

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**DON WRIGHT FACULTY OF MUSIC**  
**MUSIC 3862A – Beginner Guitar Course**  
**Fall 2021**

Lectures: Online

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**MUSIC 3862: BEGINNER GUITAR COURSE**

**Lectures:**

This course is "asynchronous," which means that we won't meet as a group at a particular time. Instead, you'll determine your own schedule for working through course activities and materials so that you can meet the course deadlines. New materials (video lectures, course curriculum etc.) will be released each Tuesday at 6am beginning September 14. Office hours will be held Tuesday evenings from 8-9 pm beginning Sept 14, on Zoom.

**Course Content:**

This undergraduate course is open to non-music majors with no prior musical training or guitar experience. The aims of the course will be to develop students' classical guitar playing skills, including a practical knowledge of the physiological principles that inform all aspects 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 primarily in a solo guitar format utilizing repertoire from global music traditions including European art music, American blues and popular music genres. Students will learn to play through aural and visual modeling and reading standard and tablature notation. Learning to play expressively will be a central focus of the course. The course will culminate with a student-chosen final video performance submission in lieu of a final examination.

**Course Materials:**

Students will be required to have a **classical guitar, foot-rest, music stand and a YouTube account**. No courseware or books will be required for this course. 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-\$15 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.

## Course Requirements:

### Weekly Video Performance Submission 50%

Each week you will submit a video recording of yourself performing an instructor chosen piece studied during the previous week. This piece, as well as other supplementary playing materials will form the basis of your practicing for the week. Your video will demonstrate your practical application of the repertoire being studied during 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 learned during the previous week. These may include chords, scales, or short pieces learned by ear or by tablature.

Video Submissions Guidelines: Please upload your weekly video submissions to YouTube, place the video on “unlisted mode”, then copy and submit the URL link through the provided portal. Video record yourself **straight on—face-to face—and be sure that your entire guitar, hands, arms, and fingers are visible.** If you do not video record yourself as described above, I cannot accurately assess you and you will lose marks as a result. Each submission must be one continuous recording. **Edited submissions will receive a grade of zero.** Please use the best possible recording devices at your disposal.

### Weekly Forum Post 10%

Each week you will participate in a forum post. A typical forum post may ask you to discuss an aspect of the weekly material that you find difficult, then offer a solution or strategy for overcoming a difficulty that a peer has identified. For example, using the above questions 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 eighth notes. Can someone offer a strategy to deal with this?” Your response might be, “tap your foot in a consistent manner, this represents a quarter note. Continue tapping the foot and clap twice; once as the foot goes down and once as the foot goes up. These represent eighth notes”. The goal of the forum is to provide a space for discussing difficulties that you may have with certain aspects of the weekly curriculum and for classmates to engage in peer-tutoring with those who are experiencing difficulties. Forums open on Tuesday at 6am and close on Thursday at 6 am. The relatively short time to complete these forums is intentional; I want you to engage with new musical materials early in the week.

### **Weekly On-Line Quiz 20%**

Each week there will be a 20-minute on-line quiz consisting of 10 multiple choice questions. Quizzes will test your knowledge of current repertoire, new topics being studied, and guitar technique. Quizzes open Saturday 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.

### **Weekly Timeline**

- New musical materials will be released Tuesdays at 6am in the Course Content section of OWL.
- Office hour will be 8-9 pm Tuesday evenings on Zoom.
- Forum posts will open each Tuesday at 6am and will close on Thursday at 6am. Engaging with new repertoire early in the week will develop good practice habits.
- On-line Quizzes will open each Saturday at 6 am and close on Sunday at 6am.

Video submission will be accepted any time from Tuesday 6am, until the following Tuesday at 5:59 am.

### **Course Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, you will be able to position your body, guitar, hand, fingers, as well as move the fingers, all in accordance with best pedagogical practices. You will be able to read basic standard music notation (including pitches and rhythms) and guitar tablature. You will be able to play simple pieces by ear by watching and listening to peer models. You will be able to perform pieces with two voice textures, arpeggios, and diads from the classical music genre, and short riffs, chord strumming, and power chords from the popular music genre. Above all you will learn to play expressively, performing with dynamic contrasts, flexible tempo and warm tone.

### **Methods of Evaluation & Grade Breakdown:**

The grade for MUSIC 3862A will be based on the following:

<b>Weekly Video Performance Submissions: 50%</b>	
1. Weekly Main Piece (40%)	10 x 4% = 40%
2. Weekly Supplemental Piece: (10%)	10 x 1% = 10%

Weekly Multiple-Choice Quiz: 20%	10 X 2 = 20%
Weekly Forum Post: 10%	10 x 1% = 10
Final Video Submission 20%	20%

N.B. Weighting of marks may be adjusted at the discretion of the instructor

## GOALS, PRACTICING, MODELING

### Goals for the Class

Many aspects are involved in learning to play a musical instrument, 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 aspects are all very important, the *main focus* of this class will be on *expressive music making*. Expressive musical aspects include dynamic shaping (playing loud or soft), flexible tempo (slowing down or speeding up) and balancing different musical voices (playing some parts loud and others soft). The expressive elements are the “good stuff”; the fun and exciting part of learning to playing an instrument. These expressive aspects are largely why we enjoy listening to music, why we become interested in playing a musical instrument, and often define those musicians who we love listening to.

### A Word About Practicing

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

### A Word about Modelling

Observing another’s performance is a common strategy used to facilitate the execution of new motor skills within the domains of sports (McCullagh, & Weiss, 2001) and musical performance (Dilworth, & DuCette, 2018). A significant amount of learning in this class will also be developed through modelling. Beginning in week two a peer model video will be included in the course. It is strongly suggested that you watch, listen and emulate the peer model as you work to develop your weekly submission piece.

## Notes:

### I.

i) **Course Prerequisites:** None.

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. 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](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](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) **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](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

**vi) 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.**

**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](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) Contingency Plan:** In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience).

The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online at the discretion of the course instructor.

## **II.**

i) **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.

## **III.**

i) **Recording of Online Activities:** All of the remote learning sessions for this course will be recorded. The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers (name displayed on the screen). The recordings will be used for educational purposes related to this course, including evaluations. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals participating in the course for their private or group study purposes. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session recordings.

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor.

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

### **xi) Important Dates for Fall 2021:**

Wed Sept 8 – undergraduate classes begin

Thu Sept 16 – last day to add a first term half-course or full course

Mon Oct 11 – Thanksgiving Day Holiday (classes excused)

Mon Nov 1 to Sun Nov 7 – Fall Reading Week (classes excused)

Thu Nov 12 – last day to drop a first term half-course without academic penalty

Mon Nov 30 – last day to drop a full course without academic penalty

Wed Dec 8 – undergraduate classes end  
Thu Dec 9 – Study Day (classes excused)  
Fri Dec 10 to Tues Dec 21 – Examination period