online, live participation virtually in music groups is extremely complicated. Anyone in musical last year has already had an experience of what trying to rehearse live online is like. Any virtual performance you have seen is the product of hours (if not days) of guided practice and editing.

Because of this, students joining class via stream will need to follow certain guidelines when practicing music as a group. We will address specifics during class, but general guidelines are as follows:

- Students will need to join our google classroom using the join code above using their SCHOOL PROVIDED EMAIL ADDRESS. The google class will not be accessible from any other account.
- Students will have access to a 'virtual folder' in the google classroom containing any sheet music/lead sheets or other resources needed for class.
- Depending on school's status (current in-person model, blended, or virtual), Mr. H will adjust class procedures and goals as needed.
- Use headphones whenever possible when participating in a class stream – this will help avoid feedback issues.
- When practicing together, microphones will need to be muted to avoid issues like feedback or sound delay.
- Mr. H will keep tabs on the stream's chat, and will also be reachable by the methods below.

Contact

Mr. Hollenberg can be contacted the following ways.

- Email: jhollenberg@indians.k12.pa.us
- Phone: Please try school number first – I will use the work-from-home number only if teachers are told to refrain from entering the building.
 - School: (570)648-5731 ext. 3424
 - Work-from-home: (570)884-4024
- Remind app: text @music-tech to 81010 or enter class code @music-tech in Remind to register for text announcements.

***NOTE: Students must now have parental permission to use Remind.**

Modern Strings/Music Tech Handbook Form

Please fill out all requested information. Sign and return to Mr. H (electronically or in-person) or to the main office to acknowledge that you have received, read, and understood the orchestra handbook.

Additionally please fill in all requested information where able.

- I give my permission for my child to use Remind for the purpose of class reminders and announcements. (check box if yes)

**CLASS CODE: @music-tech

Student Name (print)

Parent/Guardian Name (print)

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Preferred Phone

Parent/Guardian Preferred Email

Additional Phone (if applicable)

Additional Email (if applicable)

What instruments do you already play? (if any)

Are you involved in any music groups? What are they? (Both in and out of school)

What do you listen to? (Favorite music genres, songs, albums, etc.)