

Northland Preparatory Academy
Guitar Program Syllabus and Handbook 2015-16

Welcome to the guitar program! You will find the program outline, requirements, expectations and grading policies below.

1. There are **four levels** of guitar: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Performance Ensemble. You may progress through the program by passing each level and then repeating the performance ensemble or entering different levels by audition.
2. **Required materials** for each class are listed on the NPA webpage.
3. **Grading** will focus on preparedness and class contribution. To insure preparedness there will be random material checks and a weekly in class performance test. These tests vary depending on the level of guitar but will all assess the student based on **Artistic Value, Professional-level Technique, and Effective Audience Engagemnt**. There are no curves.

Points are on a TOTAL POINT AVERAGE:

Tests are all worth 10 points

Homework is worth 10 points

Weekly Prep is worth 25 points

Semester Final (written portion) is worth 100 points

Semester Final Performance is worth 100 points

4. **Practice** is a petty term. Students will undergo an integration of language, confidence, and self-guidance to problem solve motor, artistic, and performance issues at home and in the classroom. Students will not be allowed to use the term practice; rather they will learn the tools to describe precisely what needs to be improved based on beauty and effective audience engagement.

5. **Class Procedures** are set in order to maintain a safe, damage free, and engaging learning environment.

1. Guitars must go home at the end of each school day (special exceptions are made on case by case basis). Please speak to Mr. Byers about your situation. Kids leaving to sports after school are excused, for that day only. Detentions will be given for guitars left overnight without being excused. Students with multiple guitars at home will still be asked to take their instrument (practicing on the same instrument is key to nervous system development when playing.).
2. Students must put their guitars on the guitar racks in their cases in an orderly fashion. Detentions will be given for inappropriate placement of guitars.

3. Please be prepared to purchase extra sets of strings (around \$10.00) and always default to my studio webpage www.thomasbyersguitar.com for instructions on how to change strings at home. You may also have this done at Custom Sound Instruments for a fee.
4. Sick students – PLEASE KEEP HOME! I work with kids physically, and use their instruments for demonstration. I will not permit a student who is clearly ill to be in the classroom.
5. Homework, tests, and miscellaneous suggestions will be listed on the NPA webpage, listed on the board in class, will be recorded by the student.
6. We have weekly tests on Fridays. If a test is missed that student must make up that test during **BYERS OFFICE HOURS**: Wednesdays from 7:40am – 8:00am.
6. Respect and good etiquette are required in my class. I will discipline students who do not actively help make the classroom a positive working place or, in any way, belittle another student for any reason.
7. I am an open book – please feel free to contact me with any issues ☺

5. **Auditions** may be required for students to progress in the program. This aspect of moving through will be based on the demand of the courses for the next year. If the demand exceeds class limits auditions will be put in place to insure only the most serious students get a seat in the next class. Furthermore, progression through the program is at the discretion of Mr. Byers, maturity and commitment will be judged the entire year.

6. The **performance ensemble** competes each year at national and state competitions. Parents and students should expect to assist in planning, staging, and executing several fundraisers throughout the year. Our general goal is to raise enough money that students are not overburdened by trip costs. Any extra monies go towards the purchase of music, strings, and general equipment for the program. NOTE: Any students with grades lower than a C are not permitted on trips.

7. There will be a **winter and spring concert** each year that are mandatory for every student. These concerts are mandatory and are fun! These concerts are held at the Coconino Center for the Arts and are executed with professionalism, thus **concert attire** must be adhered to.

Men - Black button up shirt, black slacks, any kind of tie and any kind of shoes.

Ladies - Black blouse, black slacks or long black dress, any type of accessories that don't interfere with the instrument and any kind of shoes, i.e. formal.

8. All students are required to **attend at least one concert a semester** that the Grand Canyon Guitar Society puts on. Alternate concerts will be listed for students. Please see Canyonguitar.org to see the schedule and ticket prices. Those who cannot afford a ticket, please see Mr. Byers, that will not be a problem at all.

9. **Critical listening** will be addressed via writing prompts and fantastically in-depth discussion. The semester concerts will be recorded and each student will critique their and the group's performances. In addition we will have listening days where a large range of guitar styles will be played and the students will have an in class writing prompt based on that music.

10. **Scope and Sequence** are described below.

Beginning guitar focuses on a foundation of artistic integrity, beauty, and performance. This will include basic operations of the guitar and different roles in a standard ensemble; melody (lead), rhythm (chords), and bass. Furthermore, reading standard notation is developed along with a fundamental knowledge of musical terms, concepts, and techniques.

Intermediate guitar focuses on solo finger-style guitar playing. Students will develop a fluency in their plucking hand and read music all the way to the 12th position (fret). Quarter one will focus on introductory etudes and beginning to perform for others comfortably. Quarter two will focus on introductory guitar literature for concert performances. Quarters three and four follow the same path though use much more advanced materials from guitar masters of the past and present and in different styles from blues to flamenco.

Advanced guitar focuses on higher levels of reading music and in the context of jazz, rock, blues and other traditional styles of American music. Students will begin a serious study of theory, arranging, and improvising at this level. The text for this class is the freshmen textbook at Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts called *A Modern Method for Guitar Vol. I* by William Leavitt. Furthermore, students will begin to refine their ensemble performing techniques in anticipation of the following course, performance ensemble.

Performance ensemble explores a wide range of guitar ensemble literature and uses all previous experience to perform professional level ensemble arrangements. This class gains performance experience by recording, performing at national competitions and amassing over an hour of concert ready material to be performed at concerts and openings for international artists. This class may be repeated and students can expect a unique musical experience each and every year in this group. Advanced guitar techniques will be addressed via the ensemble music.

At every level – professional-level technique, artistry, and deep joy is expected from students and their performances.

11. **Private lessons** are encouraged after the first year of guitar so the student may receive one-on-one assistance. Private lessons provide a venue for students to explore music at their own pace and with more tailored music (music they normally enjoy). Please contact the Thomas Byers Guitar Studio at www.thomasbyersguitar.com and 928-607-0922 or speak to Mr. Byers if you have any questions concerning private instruction.

12. **Disciplinary actions** follow this sequence. The student is verbally warned, if inappropriate behavior continues the student will be asked to put their guitar away and lose all points for the day. If this happens on a test day the test points will be forfeit as well. If the student continues inappropriate behavior they will be dismissed to the Dean of Students with an after school detention recommendation.. Professionalism is key in the guitar program and it requires that each student help contribute to an appropriate learning environment.

13. Confirmation and agreement to terms above and contact information

Parents - Please e-mail Mr. Byers at Tbyers@northlandprep.org indicating you and your child have read and agree to the syllabus and PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME, PHONE NUMBER, AND LEVEL OF GUITAR, AND HAVE A GOOD DAY!

Thank you and welcome to the program!