

Dr. George Palton
Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Applied Lessons- Why do we do it!

It is the goal of applied lessons to help each student reach their full potential on their instrument. It is my philosophy that the better the individual is on their instrument, the better overall artist and educator they will be. The tools gained through intensive private and group study on one's main instrument can be applied towards the career path chosen by the individual. In my teaching I do not just show students how to complete specific tasks or play specific pieces of music. I also emphasize the process of acquiring and strengthening fundamentals, procedures to learn repertoire, and methods to develop a unique and tasteful interpretation of music. The goals of self-awareness and self-sufficiency are practical no matter what the chosen career path of the student is.

Applied Lessons- How do we do it?

As human beings a set of long and short term goals can provide motivation and direction in our lives. This is especially true for college music students. These clearly stated and student centered learning goals have one primary objective, to help the individual be his or her best. Success can be achieved within a system that offers flexibility for the individual while also supporting standards to uphold the institution and the profession. Some of the important goals of applied lessons include the following:

THE BASICS:

- **Fundamentals**- In my teaching I focus on fundamentals as a means to make the complex as simple as possible.
- **Daily Routines**- Small steps over a long period of time can add up to great things! Consistency in working towards solid fundamentals and musicianship will yield long term results.
- **Balance**- In applied lessons I stress a healthy balance of quality exercises, etudes, excerpts and solo literature in order to help the individual grow on their instrument.

LIFE SKILLS:

- **The Big Picture**- Through applied study individuals gain more than the ability to play their instrument. Students will develop communication skills and the ability to work within a team, internal discipline, motivation, the ability to focus and perform on demand, and pride in a job well done.
- **Time Management Skills**- I believe we can help students by providing strategies to help accomplish their goals in the time that they have.
- **Experience**- In my teaching I strongly believe in using the Tuba-Euphonium ensemble and the studio class to help broaden the musical horizons of my students. One of the exciting aspects of college is the wealth of new experiences students embark upon, and as applied music professors we have the ability to help provide them with many opportunities. Students should perform a diverse selection of music early and often within their college careers. This includes performing in varied settings such as solo, chamber groups, and large ensembles. The act of performing is not enough on its own; early on students need to develop their musical interpretive language. Immediately and relentlessly, encouraging creativity within a backdrop of tasteful musical parameters should be a focus. Some of the greatest potential for learning occurs outside the classroom. Attendance at seminars, university and guest recitals, masterclasses, and participation in professional and social extra curricular activities compliment the classroom and studio.
- **Critical Thinking**- Students should be able to express their opinion on music and the performance of music.
- **Self-Awareness**- A goal of applied lessons is to create self-sufficiency within an individual. The student should possess the ability to be his or her own teacher and to spread the gift of music through performance, education, and research to others.

The Role of the Applied Professor.

I believe that a university applied professor should not only demonstrate the best of musicianship but constantly work to redefine this standard. He or she can be a role model to students not only in terms of what they are able to produce, but also by demonstrating the work ethic it takes to do so. I am drawn to college teaching because of the expectation on applied professors to be active as performers, teachers, and researchers. In these disciplines I intend to continue to improve myself and the lives of my students long after I have received the privilege of tenure at a university. Lastly, I strongly believe that it is important for university professors to connect with our students. I have an open door policy with my students to discuss any of their concerns. I often remind them that "although I may not always agree, I will always listen."