



**Course Syllabus: Beginning Orchestra**  
**Instructor Information: Allison Rhoades**  
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**Class Description:** The beginning orchestra class starts the year with a basic introduction to the new instrument and proceeds through a beginning string method book. During the year of instruction, students gain greater mastery of their new instrument while learning selections in the keys of D, G and C. In addition to individual growth on their new instrument, students are introduced to the concepts and challenges of ensemble playing that will be further explored in the Intermediate level class.

**Student Expectations:** Students are expected to be on time for class with their instruments, music, and a pencil each week. Practicing at home throughout the week is essential for personal learning as well as for the advancement of the group as a whole.

**Grading:** Grades are available for this class, and will be based on the following criteria:

- Class participation, preparation, behavior & attendance will be 30%
- Concert attendance will be 40%.
- Assessments – completion of weekly practice records and performance (students will be asked to play in small groups and/or my listening and assessing during rehearsal class time) will be 30%.

### **September**

Class introductions, class expectations, pass out folders and music. Discuss instrument history with the use of visual aids. Introduce instrument care, instrument parts, bow parts and accessories. Introduce initial guitar style holding and use of pizzicato to play open strings with rote rhythms. Introduce beginning bow hold along with elements of reading music

### **October**

Continued development of bow hold with dowel and bow exercises. First of several class rhythms introduced for bowing motion. Shaping the left hand is introduced and placed on the fingerboard sequentially adding notes culminating in D major scale. Early folk songs introduced.

### **November**

Basic music theory and note reading skills further developed with weekly homework assignments. Bow is placed on the string and class rhythms reinforced for the production of a quality tone. Constant assessment of posture, shaping of both hands and music reading skills emphasized. Class assists in selection early folk songs for upcoming showcase concert.

### **December**

Continued reinforcement of bowing for pleasing tone with proper bow hold. Reinforcement of proper left hand shape for the production of good intonation. Ear training exercises implemented for improved listening skills as it relates to personal intonation. Rehearsing and refining of selected songs for upcoming showcase concert in mid-December.

### **January**

Review of fall goals. Introduce arm level changes needed for string crossings, bow markings and characteristics of a quality tone. Continue development of ear training with interval awareness. Addition of eighth notes bringing rhythmic variety to songs and the resulting challenges. Introduce beginning concepts of ensemble playing. New music distributed and method of reading new music introduced.

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### **February**

Expansion of basic music reading skills including, time signature changes, repeat signs with endings, chords, arpeggios, melody vs. harmony and basic music forms. Use of 4<sup>th</sup> finger for violin/violas introduced and shifting for cello/bass. Exploration of the G string and increased difficulty of bowing patterns.

### **March**

Teach and utilize concept of changing bow speed, meters in 3, the challenging concept of slurs and ties. Expanding note knowledge to culminate in G major scale with varied bowing patterns. Continued refinement of new sheet music for parent observation week and our “casual classroom concert”.

### **April**

Introduce new concept of the “natural”, chromatics, new notes F and C-natural and reinforce with ear training. Through listening, gain awareness of other music styles including latin American, far eastern, nationalistic and 16th century. Expand ensemble skills with duet studies and songs in two, three and four parts. Expand note knowledge to culminate in C major scale performed with a variety of rhythms and bowings. Select and begin rehearsal of new music for final May concert.

### **May**

Rehearse and refine music for concert in late May. Introduce concepts of staccato, hooked bowing, dynamics and improvisation. Continue refinement of left hand shape for intonation accuracy, ear training, bow hold and motion for continued development of a smooth and even tone. Information/brochures are distributed for summer music opportunities to continue musical growth.