

Foothill High School Guitar Syllabus

Mr. Mitch Bahr
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About the Class

Guitar is offered in order to fulfill the California High School Fine Arts Requirement for graduation. This is a year-long course that centers on the following: Music notation, tablature, chord recognition, technique and solo/ensemble playing. This course is offered for acoustic guitar only.

Grading Policy

The grading policy is on a point system. A percentage of these points determine your grade: A (90-100), B (80-89.9), C (70-79.9), D (60-69.9), F (0-59.9)

1. **PERFORMANCE** (50% of the Quarter Grade) - Once a week (often Thursdays), students will be tested to measure proficiency on their instrument. These tests are performance tests played individually in front of the class. Don't worry; they will start off very easy! A few times a quarter, the tests are duets/trios, and sometimes they are written exams. Written tests are generally 100 points (worth two performance grades). A student with an unexcused absence on a test day will earn a zero. The last semester test (during Finals day) is a chord test performed individually in front of the instructor.
2. **PROJECTS** (20% of the Semester Grade) - Each quarter students will be assigned a major project. These projects will be presented the week before the end of each quarter.
3. **HOMEWORK** (15% of the Quarter Grade) - Each quarter students will be assigned several theory packets, as well as Listening Logs. Time will be given during class to complete homework assignments. Due dates will be posted on Aeries for each assignment; I do not accept late homework.
4. **PARTICIPATION** (15% of the Quarter Grade) - This portion of the grade deal with the rules. Violation of these rules will mean a lowering of the grade. I do not anticipate any issues with these rules...and often, these are free points awarded to students for how well they follow these pretty straight-forward classroom rules!
 - o No tardies. Be in the room when the bell rings.
 - o No guitar playing while instructor is speaking.
 - o Bring all necessary materials to class.
 - o Students will stay out of off-limit areas at all times.
 - o No food, drinks, or candy (GUM!), water is the exception.
 - o Pick up after yourself in the room.
 - o Respect for yourself and others is expected at all times.
 - o "Opting out" of a performance test; choosing to take a zero, is not an option.
 - o Outside rules, as outlined by Mr. Bahr, will be followed at all times.

Disciplinary Action

Again, I do not anticipate heading down this road (as I cannot even remember the last time I wrote a referral!)...however, the rules and consequences need to be clearly stated. In the case of a student who chooses to challenge the rules of the classroom, the following actions will be taken: Verbal warning...Participation Grade adjusted....Parent Contact and, Referral to Office & Participation Grade further adjusted...In house-suspension....Removal from Class.

Class Materials

The following are items that each student *must* have each day in order to operate their instrument. Failure to have these items can result in a lowering of grade.

1. Acoustic Guitar – Label the case (luggage tag)
2. Electronic Guitar Tuner – Keep it with you at all times and label it (Sharpie)
3. Folder – A few times this year you will receive a large supplementary packet that we use as a textbook. These packets will contain songs, theory sheets, technical exercises, etc.
4. Picks – Get a few, these tend to disappear...
5. Cleaning Cloth – The life of your strings and the guitar will be greatly enhanced if you wipe off the sweat and dirt that comes from normal wear and tear.
6. Capo – A capo is a small but necessary accessory that can be purchased either at a local music store or online.

A Few More Things...

1. The act of becoming a musician is a discipline. The benefits of learning a music instrument are many (Google this...you'll learn some amazing things!). The products of discipline do not happen overnight. It is important to practice concepts with *patience*, knowing beforehand that the skill of becoming a musician takes time.

2. Concepts taught to the class will be learned at many different paces. Some students will catch on instantly, while others will take weeks. It is important to remember that some students are complete beginners while others have played for years. This will be evident in our tests (therefore I do not/cannot grade everyone with the same standard). Veterans are expected to be *helpful* and *accommodating* while we learn rudimentary skills. While they may feel like they already know how to do certain things, it is possible to pay attention and pick up little tidbits along the way that they didn't fully know. For the beginners, it is necessary to practice, so that we can move forward as a class.

3. Respect is huge in this class. The performing arts are designed to push students a bit out of their comfort zones; taking chances and risking some vulnerability...and these concepts can be both exciting and a bit scary! An atmosphere of kindness and respect must be central in our classroom, and anything to the contrary will not be tolerated.

4. I am excited to jump in and help your student learn the guitar. We are going to have a lot of fun and learn a lot! Some of this syllabus may look a bit intimidating, but I firmly believe that students operate best with structure and communication. It is my hope that you see that intent. This is my 25th year of teaching, and my 20th here at Foothill. I have taught Guitar 1 for many years, a Guitar 2 course for a few years, and I have developed guitar players every year in our jazz program here at FHS. Should you want to know more about me, please go to our band website www.fhscougarband.com There, you can find out about me under the "About" Tab on the front page.

Please call or E-Mail should you have any questions regarding this course.

Thank you,

Mr. Bahr

Due Friday, January 14th

I have read Mr. Bahr's FHS Guitar Syllabus. I am aware of the policies regarding classroom rules, grades, and materials required.

Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Parent of (student's name): _____