MPPM 420 Pop Strings

Fall 2020, Mondays 5-6:50pm Pacific Time

Faculty: Ginny Luke

E-mail: vluke@usc.edu
Office Hours: Flexible (by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION
Welcome to Pop Strings Ensemble! This class will study the art of pop strings from many different perspectives and styles. You will apply the lessons through performance on your instrument and in a variety of written worksheets that will enhance performance on your instrument. All lessons, exercises, and activities will be built around tunes that are commonly known in the popular styles of pop, rock, country, bluegrass, latin, and jazz repertoire.

OUTCOMES
The most important skills for a pop musician to have are a great ear, improvisational skills and an understanding of pop styles. As a pop player you MUST know the language of each style, and this language is found in the tunes that makeup the repertoire. We will focus on various styles over the course of the semester. We will study the melody, form, and harmony of the songs in these styles. We will apply principles of music (jazz and classical) theory, history, performance practice, and instrumental technique (some classical, some new or alternative!) to maximize our understanding of these styles.

TOPICS TO BE COVERED:

1) Pop string sound production, phrasing and stylistic nuance
2) Ear-training
3) Improvisation
4) Rapid transcription of harmonies and solos (for studio and live work)
5) Sight-reading with stylistic accuracy and "on-the-spot" decision making
6) Writing for small groups (2-6 strings)
7) Contemporary bowing techniques: Chugging, chucking, swing, double shuffle
8) Groove and rhythmic pocket
9) Comping patterns
10) Identifying keys and chord changes
11) Identifying pop song form
12) Common roles in pop/alternative string ensembles

REQUIRED MATERIALS
- String instrument (pickup or mic if you own)
- Amazing Slow Downer app
- Metronome app
- Tuner app
- GoogleDrive
- Dropbox
- Music manuscript book or paper for note taking and transcription
- Internet (for attending class and submitting assignments)
- Computer, tablet, or smart phone for Zoom classes, recording of video assignments, and access to Blackboard

Manuscript paper and your instrument must be brought to every class.

ADDITIONAL TECHNOLOGY/MATERIALS (optional)

- Piano or electronic keyboard

  - If using a midi controller, then you will need a USB cable and a computer capable of running GarageBand, Logic, or any other software program/DAW (there are free programs available, such as GarageBand for Mac and ProTools First for Windows/Mac).

  - Audiomovers (free software, link will be sent out)
  - Interface, microphone, cables, mic stand.

Two packages Focusrite offers USC students (not required): They both include an interface, microphone, mic cable, mic clip, and headphones. You would need to purchase a mic stand (and pop filter if you sing) separately.

Focusrite/Novation "studio" bundles (Edu 25% off retail rate):

   Focusrite Solo Studio (3rd Gen): $169.99 with Edu discount (includes interface (1 input, 1 preamp), mic cable, mic, mic clip, and headphones)

   Focusrite 2i2 Studio (3rd Gen): $202.49 with Edu discount (includes interface (2 inputs, 2 preamps), mic cable, mic, mic clip, and headphones)

USC-Focusrite/Novation purchase link: https://store.focusrite.com/en-gb/offers/usc-student-faculty-discount

For further information on Audio and MIDI Equipment Purchase Options for USC Thornton Studentsand FacultySoftware and Hardware contact Ginny for PDF of information.

NOTE: All course materials (lesson documents, worksheets, sheet music, etc.) will be distributed via our main Google Drive folder, which I will share with you.

You will be graded on the following:
     1) Play-tests - rhythm, intonation, stylistic accuracy, listening skills. Music history.

     2) Quizzes/Pop Worksheets

     3) Music preparation: Binder/digital folder with Pop Worksheets and organized music

     4) Audio preparation: Organized audio files (playlist or Dropbox folder), utilizing metronome and Amazing Slow Downer app. Turning in audio recordings on time

     4) Mid-Term and Technique Final, Final Performance videos

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	0-59

Online Student Folder: All items must have a <u>descriptive title titled PopStrings_YourLastName_Week 1_Assignment</u> (ex. "PopStrings_Luke_Week1_Scales"… NOT "187423087_823.mp4"). Please organize these in sub-folders (ex. "Week 1", "Week 2", etc.) within your Google Drive "Student Portfolio" Folder

Quizzes - 5% of grade

PDF Worksheets - 5% of grade

Video Assignments and Vlogs - 20% of grade
This consists of performance videos (19% of grade) and vlogs (1% of grade)

Technique Video Midterm: 17.5% of grade

Creative Project: Arrangement/Performance: 15% of grade; Demonstrating the skills learned in class, prepared independently

Technique/Groove Video Final: 17.5% of grade

Performance Video Final Exam: 20% of grade

MIDTERM (video): Due Sunday, September 27, 2020 (end of week 6)

TECHNIQUE/GROOVE FINAL EXAM (video): Due Sunday, November 1, 2020 (end of week 11)

PERFORMANCE FINAL EXAM (video): Due Monday, November 16, 2020 at 4:00 pm (finals week)

ADDITIONAL INFO

1. Weekly Practice/Establishing Daily Work Habits – For this class (and all classes), *you get exactly what you put in.* While there's no one-size-fits-all practice regimen, what counts most is QUALITY and CONSISTENCY. Depending on your practice goals for the day, your session times may vary.

   I strongly encourage you to practice on a regular basis. These skills in articulation, musical connection, groove, bebop/blues scales, improvisational skills and awareness of styles on aren't built overnight; we can't get fluent in these styles a day before a final. With consistent practice and LISTENING, you will see dramatic improvement. The exams and assignments reflect a semester's worth of work and steady commitment. Be thoughtful about your time management and stay on track with weekly assignments and class expectations.

2. Attendance and Participation – We're going to cover a LOT of material and styles this semester, so attending each class is crucial. The best way to make the most of this class is to participate. Learning pop string styles isn't a passive task... put these concepts to practice and ask questions! If you are in a time-zone that makes attendance impractical, then please let me know right away (USC defines reasonable learning hours as anytime between 7 am-10 pm in your local time zone)! I will work with you to make sure you get the education and the interaction you need.

   i) While you're not required to schedule office hours with me, I *highly,* **highly** encourage you to do so. I am always happy to answer any questions you might have, whether during class or outside of class! If you're having any difficulty or would like any clarification, please don't hesitate to reach out!

3. Absences/Make-Ups – There is no "attendance grade" for this class; don't let this fool you… your participation is a vital component of your learning, and this will be reflected in your assignments and exams. If, for some reason, you *absolutely* need to miss class, **PLEASE EMAIL ME BEFOREHAND** (NOT 20 minutes before class… communication is a valuable skill). All synchronous classes will be recorded for asynchronous review; all lesson materials and other documents will be available in the main Google Drive folder. Unless our regular class time falls outside reasonable local learning hours (as described above), I expect you to be present for all synchronous class sessions. Otherwise, it will be *your sole responsibility* to review the lectures and course material, and to **reach out for any further clarification**.

4. Homework Policy - *Late Homework (Worksheets and Videos)*: 10 percentage points are deducted for each calendar day that an assignment is late.

5. Class Format/Video Assignments – Video assignments must be completed AND SUCCESSFULLY UPLOADED before class; these are critical, as they allow me to deliver personalized feedback. When applicable, video assignments will have 'scaled' options for various difficulty levels (for those who want to take the concepts further or those who simply want a challenge).

What You Can Expect from Me:
- You have my respect
- I am here to help you, whether during class or outside of class; I want you to thrive, I want to help you establish a high level career as a pop string player, and if that isn't your end goal, to nurture your interest in pop strings and immerse you in these styles and musical history.
- If something doesn't make sense, please ask me to clarify!

What I Expect from You:
- Your respect
- Arrive to class on time, be ready to learn with an open mind, and ask questions! Tell me about your goals and tell me what you hope to get out of this class.
- Turn in your assignments on time and recognize these assignments are to prepare you to get jobs and be a major part of the music industry. If you have a request to study something, tell me!

Synchronous session recording notice

As required by USC, the synchronous sessions for this course will be recorded and provided to all students asynchronously.

Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment

USC has a policy that prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment. Please do not share or otherwise distribute class materials, music scores or recordings produced by me or any students in the conduct of this course without expressed permission.

SCampus Section 11.12(B)

> *Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (SeeSection C.1 Class Notes Policy).*

Zoom class format and etiquette

The best way to engage in class is to be present and active. I ask that you keep your camera on during all Zoom sessions. If you will be unable to keep your camera on during the synchronous Zoom session, please contact me prior to the class session.

This class is about learning and applying *concepts*, all of which I will demonstrate on camera; we will have time built into each class for you to experiment with these concepts in real time. To avoid cacophony, your microphones will be automatically muted upon entering the Zoom classroom. If you have any questions or comments at any point in the lesson, you can unmute your microphone. For further guidance and best practices, please read the following document: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lMOPCm3bETKWseh3A6sObsyz1E1uHkW7/view?usp=sharing

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/ SCAMPUS/gov/. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at http:// www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS.

USC technology rental program
We realize that attending classes online and completing coursework remotely requires access to technology that not all students possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university's equipment rental program or other assistance. To apply, please submit an application on the Student Basic Needs portal.

USC Technology Support Links
Zoom information for students
Blackboard help for students
Software available to USC Campus

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

__Support Systems__

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
dsp.usc.edu
Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710
campussupport.usc.edu
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101
diversity.usc.edu
Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu
Non-emergency assistance or information.