

**Northland Preparatory Academy**  
**Guitar Program Syllabus and Handbook 2019-2020**

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** has two components. First, *conference grading*, students and myself will determine the students efforts in the following categories: Determination, Contribution, and Management. Students will rank their efforts in these categories in relation to the objectives in class. Conference grading will take place no fewer than once every three weeks and will be worth 30 points each conference. Second, *Final Performance* and *Written Exam*, both components are worth 100 points each, where the final performance and exam are mandatory.

4. **Practice** is required based on the level of preparation of each student. At times, some students will need to practice more than others, all will need to practice, or none will. That is determined on the positive progression through material in class.

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

1. 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.
2. Please be prepared to purchase extra sets of strings (around \$10.00) I'm happy to replace strings as needed in class.
3. 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.
4. All materials and references will be on the corresponding Google Classroom page listed on the NPA webpage.
5. during **BYERS OFFICE HOURS**: Tuesdays and Wednesdayss from 7:40am – 8:00am but, am otherwise always willing to help and meet with students.
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 international, 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**, dates listed below, each year that are mandatory for every student. These concerts 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.

**Concert Dates:**

Guitar Winter Concert (all guitar students)

Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Trinity Heights United Methodist Church

Senior Showcase (seniors in ensemble only)

Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Location TBA

Spring Guitar Concert (all guitar students)

Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Trinity Heights United Methodist Church

Specific times and details will be announced in class and through e-mail at the appropriate times through the year. Some details subject to change.

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. At all levels, outstanding and engaging performances are the goal.

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 and pop 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 high-stakes 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.

**Seniors** in ensemble are required as a part of the core elective credit, to perform in the senior showcase. Music will be decided on well in advanced.

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

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. 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.

14. **Media Releases** are also required by each student. However, no identifying information will EVER be used when promoting the program, only videos or audio of the students performing. Media Release forms were signed when registering for NPA.

15. **Confirmation and agreement to terms above and contact information.** Please return the small sheet of paper sent home with your child by **Friday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

**Thank you and welcome to the program!**