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# MUS-125: GUITAR I

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**Effective Term**

Fall 2026

**BOT Approval Date**

06/12/2025

**Discipline**

MUS - Music

**Course Number**

125

**Course Title**

Guitar I

**Short Title**

Guitar I

**Credit Status (CB 04)**

D - Credit - Degree applicable

**Units****Lab Units**

1.00

**Total Units**

1.00

**Hours****Lab Contact Hours**

48-54

**Out of Class Hours Lab**

0.00

**Total Contact Hours**

48 - 54

**Total Out of Class Hours**

0

**Total Student Learning Hours**

48 - 54

**Is this an existing Extensive Lab?**

No

**Do you want to propose this for Extensive Lab?**

No

**Distance Education**

No

**Catalog Description**

This course offers individualized guitar instruction within a group setting to students who have little or no previous training. A variety of musical styles are used to develop basic guitar technique and learn basic concepts of music, including music notation.



## Requisites

### Other Enrollment Criteria

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The student must provide and maintain a classical or acoustic guitar for their own use for the duration of this course.

## Codes

### TOP Code (CB 03)

1004.00 - Music

### CIP Code

50.0903 - Music Performance, General.

### Repeatability Code

No

### Grading Option

Letter grade OR P/NP

### Minimum Qualifications

| Minimum Qualifications   | And/Or |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Commercial Music         | Or     |
| Music (Masters Required) | End    |

## Learning Objectives

### Learning Objectives

#### Learning Objective

1. Determine healthy techniques necessary to play easy melodies on guitar.
2. Demonstrate strumming of chords in simple and syncopated rhythms and accompaniment patterns.
3. Relate knowledge of music theory and notation to performance of easy guitar literature.
4. Diagram the relationship between written notation and notes on the fretboard.
5. Design a practice routine that will result in a successful musical performance.
6. Perform guitar literature of an easy level in front of an audience.
7. Evaluate performances based on execution of guitar techniques and musicianship.
8. Examine the diversity of cultures that contributed to the history of guitar performance practices.

## Learning Outcome Information

### Course Learning Outcomes

#### Learning Outcome

1. Students will name the lines/spaces on the grand staff and the frets of the guitar fingerboard.
2. Students will perform easy guitar music in front of an audience with accurate pitches.
3. Students will perform easy guitar music in front of an audience with accurate rhythms.
4. Students will demonstrate correct fingerpicking technique.

## Content

### Course Lab Content

1. Anatomy of the guitar
  - a. body, soundhole, bridge
  - b. neck and layout of the fingerboard

- c. strings, numbered 1-6
- d. head and tuning keys
- 2. Posture, hand position, and technique
  - a. Classical playing position
  - b. Right hand wrist, thumb and finger placement
    - i. strumming with the thumb
    - ii. strumming with fingers
    - iii. plucking individual strings
  - c. Left hand placement and fretting notes
    - i. fret easy open chords, such as E, A, B, C, G, D, F, E minor, and A minor
  - d. Tuning the guitar with an electronic tuner and by matching pitch
- 3. Music fundamentals and theory
  - a. whole, half, quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes and rests
  - b. easy and common syncopated rhythms
  - c. simple and compound meters
  - d. letter names of notes on a treble clef staff
  - e. location of notes on the fretboard
  - f. whole steps and half steps
  - g. accidentals: sharps, flats and natural signs
  - h. dynamic and tempo markings
  - i. tablature
- 4. Performance
  - a. reading and strumming simple and syncopated rhythms
  - b. sight-reading single line melodies
  - c. practice music with dynamic changes and a variety of articulation
  - d. playing melodies with others in unison
  - e. playing pieces with melody and chordal accompaniment in groups of students
  - f. perform beginning music in various styles including folk, blues, pop, rock, and classical
  - g. techniques and theory for improvising melodies over simple accompaniment at a beginning level
- 5. Effective Practice Techniques and Strategies
  - a. Repetition at performable tempos
  - b. Blocked practice vs interleaved practice
  - c. Avoiding injury
- 6. Performance modeling
  - a. Copying instructor technique and musicality
  - b. Learning from and discussing audio and video recordings of significant performers and musical repertoire in a variety of styles
  - c. Peer and self evaluation
- 7. Guitar history
  - a. Historical perspectives on construction
    - i. Baroque and early romantic guitars
    - ii. Modern classical guitars
  - b. Geographical perspectives, such as Spanish, French, German, etc.
  - c. Cultural perspectives, such as Arab and Moor influences, Spanish contributions, Baroque court music, opera, folk musics from Europe and the Americas, etc.
- 8. Guitar as a vehicle for inclusion, accessibility and advocacy
  - a. Historically significant guitarists with disabilities, such as Django Reinhardt or the many blind blues musicians
  - b. Guitar music as symbols of rebellion and advocacy
    - i. African-American folk and blues music
    - ii. Black American contributions to rock music
    - iii. Protest music (including advocating for racial and gender equity, progressive social change, and anti-war/violence)
    - iv. Spanish and Latin American contributions to guitar music

## Methods of Instruction

### Method

Lecture

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**Integration**

Lecture is used to convey the principles of guitar technique. Topics include correct posture and hand position, note-reading/theory, connections to history and culture, adapting technique for accessibility, etc.

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**Method**

In-class Exercises

**Integration**

Large group, small group and solo performances, exercises, and etudes are used to further the development of student guitar performance skills. The instructor gives individualized critique and advisement within a group class setting.

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**Method**

Discussion

**Integration**

Discussion is used to assist students in making connections between contemporary guitar performance and extra-musical historical and cultural influences. Students explore their understanding of the roots of guitar music in a group setting, learning from others' perspectives and experiences, and integrating them with an understanding of guitar history.

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**Method**

Observation and Demonstration

**Integration**

The instructor, as an expert in guitar performance and pedagogy, demonstrates performance technique to the class in a masterclass format. Demonstrations by the instructor will be enhanced with accessible audio and visual example, guest performers and students themselves, as appropriate to the topic.

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**Methods of Evaluation****Method**

Class Performance

**Integration**

Students regularly prepare and perform pieces, exercises and etudes to be evaluated by the instructor. In most cases, feedback and a plan for improvement can be given immediately.

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**Method**

Final Performance

**Integration**

Students prepare a solo or small group performance of assigned or approved pieces. The instructor provides a written evaluation that objectively measures student skill development over the course of the semester.

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**Method**

Self-Evaluation

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**Integration**

Students maintain a practice journal throughout the semester to record progress and class performance feedback. Students also regularly provide peer evaluations, both to add to and encourage learning of the other students in the class, and as a self-evaluation of a student's own ability to measure musical performance and identify strategies for improvement.

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**Method**

Quizzes

**Integration**

Quizzes can be graded or ungraded assessments for students to check their understanding of basic music theory/fundamentals concepts, such as note and rhythm reading.

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**Assignments****Assignment Type**

Writing

**In-class and/or outside of class**

In-class

**Formative or Summative**

Formative

**Assignment**

Keep a practice journal that records the pieces and exercises assigned by the instructor. Once a week, make an entry in the journal that reflects on your progress on these pieces and exercises, feedback from the instructor, and records your goals for the coming week. Your instructor will regularly check your practice journals for consistent, regular entries.

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**Assignment Type**

Reading

**In-class and/or outside of class**

Outside of class

**Formative or Summative**

Summative

**Assignment**

Read the article from Breakthrough Guitar titled "How Guitars Became a Symbol of Rebellion in Music." Reflect on the pieces you've prepared this semester and how they connect to the contributions of historically important guitarists that have advocated for inclusion, accessibility and equity. Prepare to share in a class discussion an answer to the following prompt: What responsibilities do you have as a performer to authentically represent the diverse history of the pieces you perform?

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**Assignment Type**

Other

**In-class and/or outside of class**

In-class

**Formative or Summative**

Summative

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### Assignment

Together with the instructor, decide on a piece to prepare and perform in front of the class. Your performance should be well-prepared and representative of your current technical ability on guitar. You will be evaluated using a rubric that measures accuracy of rhythm, pitch, dynamics, tempo and other musical characteristics.

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## Course Materials

### Textbooks

Jonathan Leathwood, Richard Wright, Guitar (Kahn & Averill 2024), ISBN: 978-0995757493

## Class Size Information

### Class Size

32

### Class Size Category

G - Large lab 32

## Diversity and Inclusion

**Course Design and Materials:** Course will incorporate diverse perspectives, authors, and examples that reflect a variety of cultures, identities, and lived experiences. Instructional materials will be reviewed regularly to ensure representation, inclusivity, and alignment with equity-minded practices across disciplines.

**Inclusive Learning Environment:** Instructors will establish classroom norms and policies that promote respect, civil discourse, and belonging in both online and face-to-face classes. Clear expectations for communication and engagement will support a learning space where all students feel valued and heard.

**Accessible Instruction:** Course content will be delivered using accessible design. Materials will follow accessibility guidelines within the CMS, including captioned media, readable document formats, and multiple means of engagement to support diverse learning.

**Equitable Teaching Practices:** Instructors will use transparent and grading criteria, varied assessment methods, and timely feedback to promote fairness and student success. Opportunities for revision, reflection, and multiple demonstrations of learning may be incorporated when appropriate to the discipline.

**Culturally Responsive Pedagogies:** Instructional strategies will encourage critical thinking about diverse perspectives and systems of power relevant to the course content. Faculty will foster opportunities for students to connect course material to real-world contexts.

**Ongoing Reflection and Improvement:** Faculty will engage in continuous professional development related to IDEAA principles and reflect on course practices using metacognition to identify opportunities for increased equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

### **Explain how diversity and inclusion(e.g., gender, culture/race, sexuality, etc.) is infused into the course.**

As a performing arts technique course, topics of diversity are infused into lessons on technique and applying history, cultural sensitivity and aesthetic awareness directly to performance. The diverse history of guitar playing naturally lends itself to teaching of diversity and inclusion, as the guitar was developed over a long period of time by many cultures in many parts of the world. Additionally the course includes the use of guitar music as an advocate for social justice, equity, advocacy and inclusion has been added to the course content and instructors blend that history into the music that they use for examples and assign to students.

### **Describe how assignments, instruction, evaluation, course content, and interactions are contextualized for diverse learners promoting an equitable course.**

Guitar is an intensely physical instrument that presents barriers for accessibility and inclusion. However, there is also a long history of musicians with disabilities celebrated as some of the most significant contributors to guitar technique and culture, which is celebrated in this course, through examples and the literature chosen by the instructor for students. For example, this course outline includes an example assignment that asks students to read and reflect on the many historical uses of guitar music as advocating social justice, equity and inclusion. Additionally, accessibility is addressed through a focus in the course content and objectives on healthy technique, which is as valuable for younger students without disabilities as it is for students that are older or with disabilities - a prime example of "accessibility is necessary for some, but valuable to all."

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## Interactions

### **Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-student interaction.**

Students will observe each other's guitar performances and make constructive critiques, learning from each other's perspectives and experiences. Students will engage in group discussion on various topics. Students will play guitar pieces, exercises and etudes together as a whole class and in small groups.

### **Explain how the course will incorporate instructor-to-student interaction.**

The instructor will engage with students through lecture, demonstration, and leading various group guitar exercises and playing activities in class, as well as leading discussions and answering questions on various lecture topics. The instructor will also give individual feedback on in-class performances, both verbally and in writing.

### **Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-content interaction.**

Students engage with the content through lectures, demonstrations, accessible audio/video examples, and in-class discussions. Students will view/listen to various guitar performances from a variety of cultures, styles, geographies, and historical periods in order to evaluate and analyze the techniques used and develop their aesthetic and cultural awareness.

### **Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-self interaction (metacognitive).**

Students will maintain a practice journal throughout the semester to record progress and class performance feedback. Students also regularly provide peer evaluations, both to add to and encourage learning of the other students in the class, and as a self-evaluation of a student's own ability to measure musical performance and identify strategies for improvement.

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