

This course is for students who want to know how music works, and how to write music that sounds well-crafted. No basis in music theory or performance is expected, but if you're starting from scratch, the first few weeks will feel like they're moving very quickly! We'll learn how to compose a catchy melody, and to write chords that progress logically and sound full. We'll look at pieces by great composers, to see how they solved the same problems built in to all music. We will gain the technique needed to write good music without having to wait for inspiration, or staying within a narrow range of ideas we're comfortable with. The focus will be on learning the same traditional craft and skills that are still taught to composition students in conservatories, and we'll try to uncover the basic principles behind pieces that have been beloved for a long time.

We'll learn the fundamentals of music theory, divided into the sections Rudiments, Melody, Counterpoint, and Harmony. We'll cover notation, terms, time and key signatures, major and minor keys, intervals, cadences, diatonic triads and sevenths, and harmonic analysis of simple chorales with Roman numerals and figured bass. We'll also practice quite a bit of ear training (hearing what we see, and writing what we hear), using moveable do.

At the end of each section, we'll look at how the generic skills we've learned apply to popular styles. And at the end of the course, we'll look closely at styles from three important historical periods in classical music.

You'll need to buy a 4-month license from **Artusi** to do the worksheets: it's \$35 from artusimusic.com. Use "rit_sprin" as the enrollment code so I can grade your work. Artusi has a good built-in textbook which we won't go over in class, but please feel free to use it as a reference when the lectures get confusing. Also download **Musescore** (free at musescore.com), which will be our music notation program. Please bring your laptop, and staff paper (sometimes called "manuscript paper"; lots of free pdfs online to print out) and a pencil to each class for note-taking and the ear training exercises.

There will be **assignments** every class: sometimes a worksheet on Artusi (for skills and drills), and sometimes a discussion post on MyCourses (for more complex work). Since every new idea and skill builds on previously acquired ones, I give each assignment a slight bonus if finished within a week of its being assigned, for encouragement. >100% is possible for very good work if done within the week. Assignments can be resubmitted if you'd like to incorporate feedback or new knowledge.

The **final projects** are 1) a large Artusi assignment comprising much of what we've covered in the semester, and 2) a set of variations for keyboard in Baroque style. There's no final exam.

All the music we listen to in class is at youtube.com/davidmccarthy.

Attendance isn't a factor in the grading, but the lectures will soon stop making sense if you skip, even if you have some background in music theory. We'll also often practice the assignments in class, which will make them much easier. There's no remote option for this class.

Instead of set office hours, I've found that Zoom meetings work well – just email me to set up a time.

The course grade will be:

- 45% from Artusi worksheets
- 40% from myCourses discussion posts
- 15% from the final projects (7.5% each)

Schedule

(assignments are shown on the date they're assigned; they're **due a week later**)

Tues	Thurs	<i>Rudiments of Music Theory</i>
1/16	-----	Intro to MT, singing, the major scale, ear training WS 1
	1/18	----- Basic notation terms and how they look, geography of the keyboard, key signatures, the circle of fifths WS 2
1/23	-----	More on notation, folk songs notated, the three main dimensions of music WS 3
	1/25	----- Other dimensions of music; listening to music together WS 4
1/30	-----	No class
	2/1	----- Acoustics, dictation, review Post 1: Copying a page of a Romantic-era piano piece into MuseScore
		<i>Melody</i>
2/6	-----	Scale degrees review, dictating folk melodies, common features of good melodies, text-setting WS 5
	2/8	----- Quatrain assignment, specific intervals, minor WS 6
2/13	-----	Melody as used in popular music Post 2: Setting a text for solo voice
		<i>Counterpoint</i>
	2/15	----- Intro to counterpoint, types of motion, species counterpoint, 1 st species WS 7
2/20	-----	2 nd and 3 rd species WS 8
	2/22	----- Review of course so far, 4 th species WS 9
2/27	-----	Fifth species Post 3: Fifth species
	2/29	----- Extensions of two-part counterpoint, fugue and canon Post 4: Canon
3/5	-----	Counterpoint as used in popular music WS 10
		<i>Harmony and Voice-Leading</i>
	3/7	----- Triads, chord inversions and spacing, figured bass notation, cadences WS 11
3/19	-----	Minor, Roman numeral analysis, seventh chords, tendency tones Post 5: Harmonic analysis of a diatonic chorale
	3/21	----- Chord construction and voice-leading guidelines, the PDT cycle WS 12
3/26	-----	Harmony miscellany, error identification checklist, practice harmonization Post 6: Harmonizing a chorale diatonically
	3/28	----- Sequences, secondary dominants, more harmonization practice WS 13
4/2	-----	Artusi practice, realization of a figured bass, keyboard textures WS 14
	4/4	----- PDT, chord construction, and voice-leading addenda WS 15
4/9	-----	More on secondary dominants, analysis Post 7: Harmonic analysis of a Bach chorale
	4/11	----- Harmony and voice-leading as used in popular music WS 16
		<i>Three Historical Studies</i>
4/16	-----	Baroque instrumental style, variation sets, final project WS 17
	4/18	----- Choral v. instrumental style, Renaissance vocal music, composing for choir Post 8: Renaissance-style vocal work
4/22	-----	Church modes, plainchant, Medieval dances WS 18
	4/25	----- Review of semester WS 19, 20
5/7		Final projects (Artusi final online, and variations as MyCourses discussion post) and everything else by 11:59 p.m.

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