WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DON WRIGHT FACULTY OF MUSIC

MUSIC 3862A 001: Beginner Guitar Course
Winter 2021

Lectures: Tuesday (beginning January 12), Online.
New materials released each Tuesday at 6am.

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Office Hours: Online by appointment

Course Content:

This undergraduate course is open to non-music majors with no prior musical training or guitar experience. This course aims to develop students’ classical guitar playing skills, including a practical knowledge of the physiological principles that inform all aspects of guitar playing; including the positioning and movement of the body, arms, wrist and fingers, in accordance with current best practices in guitar pedagogy. Students will play within a solo guitar format utilizing repertoire from global music traditions including European art music, South American dance music, and American blues and popular music genres. Students will learn to play through aural and visual modeling as well as reading standard and tablature notation; playing expressively will be a main focus. The course will culminate with a final video performance submission in lieu of a final examination.

Course Outcomes:

By the end of this course, you will be able to position the body, guitar, hand, fingers, as well as move the fingers all in accordance with best ergonomic practices. You will be able to read basic standard music notation—including pitches and rhythms—tablature, and to learn through aural and visual modelling (i.e., playing by ear). You will be able to perform pieces with two voice textures, arpeggios, and diads from the classical music literature, as well as short riffs, chord strumming patterns, and power chords from the popular music literature. Above all you will learn to play expressively; performing with dynamic contrasts, flexible tempo and a warm tone.

Courseware and Materials:

Students will be required to have a classical guitar, foot-rest, music stand and a YouTube account. Instructional materials will be provided weekly through the Owl course website. If you are in the London area, guitars can be rented for approximately $10 per month from Long and McQuade music store, 725 Fanshawe Park Rd W, London, ON. Phone:(519) 439-0101. Electric and folk (steel string) guitar will not be permitted.
Methods of Evaluation & Grade Breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Video Performance Submission: 50%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Weekly Piece (40%)</td>
<td>10 x 4% = 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Weekly Supplemental Piece: (10%)</td>
<td>10 x 1% = 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Multiple-Choice Quiz: 20%</td>
<td>10 x 2% = 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Forum Post: 10%</td>
<td>10 x 1% = 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Video Submission 20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Course Requirements:

Weekly Video Performance Submission 50%

Each Tuesday you will submit a video recording of yourself performing an instructor chosen piece studied during the previous week. This piece and other supplementary materials will form the basis of your practicing for the week. Your video will demonstrate your practical application of the repertoire being studied in the previous week.

*Main Piece, 40%*: This video submission will highlight new musical/technical elements learned during the previous week.

*Supplemental Piece, 10%*: This video submission will highlight supplemental materials learn during the previous week. These may include short pieces learned by ear or by tablature, and may include chords and scales.

*Video Submissions*: Your video submission should include the entire guitar and your playing position (hands, arms, fingers, face) filmed straight on, at a face-to-face angle. You may record your video on any devise (i.e., cell phone, laptop). Please upload your video to Youtube, place the video on “unlisted mode”, copy the URL link and submit through the provided portal.

Weekly Forum Post 10%

Each week you will participate in a forum post. For instance, you may be asked to, 1) discuss an aspect of the weekly material that you find difficult and identify why you find it difficult, and 2) offer a solution or strategy for overcoming a difficulty that a peer has identified. For example, using the above post a peer might state, “I do not understand how to count rhythms when playing the guitar. I get confused with the difference between quarter notes and eight notes. Can someone offer a strategy to deal with this?” A response might be, “tap your foot in a consistent manner, that is a quarter note. Continue tapping the foot and clap twice; once as the foot goes down and once as the foot goes up; these are eighth notes”. The goal of the forum is to provide a space for students who experience difficulties with aspects of the curriculum to have a vehicle to voice those difficulties to others. Further, it is intended as a vehicle for classmates to engage in peer-tutoring with those who are experiencing difficulties. I will moderate the forum and, at
times, comment on, or create an instructional video to address pertinent topics. Forums open on Thursdays at 6am and close the following Tuesday at 6 am.

**Weekly On-Line Quiz – 20%**

Once per week there will be a 20-minute on-line quiz consisting of 10 multiple choice questions. Quizzes will test your knowledge of current repertoire being studied as well as aspects of guitar technique. Quizzes open Saturday morning at 6am and close on Sunday at 6am.

**Final Guitar Video Assessment 20%**

You will submit a solo guitar video performance of yourself at the end of the term. You may choose from a variety of pieces selected by the instructor, or a self-chosen piece, provided you have approval from the instructor. In the past, some students have chosen to perform popular music selections and even to sing and play. If you are choosing your own piece, please send a YouTube video and score for approval. (Due date, April 13)

**Weekly Assignment Timeline:**

Weekly timeline:

(a) New musical materials will be released each week on OWL at 6am on Tuesday.
(b) Forum posts will open each week at 6am on Thursday and close at 6am the following Tuesday.
(c) On-line Quizzes will open each week at 6 am on Saturday and close at 6am on Sunday.
(d) Video submission will be accepted from Tuesday 6am, until the following Tuesday at 5:59 am.

**Goals for the Class**

There are many aspects involved in learning to play a musical instrument. These including learning the proper positioning of the instrument, the movement of the body, how to read musical notation and how to practice effectively. While these are all very important aspects to learning an instrument, the *main focus* of this class will be on *expressive music making*. These express aspects include dynamic shaping (playing loud or soft) and use of flexible tempo (slowing down or speeding up). These expressive elements are the “good stuff”; the fun and exciting part of learning to play an instrument. The inclusion of these expressive aspects are largely why we enjoy listening to music, why we become interested in playing a musical instrument, and how we define excellent musicians.
A Word About Practicing

Unlike subjects that rely heavily on declarative knowledge, playing music relies heavily on procedural knowledge. In this respect music resembles sports more than mathematics. For this reason, you should focus your practice sessions by reviewing the basics: the positioning of the instrument and body, the movement of the fingers, a creating a beautiful sound. During practice you should identify musical areas needing refinement, establish realistic goals for those areas, create strategies to overcome those difficulties, practice using those strategies, then revaluate to see if those goals have been met. You will make many mistakes while learning to play an instrument. These mistakes are a good thing. They are opportunities for success. They allow you to identify and create change in performance.

A Word about Modelling

Observing another’s performance is a common strategy used to facilitate the execution of new motor tasks within the domains of sports (McCullagh, & Weiss, 2001) and musical performance (Dilworth, & DuCette, 2018). A significant amount of learning in this class will also come through modelling. A video modeled performance of each new piece will be included weekly in the lessons section of OWL. You should watch and listen to these modeled performance many times. In doing so you will gain a visual and an aural representation of how the piece sounds and should be played. This representation will guide you as you practice during the week.

Notes:

i) **Course Prerequisites:** There are no pre-requisites for this course

ii) **Grading scale:** A+=90-100%, A=80-89%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, D=50-59%, F=0-49%.

iii) **Academic Consideration for Student Absence:** Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student’s final grade. **Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus.** Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student’s final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year.

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are not met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. **Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.**
Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty. For the Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Special Note for Covid-19-related Situations:

As a guideline, if a student has been contacted by the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) to self-quarantine due to a Covid-19-related situation, then the Self-Reported Absence system is not to be used to report this absence or to request an academic accommodation. The student should contact the Academic Counselling office as soon as they are notified.

In general, students are advised to not self-determine when to self-isolate. Unless directed by the MLHU students should go about their business as usual. But if a student chooses to self-isolate due to a suspected Covid-19-related situation while waiting to receive direction from the MLHU then the student is directed to contact the Academic Counselling office as soon as possible for further direction on receiving accommodation consideration.

iv) Academic Consideration for Missing Work: In cases where students are unable to submit work due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if an online self-reported absence is submitted, or if appropriate supporting documentation is submitted to the Associate Dean’s office, and the accommodation is granted, then the missed assessments may be rescheduled or discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course, at the discretion of the instructor. If neither a self-reported absence nor an appropriate supporting document is submitted to the appropriate office, then the missed assessments will receive a grade of zero.

v) Mental Health & Wellness: Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to the Health and Wellness at Western page (https://www.uwo.ca/health/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or to go to the Wellness Education Centre located in UCC room 76. Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in UC11 or to click on the big green “I Need Help Now” button on the Health and Wellness page above.

vi) Academic Offences: Submission of work with which you have received help from someone else (other than the course instructor or TA) is an example of plagiarism, which is considered a major academic offence. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, as found at:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf
vii) Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Students work with Accessible Education Western (AEW, formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

viii) Religious Accommodation: Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar. http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo

ix) Online Etiquette: Some components of this course may involve synchronous online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honour the following rules of etiquette:

• Use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet)
• “Arrive” to class on time • Ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of discussions in the event that a class discussion deals with sensitive or personal material
• To minimize background noise, kindly mute your microphone for the entire class until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise
• Unless invited by your instructor, do not share your screen in the meeting
• Be prepared to turn your video camera off at the instructor’s request if the internet connection becomes unstable

The course instructor will act as moderator for the class and will deal with any questions from participants. To participate please consider the following:

• If you wish to speak, select the blue “raise hand” function and wait for the instructor to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question.
• Kindly remember to unmute your microphone and turn on your video camera before speaking. • Self-identify when speaking.
• Kindly remember to select the “raise hand” function again to lower your hand, mute your mic and turn off your video camera after speaking (unless directed otherwise).

General considerations of “netiquette”:

• Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.
• Be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing.
• Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment.
Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of “Zoom-bombing” a class, or of other serious online offenses, may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

x) **Computer-marked Multiple-choice Tests or Exams:** These may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.