MUS 1101 – Elements of Music Theory

Fall 2012

Course Syllabus

COURSE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Course: MUS 1101 - Elements of Music Theory
Semester: Fall 2012
Class meetings: Mon & Wed 12:45 – 2:00
Room: Phillips B-120

Instructor: Professor Eugene Montague

Email: eugene_m@gwu.edu
Office: Phillips B140
Phone: 202-994-8563
Office Hours: Mon: 2:30 – 3:30; Wed: 3 – 4; Thu: 1:30 – 3; other times by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

MUS 1101 is a prerequisite course for the B. A. in Music, the Minor in Music, and the Minor in Jazz Studies. For those students interested in taking further Music classes, it is recommended that students take this course simultaneously with MUS 1051, Class Piano. MUS 1101 also counts as an approved Humanities course for the School of Public Health and Health Services programs. This course introduces some of the basic elements of the academic study of music, with a strong emphasis on the development of skills in practical musicianship. Course content includes the use of fundamental concepts of musical organization to interpret, create, and understand music, reading and writing traditional musical notation, and foundational aural skills. It is open to all students and presumes no prior knowledge of music.

COURSE GOALS

Through this course, students will achieve the following:

• Knowledge of the fundamental elements of musical construction, with emphasis on pitch and rhythm
• Familiarity with these elements in representative musical selections
• Experience in applying these elements in the construction and improvisation of melodies, and in reading and performing music from written scores

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

On completing this course, and in achieving the above goals, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate command of musical rhythm by
   • Reading a single line of written music, conducting the beat and speaking all note names with accurate rhythm, at an appropriate tempo, with short preparation
   • Tapping the rhythm of a single line of written music, at an appropriate tempo, at sight
2. Demonstrate command of diatonic melody by
   • Singing a short melody (3-5 mm) in a major or minor key from a written score using correct solfège syllables, with short preparation
   • Singing an extended melody (8-16 mm) in a major or minor key from a written score using correct solfège syllables, with overnight preparation
3. Display a basic familiarity with musical elements on a keyboard by
○ Playing on a keyboard the primary triads of a major key with no more than two sharps or flats, given the tonic chord of that key, with overnight preparation
○ Playing on a keyboard a single line melody, with short preparation

4. Write and recognize fundamental elements of music through musical notation by
○ Writing major and minor scales of keys with no more than 3 sharps or flats at a rate of 2 scales per minute
○ Describing written intervals in terms of both traditional quantity (2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.) and number of half-steps at a rate of 4 intervals per minute
○ Writing major and minor triads at a rate of 8 triads in 5 minutes

5. Apply their knowledge of musical construction to aural perception by
○ Identifying the self-tape labels for a diatonic melody after hearing it three times
○ Analyzing cadence types and elements of repetition in a heard melody
○ Discriminating chord-tones from decorative tones in both written and heard melodies

6. Create appropriate responses and continuations for given melodic beginnings by
○ Improvising a suitable consequent phrase to answer a given first phrase
○ Writing a suitable continuation and cadence for a short melody, given a 1-2 measure incipit

7. Synthesize and apply their knowledge in the creation of a short original composition for one or two instruments that demonstrates control of melody, harmony, and suitable performance indications

COURSE TEXTS


The first two texts are available as a set from the GWU Bookstore and online textbook suppliers, including the publisher's website at wwnorton.com. If you plan to purchase the books separately, you should buy the Manual first, as we will not be using the Anthology until a few weeks into the semester. Also, note that the CD-ROM is an essential element of the course, and will be required for several course assignments.

The third text, the Musician's Guide is a comprehensive textbook for music theory that will serve as a reference for future classes in Theory and Musicianship at GW, including the next course in the sequence, MUS 1102. It is available in several formats, including hardcover, paperback, and digital versions. If you are considering taking further theory courses in the Music Department, you might consider investing in the hardcover version. However, the e-book is quite acceptable for the purposes of this course.

GRADING

Quizzes: 60% (5 * 12)
Composition project: 10%
Homework: 25% (graded ✓+, ✓, or ✓-)
Participation: 5%

CLASS POLICIES

Late Assignments:
Work must be handed in at the time it is due. Assignments received later than the deadline established in the online calendar will not receive credit.
Absences:
As this is a skills-based course, class participation and activity are important. Thus, regular attendance at all class meetings is strongly recommended.

Make-up exams:
Three of the quizzes in this course are one-to-one and are organized on a sign-up basis. If you sign up for a time-slot and find later that you cannot make this appointment, please let me know as soon as possible, and, if possible, organize a "swap" of your time-slot with another class member. I will generally re-schedule your exam without penalty. If you miss a "fixed-time" exam, such as the final, contact me as soon as possible. In this circumstance, appeals for a make-up exam will be assessed on an individual basis.

Religious Observances
I will make every reasonable effort to accommodate the religious observances, practices, and beliefs of individuals in regard to class attendance, and the scheduling of quizzes and assignments. In accordance with University policy, I ask that students who intend to be absent from class in order to observe a religious holy day notify me of this intention during the first week of the semester.
The student will be held responsible for any material covered during the excused absence, but will be permitted a reasonable amount of time to complete any work missed. Where practicable, major examinations, major assignments, and University ceremonies will not be scheduled on a major religious holy day.

GW RESOURCES
Academic Integrity:
I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity, and I expect that all participants in this course are familiar with, and will abide by, this Code. It states: "Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information." For the remainder of the code, see: http://www.gwu.edu/~integrity/code.html. Any breach of this Code in work submitted for this course will result in a failing grade in the course and may lead to further disciplinary measures through University governance.

Support for Students Outside the Classroom:

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)
Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC) 202-994-5300
The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:
- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices

Security:
In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous.