

Semester 3 Theory (MUSC 2101) – Section 001

Assessment guide

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1 Self evaluation

The ability to evaluate one's own progress is an essential skill for any educated person, especially professional musicians. The ability to communicate one's mastery of various relevant topics and skills accurately and concisely is essential to finding and keeping a job. Finally, the ability to determine an appropriate level of mastery based on the material, and not on a rubric given by a superior, is one of the key marks of an educated person and independent learner. Further, it is essential if one wants to be successful in new ventures over the course of a career, not simply in a single career track the first few years after graduation.

With all this in mind, the student—not the instructor—will be the primary assessor of his or her own mastery of the course material. The instructor will have the final say, of course, but it will be the student's job to keep track of progress, assess that progress, assess mastery at the end of each unit of study, and make a reasoned and supported argument to the instructor regarding their final grade for the course. Students who successfully make the case for the grade they have chosen will receive that grade.

The following will serve as a framework for student self evaluations and grade petitions.

2 Assessment and final grades

Assessment will be in reference to written self evaluations with supporting portfolios, submitted at the end of each unit of study. These will be Google documents maintained by each student, shared with me, and updated weekly. Weekly updates are due at 8am on the day following the last class meeting of the week, so that I can read and comment on them before preparing for class for the following week. (For MW classes, updates are due every Thursday morning at 8am.) These weekly updates should outline the assessment criteria (concepts and skills listed in the course syllabus), reflect upon progress made and mastery demonstrated, and should outline a plan for acquiring or demonstrating the remaining knowledge or skills by the end of the unit.

At the end of each unit, the student will assign a letter grade for each criterion (no pluses or minuses), and provide a written argument of no longer than a paragraph demonstrating the reason that the chosen grade is appropriate. This argument can and should make reference to in-class work, projects, or habits demonstrated by the student during the unit.

At the end of the semester, the student will assign a whole-semester letter grade (no pluses or minuses) for each criterion, and provide a written argument of no longer than a

paragraph demonstrating the reason that the chosen grade is appropriate. This argument can and should make reference to in-class work, projects, or habits demonstrated by the student during each respective unit.

A student's overall grade will be the median grade of all assessment criteria, or one letter grade higher than the lowest criterion grade—whichever is lower.

3 Assessment criteria

Assessment will take place in reference to the concepts and skills listed on the course syllabus.

It is the responsibility of the student to determine the appropriate content and standards of mastery for each of these criteria in a given unit of study, based on course material (including, but not limited to, the syllabus), activities, and conversations with peers and instructor.

4 Letter grades

Following are general guidelines for letter grades:

- A: Student has excelled in this area and demonstrated mastery over it.
- B: Student has sufficient working knowledge of this area to move on to next unit/course with no need for extra review/remediation.
- C: Student is ready to proceed to next unit/semester, but only after review or correction of some of the material.
- D: Student demonstrates significant lack of understanding/mastery, and will not likely be able to proceed successfully to next unit/semester without substantial review or repeating the course.
- F: Student made no significant attempt to master this material.

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