MUSI 1192.43003: Guitar Class I
Instructor: Rachel Loss-Cutler-Hull
T/R, 4:00-5:50 PM (1 credit hour)
E-mail: RLoss-Cutler@dcccd.edu
Room: F-112
Office hours: By appointment.
Dates: 1/27/15 - 3/5/15
Division telephone: 972-391-1047

Course Description and Objectives:
Course prerequisites: None.
An introductory course in acoustic guitar playing based on acoustic and classical guitar technique.
Music reading of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic exercises is involved to gain initial mastery of
the fundamental techniques of guitar playing. This will culminate in the completion of the first
position on the guitar, as well as in a short solo guitar piece for the final exam.

In this course, you will learn the following:
1) Basic technique for both hands (finger alternation, arpeggios, simple melodies) and music
reading (natural notes in the first position, rhythmic values to the eighth-note, fingerings).
2) Solo performance (playing music unaccompanied) and extension of the knowledge in part I
as time permits (ascending and descending ligados, intervals, chords, sharps and flats,
dynamic markings, and tempo markings). Musical interpretation will be discussed. Getting a
great sound will be emphasized.
I would be pleased to offer a YouTube listening list to any of my students who are interested in
hearing a wide range of classical guitar music. Classical guitar music spans the last five hundred
years, includes music composed now, and contains many different styles of music within it.

Required course materials and textbook: 1) A classical guitar (with nylon strings) and footrest
are strongly suggested. An acoustic guitar is an acceptable alternative; an electric guitar is not.
Students must have a guitar to participate in class, and should bring the guitar to class beginning on
the first day. 2) Solo Guitar Playing by Frederick Noad, either 3rd or 4th edition.

Grading:
Attendance: 20% (200 total points possible)
Participation: 30% (400 total points possible)
Playing Benchmark: 20% (200 total points possible)
Final exam: 30% (400 total points possible)

Exams:
Playing Benchmark: February 17th.
Final exam: Thursday, March 5th.
There may be changes to the exam scheduling, as needed. Changes will be announced in advance.

Grading Scale:
90% and above A
80% to 89.94% B
70% to 79.94% C
60% to 69.94% D
59.94% and below F

Practicing:
Practicing is important. If you do not play the guitar often, you will find it doesn't become
much easier over time. If you are easily bored, the worst thing you can do is avoid practice; it is only with practice that you can move on to new material with confidence. I practice. Virtuosos practice. Musicians who have played for fifty years practice.

Practice does not mean rote repetition, a state in which the brain is disconnected from the activity and one must sit and play the same thing over and over and over again. Practice is both more useful and more enjoyable than this! There are three different kinds of practice, and you should decide which you are going to do before each practicing session.

1) Noodling. This is what you do when you sit down to just play the guitar. You're having fun, not trying to improve anything. This is important!

2) Solving problems. Is there something which is particularly difficult in an exercise, or a piece of music—or just in your technique in general? When you fix problems, you first identify the problem (and make certain you know where it occurs—technical problems often actually occur slightly before where we think they are), make guesses as to what causes the problem, and try to think of solutions. Once you find a solution, then you instill it in your physical memory with careful, focused repetition. Solving problems can be difficult, but it is always rewarding. And remember, I'm here to help.

3) Performing. When you do this, you sit down and play your music all the way through, from start to finish, without stopping or intentionally hesitating or slowing down at the difficult parts. You experience what it will be like to play your music for someone else. Sometimes, this kind of practice leads back to solving problems, but you should always finish your performance before you leave this mode of practice—otherwise you aren't giving yourself the real experience of performing.

A good amount of practice for a beginning student is half an hour a day, five days a week. More is fine. If you consistently get much less (say, one or two days a week for a couple of minutes), you are not doing yourself any favors. Practicing for an hour twice a week is not as good as practicing four times a week for half an hour.

One final piece of advice: you will find it helpful to practice as soon as you go home from class, or at least the very next day. This will solidify what you learned in class and will help you remember it. If you do not play for several days after class, you will almost certainly find it difficult to remember what we did.

General notes:

1) I will not assign work just to keep you busy. My aim in this course is to help you learn to play the guitar; assignments will be geared towards that end. If you have questions about the purpose of an assignment, or how to do a given assignment, please ask me.

2) We use the technique we do because it is the most efficient we have found. I am happy to explain the reasons for any given piece of technique.

3) I love questions that come from a desire to learn. If you have difficulty understanding something, I am happy to assist. Please don't feel shy asking questions; answering them is a large part of my job.

4) E-mail is the best way to reach me. I may not receive telephone messages in a timely fashion.

Attendance:

It will be very difficult to learn in this class without attending class regularly; this is the whole point of studying with a teacher. However, because emergencies do occur, you will be allowed two absences during the semester, no questions asked. Absences for illness are excused at my discretion; these will not affect your grade. Absences for religious holidays approved by me according to the policies given later in the syllabus will not affect your grade. Additional absences will lower your course grade by 5% each, to a maximum of 20%. This means that if you miss class three additional unexcused times, the highest course grade you can make is a B. Tests will not be
given late (for reasons other than illness excused with a doctor's note); if you know that you will not be able to attend on a test-day, you must arrange to take this test in advance. While I will do my best to accommodate any such needs, I cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Students are responsible for anything that occurs in their absence, which includes covered material and assignments. If you miss a class, make certain you either e-mail me and ask for your assignments, or get them from your fellow students. Please note that class participation is part of your grade—and you will not be able to participate if you are not prepared.

If you are not present at roll-call, you will be marked as tardy. Three tardies count as one absence. Exceptions can be made, but they must be discussed with me ahead of time. If you are tardy, it is your responsibility to check with me that class and make certain you are not counted as absent.

Class Conduct:
For detailed information on Eastfield's standards of conduct, please consult the current edition of the Eastfield Student Handbook. The short of it is this: I will treat all of my students with courtesy, and expect courtesy from you in return.

Cell-phones, laptops, MP3 players, and their kin must be turned off so they will not detract from the class. I understand if there is an emergency and you need to be available—but this needs to be a rare occasion, and I must be notified ahead of time.

Eating and drinking are not allowed during the class period.

Religious Holidays:
Absences for observance of a religious holy day are excused, and do not count as one of your two allowed absences. A student whose absence is excused to observe a religious holy day is allowed to contract with the instructor to take a make-up examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence. Notification of your impending absence must be given to the instructor more than two weeks prior to the holy day for the absence to be excused.

Emergencies and Inclement Weather Conditions:
In case of emergency or inclement weather conditions, Eastfield students should listen to KEOM-FM Radio Station (88.5) as the primary media source. In partnership with the Mesquite Independent School District, Eastfield College Administration will notify KEOM immediately after a decision is made to cancel classes on any given day of inclement weather or for emergency purposes. The earliest an announcement may be broadcast on KEOM Radio is 6 AM.

Students may also refer to the Eastfield College webpage (www.eastfieldcollege.com) for the Inclement Weather announcement under News/Features. You may also call the college for information: 972-860-7100.

Academic Dishonesty:
Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes passing the work of others off as your work, and cheating on tests. For more information about academic dishonesty, please consult the Eastfield student handbook. If you are wondering whether something counts as academic dishonesty, you can always ask me. Please note that academic dishonesty will result in the minimum of a grade of F on the assignment in question.

Students with Learning or Physical Disabilities:
Students requesting accommodations due to the presence of a disability must identify themselves in a timely fashion and demonstrate/document the need for accommodation through the Disability Services Office (DSO). For information regarding the rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities contact DSO at 972-860-8348 voice/TDD.
NEW: STOP BEFORE YOU DROP
For students who enrolled in college level courses for the first time in the fall of 2007, Texas Education Code 51.907 limits the number of courses a student may drop. You may drop no more than 6 courses during your entire undergraduate career unless the drop qualifies as an exception. Your campus counseling/advising center will give you more information on the allowable exceptions. Remember that once you have accumulated 6 non-exempt drops, you cannot drop any other courses with a “W”. Therefore, please exercise caution when dropping courses in any Texas public institution of higher learning, including all seven of the Dallas County Community Colleges. For more information, you may access: https://www1.dcccd.edu/coursedrops

Withdrawal Policy:
The instructor will not initiate withdrawing from the class. To drop a class, first inform the instructor and then contact the Admissions Office or the Counseling Center. If a student needs to withdraw from the class due to excessive absences, unacceptable grade average, or personal reasons, it is the student’s responsibility to initiate withdrawal. If a student ceases to participate in the class by failing to attend, do assigned homework or complete exams, he or she must withdraw from the class. The last day to withdraw with a letter grade of “W” is Tuesday, February 24th. Failure to officially drop or withdraw from a course will result in your receiving a performance grade, usually a grade of F.

Financial Aid Statement:
Students who are receiving any form of financial aid should check with the Financial Aid Office prior to withdrawing from classes. Withdrawals may affect your eligibility to receive further aid and could cause you to be in a position of repayment for the current semester. Students who fail to attend or participate after the drop date are also subject to this policy.

Obtaining Final Course Grades Using eConnect:
Final Grade Reports are no longer mailed. Access is available online at www.econnect.dcccd.edu. Use your identification number when you log onto eConnect. Your grades will also be printed on your Student Advising Report, which is available in the Admissions Office.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)
In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the College may release information classified as “directory information” to the general public without the written consent of the student. Directory information includes: (1) student name, (2) student address, (3) telephone numbers, (4) date and place of birth, (5) weight and height of members of athletic teams, (6) participation in officially recognized activities and sports, (7) dates of attendance, (8) educational institution most recently attended, and (9) other similar information, including major field of student and degrees and awards received. Students may protect their directory information at any time during the academic year. If no request is filed, directory information is released upon written inquiry. No telephone inquiries are acknowledged. No transcript or academic record is released without written consent from the student, except as specified by law.

The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as necessary.
Syllabus Certification

I certify that I, (print name) _________________________________, have read the syllabus for Guitar Class I (MUSI 1192.43003) in its entirety and that I understand all of the provisions in it. The syllabus contains the rules, procedures, and requirements of the class; I understand how important it is to read this document carefully.

Print name:

Sign name:

Date signed: