

SAST107-001: Beginning Sitar II (2023A)

Instructor: Jagadeesh Gokhale.

Syllabus

Beginning Sitar II is open to those continuing from *Sitar I* and to new students.

For new students, this course will serve as an introduction to playing on the *Sitar* and to the world of *Hindustani* (Indian classical) music. Class instruction will cover the features of the *Sitar*, its historical development, and basic techniques of playing the instrument. For continuing students, the instruction will seek to advance their performance abilities through additional performance items: *ragas*, and *talas*.

Class instruction will review information on musical notes and their corresponding fret locations on the *Sitar*. Students will follow simple (non-western) musical notation to learn about musical scales, note sequences, and practice musical figures and embellishments that are often employed by professional exponents of *Hindustani* music. (Throughout the course)

- Several scale and string-plucking exercises will be assigned and performed during class hours to improve students' command of the instrument. Exercises from the *Beginning Sitar I* course will be carried forward and expanded.
- Initial preparatory exercises will be followed by performing melodic phrase sequences (*sargam*) within a preselected base melodic form (*raga*), different from that covered in the *Beginning Sitar I* course.
- Students will learn the basics of Hindustani rhythmic cycles, cycle-subdivisions, and time signatures that mark opposing ends of the cycle and their attributes: accent beat (*sam*) and null beat(s) (*khali*).
- Students will be provided with aural examples of off-cycle melodic innovations and alternative point-counterpoint melody-rhythm arrangements. They will attempt contemporaneous verbal and hand-clapped rhythm patterns for coordinated arrival at the *sam*. They will also listen to carefully selected Hindustani music performances that demonstrate extemporaneous departures from and returns to the base rhythm cycle.
- Instruction will next focus on playing a fixed composition (*gat*) which adheres to the *raga's* melodic rules and is anchored to a 16-beat rhythmic cycle.
- Traditional auxiliary movements to accompany the *gat* (*stahyi*, *manjha*, *antara*) will be taught next within the context of the pre-selected *raga*.
- Class instruction will demonstrate how the *gat* may be used to anchor melodic and rhythmic innovations to explore the aural spectrum of the *raga*.

- Students will complete home-assignments on various aspects of *Hindustani* music – historical developments and contemporary performance practices and genres. Readings/notes on the history of the *Sitar*, elementary structures of *Hindustani* music, *ragas* and their salient movements, playing styles, and information about the cultural context and content of *Hindustani* music will be assigned. Students will post responses to class assignments on Canvas.
- Students will prepare to perform material in *raga* that they have learned for a semester-end group performance before a live audience.
- Students continuing from Sitar-I will be expected to retain and expand on their performance repertoire.

Students are expected to devote two hours each week outside of class and review-session times to practice playing on the *Sitar* and one hour every other week to posting answers to assignments.

Final course grades will be based on a weighted average of scores on posted assignments, two practical quizzes, a written multiple-choice mid-term exam, semester-end live performance, and a final exam including practical and written elements.

The Music Room will be available for practice during Williams Hall hours, except during *tabla* class times (MW 5:15-6:45 p). A one-hour review session will be held upon student request on Fridays beginning at 5 pm.