

Course Information

Term 1 (Fall)

Marching Band is what we call our Fall (Term 1) Bands. The bands often perform as a combined band, and also perform separately from time to time. The band performs at home football games and local parades, but later in the term performs concerts both at school and in the community. The band is well received and has a Tradition of Excellence. Be prepared to work hard, have fun, and have rewarding experiences in this group. Decide which course to sign up for using the following as your guide:

Band is recommended for students who have played an instrument for 2 years or more. Incoming freshmen should sign up for this class.

Advanced Band is for students with at least 3 or more years of experience and/or have been in the Marching Band previously at SHS.

Jazz Band is a challenging but fun group. During Term 1, the group is open to all students who have moderate proficiency on Saxophone, Trombone, Trumpet, Piano, Bass, or Drum set. Guitarists must read standard notation (not just tabs) and chord symbols. We have after-school combos in the Fall—Ask me about them.

Music Theory/Composition is designed for those who would like to learn about the theory of music (how music is put together) and would like to compose their own music. It can be taken more than once, as we have several levels of theory books, and students work at their own level of composing.

Term 2 (Spring)

(Concert) Band

The Concert Band is for students with at least 2 - 3 years of experience on their instrument. This is also a good class for those who want to learn a new instrument, or for students who have played an instrument at one time, but have not played for a year or two. Most freshmen would be in this group.

Advanced (Symphonic) Band

Instructor's approval is required to be in this group. The Symphonic Band is the premier group in our program. Students are expected to be familiar with their major and minor scales, with all basic rhythms, able to sight-read music, and be self-motivated. Individual practice outside of school will be required in order to play this level of music.

The band performs concerts both at school and in the community, and participates in festivals throughout the area. The Band is well received and has a Tradition of Excellence. Be prepared to work hard, have fun, and have rewarding experiences in this group.

Jazz Band

Instructor's approval is required to be in this group. The Spring Term Jazz Band consists of the following instrumentation:

Alto saxes (2); Tenor saxes (2); Baritone Sax (1); Trombones (4);

Trumpets (4-5); Piano (1); Bass (1); Drums (1-2); Guitar (1-optional)

This group performs frequently and has become very popular both on and off campus, receiving many invitations to perform. Students will play a wide variety of music, and learn to improvise. This group also has a Tradition of Excellence, and requires a big commitment.

Questions & Answers About the Sierra High Band Program

What is it like to be in Band?

These are some of the things our students have said about their experience in Band:

“Sometimes it’s hard work”--“You make a lot of friends”-- “It’s great”

“I’m learning a lot”--“It’s fun performing in front of a lot of people”

The truth is that while it takes a lot of work and commitment to make a good Band, the rewards are great! Music students tend to be, generally, some of the nicest, funniest, friendliest, and most conscientious students at school. Friendships are often formed in Band that will last for many years. Plan on making friends through this experience.

Does the Band travel?

The Band generally travels to Cal or Fresno State once each fall to perform. Also, most years the band takes an overnight trip in the springtime. Disneyland has been a popular destination, where the band has performed many times. Our Nor-Cal trip a few years ago was fun. The band has also traveled to Oregon, Santa Cruz, Hawaii and Japan.

How much time is involved?

While these groups do perform a lot, most students still find time to be involved in other activities as well, and most have very high-Grade Point Averages. Plan on putting in some time for performances, but not as much daily time as you probably spend on homework for your other classes. A minimum of 2 hours of practice per week (outside of class) is expected and required.

Can I be in Band and play sports or do other activities?

Absolutely! In fact, a very large number of our students are musician-athletes. We make every effort to make it possible for our musicians to be involved in sports, cheerleading, leadership, Choir, JROTC, FFA, etc.

♦*Tip:* When conflicts arise, plan on using this “rule of thumb.” First, be sure to discuss it with both teachers/coaches as far in advance as possible. Second, when you have a practice with one group and a game or performance with the other, go to the game/performance. Third, when both groups have a game/performance, attend the game/performance where you are needed the most. And if necessary, coming to a performance directly from a game in your game uniform is generally acceptable.

What do I need to be in Band?

Mainly, just a good attitude. As for instruments, most students have their own, but we do have a few school-owned instruments, mostly the larger ones. Sheet music is provided by the school.

What if I’m having trouble with my schedule?

Sometimes schedules are tight, and it might be hard to fit everything you want to take into your schedule. There are a number of ways to work this out, especially if you plan ahead. Taking summer school, for example, frees up a class; 5th period P.E. is another option, and is especially nice for our musician-athletes, as they are not required to

actually attend P.E. when they are participating in school sport(s). Mr. Hammarstrom has a sample schedule for college-bound students you can use to help in your planning. Ask your counselor to help you. They can show you a variety of options. We have great counselors at SHS.

Are there any non-musical benefits to being in band?

Recent studies show that music and art students score higher on tests, are more involved in school and community, and do well in academic classes. In addition, Band and Choir students learn the lessons of teamwork on a team where no one sits on the bench! Plan on learning good life lessons.

Can parents get involved?

Yes, parents can join Band Boosters. The Band Boosters is a group of parents who assist in promoting a quality program for students at Sierra High. Parents actively raise money to pay for equipment, instruments, and trips. They also help with moving equipment, organizing events, chaperoning, etc. To get more information simply call the band director, Rick Hammarstrom at (209) 858-7410, ext. 59519.

How do I sign up?

Talk to your counselor. You can reach the Counseling Center by calling the school at (209) 858-7410, ext., 54332 or press option "4". When filling out your registration form, if you would like to specify which term you want a Band class, check "T1" for first term and "T2" for second term next to the class title. For both terms check "Both".