

## MUS 194: BEGINNING CLASS GUITAR I FOR NON-MAJORS

### COURSE SYLLABUS

Spring Semester, 2014  
ASU School of Music

Instructor: Brendan Lake  
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#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

\*Acoustic Guitar - Bring to class every day unless otherwise instructed. Solid-body electric guitars are discouraged.

\*Textbook: [Mel Bay Mastering the Guitar Class Method, Level 1: 9th Grade & Higher by William Bay and Mike Christiansen](#)

\*Guitar Picks (any size, and if you don't yet have a preference, start with [medium](#))

\*Capo (recommended brand: Kyser)

- Note: Capos are designed to fit either [steel-string guitars](#) or [nylon-string guitars](#). Make sure you choose the right style for your guitar.

\*Clip-on tuner (recommended brand: [Snark](#))

\*Music and worksheets delivered via email/internet

Note: I've provided Amazon links, but most guitar stores will have these, with the exception of the textbook (which will be available at the ASU bookstore). If you have any questions, please email me or ask a guitar store employee for help.

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES

**Right-hand Technique:** Use a pick or the fingers of the right hand to create clean, strong notes and strums in the correct or appropriate rhythms

**Left-hand Technique:** Use the correct pressure and placement of the left hand fingers to facilitate playing in positions I-IX without excess tension or awkward arm/wrist angles. Learn to execute left hand slurs, "hammer-ons" and "pull-offs"

**Chords:** Perform basic chords in the open position

**Equipment:** Understand the parts of the guitar, how they function, how to care for the instrument, and how to keep it in tune

**Sight-reading:** Read standard notation (in the open position), tablature, and chord diagrams

**Improvisation:** Use the blues, pentatonic, and diatonic major and minor scales to improvise over a given harmonic progression

**Repertoire:** Learn various songs and pieces chosen by the instructor and the student

#### PRACTICING

Your instructor will introduce materials during class time, with the expectation that you will practice outside of class and use your instructor's office hours to help you with any questions about assignments. As a general guideline, you will need to practice at least 30 minutes per each class in order to attain significant benefit.

## ATTENDANCE

Daily attendance in class is expected. You are responsible for all of the material covered in class, whether or not you are present. Absences are categorized as excused or unexcused for grading purposes (see below). Student absences that are considered excused are those that involve the following:

- ASU required events (please provide documentation in advance from the professor in charge of the event to your MUS 194 instructor)
- Religious holidays not observed by the university (please contact your MUS 194 instructor and explain your absence in advance)
- Medical emergencies (please provide written documentation from your doctor, emergency room physician or medical clinic)
- Other absences may be considered excused in consultation with your instructor at his/her discretion (please consult in advance when possible)

You are allowed 3 unexcused absences before your grade will be affected. On the 4<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence, your final grade will be lowered 8%. On the 5<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence, your final grade will be lowered 16%. On the 6<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence, your final grade will be lowered 24%. On the 7<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence, you will automatically fail the class.

\*The student must attend spend at least 45 minutes in class to earn attendance.

## GRADING

You will be graded regularly in class throughout the semester. Make-ups for missed grades due to unexcused absences and tardiness are not allowed and will be averaged into the final grade as zeros, with the exception of the midterm and final exam grades (see below). For those absences that are excused, the assignments/grades must be made up within a week of the absence.

The grade is calculated using the following percentages:

Assignments (6% x 5) - 30%

Concert review - 10%

Midterm Written Exam - 10%

Midterm Performance Exam - 10%

Final Written Exam - 15%

Final Performance Exam - 15%

Class participation and contribution - 10%

The grading scale is computed in percentages and is as follows:

90-100 = A

80-89.9 = B

70-79.9 = C

60-69.9 = D

59 or lower = E

We will use the (+) (-) system which is computed thusly: A+ = 96.6 – 100, A = 93.3 – 96.5, and A- = 90.0 – 93.2. The corresponding numbers in the 80's yield corresponding types of B's. The university system allows for C+ and C, but no C-.

**CONCERT REVIEWS:** You will be required to attend one on-campus guitar recital. In addition, you are asked to write a 1+ page double-spaced review of the recital. Please include

three paragraphs in your review: (1) the names of the performers, titles of the pieces; (2) your perceptions of the performance; (3) how what you heard (and saw) relates to this class. Use musical terms where appropriate. For more information, I've posted another sheet to guide you through this assignment.

## MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAMS

The exams consist of a written portion, which will cover class topics and principles, and a solo performance for the instructor conducted in the classroom. The exact times of the performance exams will be allotted the previous week and students will only need to show up for their appointment, with enough time beforehand to tune and warm-up.

**Note: you must take both midterms and both final exams to pass the class.**

## A FINAL NOTE

This course has been designed to help you learn the basic skills of guitar and musicianship. Please take advantage of everything this course has to offer. There are many resources available to you – class time, your instructor (including office hours and emails), and your classmates.

## AGENDA

(Subject to change based on class progress and interests)

### Week 1

#### Day 1 - Introduction to the class

Understanding how the guitar works

Holding the guitar and posture

Using a pick & open strings

Tablature and basic melodies

HW: Read pp. 2-6, p. 15

Practice pp. 16-17

#### Day 2 - More complex melodies

Tuning with your electronic tuner

Introduction to chords and strumming

Simplified (four-string) chords: C major, G major, G7, pp. 11-13

How to practice chords

HW: "Easy Folk Songs" – Course Packet (CP)

### Week 2

#### Day 1 - Perform "Easy Folk Songs" as a class

Understanding the pitches of the guitar

Avoiding buzzing and clipped notes

Chords: C major, E minor

HW: "Eleanor Rigby" (CP)

Practice p. 18 (all three parts for "Where the Red Fern Grows")

#### Day 2 – Perform p. 18 as a class

Using a capo

Rhythms and time signatures

More complex strumming patterns  
Subdividing rhythmic values  
Chords: A minor, G major, F major (Fmaj7)  
HW: Practice a few songs from Repertoire # 2

### Week 3

Day 1 – **ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE: Review of the first two weeks**

Review Repertoire #2  
Chords: D major, D minor  
Reading notes – p. 19-21  
Notes on the 1st string  
Plucking up and down  
HW: pp. 22-26

Day 2 - Notes on the 2nd string  
Fret positions and guitar fingerings  
Chords: E major  
HW: Practice a couple songs from repertoire #3  
pp. 29-32

### Week 4

Day 1 - Review Repertoire #3  
Notes on the 3<sup>rd</sup> string  
Finding music on the internet  
Tuning without a tuner, p. 7  
HW: pp. 33-35

Day 2 - Fret positions and guitar fingerings  
Two-octave major scale  
The natural/“white” notes in open position  
HW: pp. 49

### Week 5

Day 1 – **ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE: Internet Printouts (two tab, two chord)**

Review week 4 material  
Discuss internet printouts  
Two-octave minor scale  
Ensemble in class: p. 37  
HW: pp. 36

Day 2 – Ensemble in class: p. 50-51  
Vibrato  
“Swinging the eighths”  
HW: pp 42-44 \*Only the chords\*

## Week 6

Day 1 - Notes on the 4<sup>th</sup> string  
Performance midterm pieces  
Transcribing standard notation to/from tablature  
Chord: A major  
HW: pp. 52-53

Day 2 - Ensemble in class: Charlotte's Web, p. 57-59  
Musicality: Dynamics, Playing with tempo  
HW: p. 54, 131 (Tempo and Dynamics)

## Week 7

Day 1 – **ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE: Transcribing standard notation and tablature**  
Review for first written exam  
Review midterm repertoire  
HW: Prepare for exam and practice midterm pieces  
Day 2 - **WRITTEN EXAM - guitars not needed**

## Week 8

Day 1 & 2 - **PERFORMANCE MIDTERMS - Only come for your appointed time**

## Week 9 -

Day 1 – Review of the written exam  
New chords – D7, B7, A7, E7  
When to use 7 chords instead of regular major chords  
Twelve bar blues in A and E  
HW: p. 60, 97

Day 2 – Ascending Slurs (Hammer-ons)  
Descending Slurs (Pull-offs)  
HW: pp. 61-62  
“Wish You Were Here” - Pink Floyd (CP)

## Week 11

Day 1 - **ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE: Fretboard map**  
Review “Wish you were here”  
Notes on the 5<sup>th</sup> string  
Power chords  
Movable chord patterns  
Hw: p. 65-67

Day 2 – First and second endings, p. 68

Dotted quarter notes, p. 70  
Fingerpicking and *p i m a*  
Hw: Giuliani's Right Hand Patterns (1, 2, and 3) (CP)

Week 12

Day 1 - Fingerpicking in popular music  
Notes on the 6<sup>th</sup> string  
Hw: pp. 72-73

Day 2 – Practice on key signatures and sharps  
Natural harmonics  
Tuning using harmonics  
Hw: pp. 82-83, p. 90

Week 13

Day 1 - **ASSIGNMENT #5 DUE: Writing a Chord Progression**  
Final exam performance repertoire  
Review dynamics & tempo  
Musicality: Articulation & timbre (“TAM-ber”)  
Applying musicality principles to popular and classical music

Day 2 – Studying and practicing scales  
Basics of improvising  
Pentatonic scale in E minor  
Review the blues  
Hw: p. 113-115

Week 14

Day 1 – Bar chords: Bm, full F major  
Other topics requested or not covered

Day 2 – Review for the final exam  
Review performance exam repertoire

Week 15

Day 1 – **FINAL WRITTEN EXAM** – Guitars not needed

Day 2 - **PERFORMANCE EXAMS**  
Sign up to perform for me on either this day or during finals week. You don't need to go to the other session, and on your assigned day, you only need to show up for your time slot.

Finals Week

**PERFORMANCE EXAMS (continued)**