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Course Outline: Music 1 (Guitar) (2015-2016)

Description: Music 1 is a guitar-based introductory music course open to students of all levels of musical ability. Students will learn the following:

- The appreciation of a wide variety of music from the perspective of an instrumentalist
- The basic of guitar playing in different styles
- Introductory ideas in music theory that will serve their playing

The largest portion of our class time will be spent with our instruments, learning the practical aspects guitar playing. The vast majority of the theory and knowledge-building aspects of the course will work practically toward becoming a better player.

Students will work in pairs, with one guitar to every two students. During class, each pair will share their guitar and help each other learn the musical ideas of the day's class. Outside of class, one student in each pair will take the guitar home for practice one week, and the other student in the pair will take it home for practice the following week.

Overview: There are three basic components to this course: music appreciation, guitar practice and performance, and music theory & knowledge-building.

This is a one-year, 10 credit course

Music appreciation:

In order to become a well-rounded guitarist, it is important to be able to appreciate different styles of music and understand what goes into the composition a wide variety of musical styles. This course will have listening assignments and writing assignments geared toward this goal.

Guitar practice and performance:

1) We will begin with the basics of finger positioning and strumming and will work up through a variety of chord progressions and playing styles. I will introduce new playing concepts in class and students will work on these concepts during class time with my assistance. Students will then practice these concepts at home.

2) In the second-half of the semester, students will work in groups to master a song of their choosing. Alternately, students can write a song as a group and work to perfect it. The proficient performance of this song will act as one portion of the end-of-semester exam.

3) At-home practice is absolutely crucial to success in this class!

Music theory & knowledge-building:

The theory and knowledge component of this course will encompass a range of knowledge, from knowing names of the basic components of the guitar to knowing how chords are constructed and understanding the essentials of musical keys.

Additionally, students will learn to read guitar tablature (the most common method of music notation for guitar).

Final Exams:

Each end-of-semester exam will consist of a performance component and a written component. The performance component will exhibit a student's mastery of the semester's practical playing concepts, and the written component will exhibit a student's mastery of the theory & knowledge-building instruction of the semester.

Materials Needed for Class:

- Guitar
- Binder
- Notebook paper
- Pencil
- Internet access (at home or at a library or cafe)

Guitar care and maintenance:

When students receive their guitars, they will also receive a page of instructions for proper care and maintenance of the instrument. This document will require a parent or guardian signature. Students will be held responsible for damage or loss of instruments in the same manner as damage or loss of a class textbook.

Please treat your instruments with care!

First Week's Assignments

We will begin the semester with some music appreciation assignments. I would also like to get to know your musical background. Please write a 5 paragraph essay according to the following prompts:

Paragraph 1: Describe your past experiences with playing and listening to music. Do you currently play any instruments? Have you ever taken any kind of music lessons? Why do you want to play guitar? What kind of music would you like to play on the guitar? What kind of music do you like listening to? Why? Do you consider yourself an open-minded listener?

Paragraphs 2 - 4: For the next three paragraphs of this essay, complete the following:

-Choose a piece of music for each of these three paragraphs. Each piece of music must contain guitar playing. *Each should be from a different genre.* Some examples of musical genres that generally feature the guitar are as follows: pop, rock, jazz, blues, R&B, soul, funk, folk (from anywhere in the world), singer/songwriter, classical guitar, flamenco, etc. After listening, write a paragraph that touches on the following:

- Title, artist, album, genre, and year of the song's release
- Describe the song. What does it sound like? How does it make you feel?
- Why did you choose this song?
- What do you like and/or dislike about this song in general?
- Describe the guitar playing.
- What do you like and/or dislike about the guitar playing on this song?
- What makes the guitar playing unique?

To clarify, you will be choosing three songs (one for each paragraph) and writing about the things listed above.

Paragraph 5:

Conclude by explaining what you got out of this experience. Do you think it is important to appreciate many different styles of music? Why or why not?

TURN ME OVER =>

Artist Bio Assignment

Choose a famous guitarist, and write a biography about their life and their music. This bio should be at least one full page, double spaced. Within the text of your bio, address the questions below. Feel free to include any other interesting info, quotes, or anecdotes you come across in your research.

1. When and how did this guitarist begin playing?
2. What bands or ensembles did he/she play with?
3. What genre (style) did he/she play?
4. What kind of guitars (acoustic, electric, hollow-body, brand-names, etc.) did he/she play?
5. What were some influences (musical and otherwise) for this guitarist?
6. Did this guitarist influence any future musicians? If so, who?
7. Did this guitarist have a clearly-stated artistic intention?
8. What do you think of this guitarist's playing?
9. Is this guitarist still living? If not, when and how did he/she die?

If you can't think of a guitarist that you would like to write about, try searching the web for lists of the greatest guitarists of all time. There are numerous excellent lists out there.