

# MUSIC THEORY I

## FNRT 205 | Fall 2021

**Instructor:** Dr. Yunn-Shan Ma

**Office Hours:** Mon/Wed 2:30pm – 4pm and by appointments

**Office:** LBR 06- 1112

**Class meets:** Mon/Wed/Fri 1:25pm – 2:15pm at A120 (SAU)

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### PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

**Do** you like to listen to music? **Have** you pretended that you are one of the musicians that you admire and wish that you could sing/play as they do? **Have** you ever wondered how music works?

We usually 'listen' to music as a solely aural experience. The music makers, though, must have 'something' that they either know or feel in their mind so that they can improvise, or 'something' that they can read that they can 'realize' from, for example, a music score. **How** do the notes, lines, flags and signs on the score mean? **How** do we produce 'musical sound' from the written score? **What** are the basic norms and rules of music that have been concluded or established over the history of more than 2019 years?

The purpose of this course is to **encounter music as a “language”** from its alphabets, words and grammar and develop a basis for musical literacy through learning the fundamentals of music theory. Topics to be covered will include the study of clefs, major and minor scales, key signatures, rhythms, intervals, triads, notation, introduction to piano keyboard, harmonic analysis and terminology. The main goal of the course is that the students will gain solid adeptness in basic music theory, achieve the ability to transform visual notations into accorded sound, and to transcribe aural sound to notes, as well as perform music analysis. In short, the aim of this course is to introduce you how to read and listen to music, as well as teach you a way or two to make music on your own!

In order to make 'theory' practical and connect it with our aural system, we will have activities and assignments to help you become more fluent with the knowledge regarding relationships among the notes. We will also learn how to identify the note, interval, chord or melody by ear (called "ear-training"). There will be assignments most days, including written and listening assignments, as well as announced and unannounced Q&As. Toward these ends, we will engage in the following activities:

- ❖ Sight singing & prepared singing (alone and in groups), with the goal of being able to sing diatonic melodies and basic rhythmic patterns musically at sight, aloud and in your head
- ❖ Analysis by ear of melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, and formal features, including error detection, developing the ability to notate these with fluency
- ❖ Playing simply melodies, chord progressions
- ❖ Conducting while singing, out loud and in your head

We will learn rules and norms with clear right and wrong answers, along with some common exceptions. We will also find that some of the most important questions about music do not have clear right and wrong answers, and that the pursuit of meaningful answers leads one beyond music into other disciplines - such as psychology, philosophy, history, anthropology, history, anthropology, sociology and cultural studies. We will shift our focus between relationships among the notes themselves and how the relationships are heard and understood by human listeners. I would love to see how you could relate, understand music theory from your disciplines or even analyze music via computer language (?), color (?), lights (?)...whatever tools you can come up with! The final report, a short written project (2-3 pages), will be your take on any piece that you love! (Instruction will be distributed separately.)

It's my goal to make music theory fun, easy and approachable for you! On the other hand, I would love to see you become more and more comfortable singing or playing on the keyboard, or even compose new songs or create a NEW instrument, as the term proceeds. For some of you, playing on the keyboard and singing a melody on the spot will be a new experience for you. If you need extra time (which means you are willing to put extra effort, good job!), I will happily schedule additional meetings with you.

### SUGGESTED TEXTBOOK

- ❖ Jane P. Clendinning | Elizabeth W. Marvin, *The Musician's Guide to Fundamentals*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.
  - This text is available for purchase at the College Store or on <http://www.norton.com>
  - Students are required to use the correct edition of the textbook for class meetings.
- ❖ Handouts, Articles, Musical excerpts as assigned

**EXTENDED READING MATERIAL**

- ❖ Jane P. Clendinning | Elizabeth W. Marvin, *Theory and Analysis*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition
- ❖ Joseph N. Strauss, *Elements of Music*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition
- ❖ Steve G. Laitz, *The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Tonal Theory, Analysis, and Listening*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

**Suggested software:** MuseScore, Finale, Sibelius, ACappella, Soundtrap, iMovie

**OTHER MATERIALS NEEDED**

- ❖ **Three-ring binder (for collecting working sheets, additional materials and your notes)**
- ❖ **Music manuscript paper:**
  - You may buy printed manuscript paper or print it from online sources, such as: <http://www.pdfpad.com/staffpaper/> ( “unmarked clef” recommended)
- ❖ **Pencils and Eraser:** Please use **ONLY PENCILS, ONLY PENCILS, ONLY PENCILS** for all musical assignments, quizzes and exams (mechanic pencils suggested)
- ❖ **Stapler or Clips:** Please staple or use paper clips to make weekly assignments as a package before turning in.
- ❖ **MyCourses**

**ASSIGNMENTS**

- ❖ **Daily assignments** will be given throughout the semester.
  - All written assignments for a given week will be **stapled or clipped together, due on the day as announced in class meetings, at the beginning of the class.**
  - **Late written assignments:** There will be a 10% grade reduction (for example, -2pt for a 20pt assignment) for each 24 h-period any assignment is late.
  - Assignment later than the next class meeting will not be accepted.
  - Unusual circumstances upon with official documentations will be discussed by case.
- ❖ **Q&A:** There will be a brief Q&A at the beginning or the end of many classes on reading assignments, musical excerpts assignments as well as course materials of the previous class. These small quizzes will be regarded as part of daily assignments rather than exams. **There is no make-up Q&A.** Please plan to come to classes ON TIME.

**ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

I expect that students in my course will engage with the modality of my course as outlined, barring any unforeseen issues such as illness, quarantine, etc. Attending and engaging in class time with me and your peers is important for your learning the materials. In this class, Class Participation points can be largely earned by attending class meetings, as well as your further involvement towards class/group activities throughout the semester. If you have questions about your attendance and participation in this course, please contact me.

**GRADING**

- ❖ **Written Assignments:** Grading of the written assignments will hinge upon completeness as well as quality of the work
- ❖ **Performance Grading:**
  - The standard for a grade of A allows for a couple of hesitations or small errors, so long as the majority of the performance is musical in conducting, singing and/or playing.
  - For standard for B allows for several hesitations and/or a couple of errors, so long as there is a reasonable sense of musicality and evidence of preparation.
  - Note: Writing in more than a couple (exact number decided upon each excerpt) scale degree / solfege symbols will lower the best possible score on a given excerpt to 70%.
- ❖ **Assignments / Q & A** 260pt
- Class participation / Activities** 250pt
- Concert Reports (2)** 40pt
- Exams** 220pt
- Final Project/Analysis Report** 230pt

❖ **Grade vs 1000-points Distribution:**

<b>A : 930-1000</b>	A- : 900-920	B+ : 870-890	B : 840-860	B- : 800-830
C+ : 770-790	C : 740-760	C- : 700-730	D : 690-600	F : < 600

[I 'd prefer never to adhere the lightest letter grade as shown above, but know that I will do so consistently if the circumstance arises]

**Important Reminders**

**RIT Honor Code:** Students will be expected to reflect the values and behavior characterized in the University Policy P03.0 Honor Code, which states -

“Integrity and strong moral character are valued and expected within and outside of the RIT community. As members of the RIT campus community, including students, trustees, faculty, staff, and administrators, we will:

- Demonstrate civility, respect, decency and sensitivity towards our fellow members of the RIT community, and recognize that all individuals at this university are part of the larger RIT family, and as such are entitled to that support and mutual respect which they deserve.
- Conduct ourselves with the highest standards of moral and ethical behavior. Such behavior includes taking responsibility for our own personal choices, decisions and academic and professional work.
- Affirm through the daily demonstration of these ideals that RIT is a university devoted to the pursuit of knowledge and a free exchange of ideas in an open and respectful climate.”

**Academic Integrity**

This course has a **zero tolerance policy regarding breaches of RIT’s Academic Integrity Policy**. It is the responsibility of all students to familiarize themselves with the complete RIT Academic Integrity Policy. The RIT Policy for academic integrity applies to all aspects of this course. As a university, RIT is committed to the pursuit of knowledge and the free exchange of ideas. In the case of students, Academic Honesty demands that at all times student work be the work of that individual student, and that any information which a student uses in a work submitted for evaluation be properly documented. Any violation of these basic standards constitutes a breach of Academic Integrity.

A breach of student academic integrity falls into three basic areas: cheating, duplicate submission, and plagiarism.

**Cheating:** Cheating is any form of fraudulent or deceptive act, including falsification of data, possessing, providing, or using unapproved materials, sources, or tools for a project, exam, or body of work submitted for faculty evaluation.

**Duplicate Submission:** Duplicate submission is the submitting of the same or similar work for credit in more than one course without prior approval of the instructors for those same courses.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the representation of others’ ideas as one’s own without giving proper attribution to the original author or authors. Plagiarism occurs when a student copies direct phrases from a text (e.g. books, journals, and internet) and does not provide quotation marks or paraphrases or summarizes those ideas without giving credit to the author or authors. In all cases, if such information is not properly and accurately documented with appropriate credit given, then the student has committed plagiarism.

- RIT Academic Integrity Policy (D08.0)

To Sum up – **All work submitted for this course shall be completed entirely on your own**: this includes not consulting classmates’ work and/or existing analyses for assignments as well as the existing scores for Music-by-Ear assignments.

**Covid-19 Special Reminders**

We are all aware of the unique circumstances of this fall semester resulting from the worldwide COVID-19 SARS-2 pandemic. RIT has consulted federal, state, and local guidelines and policies to implement a safe, yet educational environment for students, faculty and staff. These guidelines, located at <https://www.rit.edu/ready/> are routinely updated as conditions change.

What do these mean for this class? When we meet in person **everyone will wear a mask that covers their mouth and nose at all times and have freshly washed or sanitized hands.**

We will talk in class about these expectations to ensure that we all are comfortable with what is happening during class. I encourage your communication about any special needs or concerns. **Music can never die!** We can make it happen to still enjoy and understand more about music in this 'special' time!

### CLASSROOM EXPECTATION AND ETIQUETTE

- ❖ **Please respect RIT COVID Safety Guidelines** in regards to masking and all updates throughout the semester.
- ❖ **Please plan arrive to class prior to meeting time.**
- ❖ **For smaller group meetings:** Smaller group meetings will be assigned as to best benefit all our class colleagues. You have to attend to the 'assigned' meetings as scheduled.
- ❖ **Phone/Laptop in class:** Please only use phone/laptop when it is required and requested for a classroom activity. I will also ask you to kindly put your devices to **silent mode** during class meetings.
- ❖ **Phone/Laptop during exam:** All electronic devices should be silenced and placed out of sight prior to entering the classroom.
- ❖ **Active participation:** "It is more joyful to share the joy than to keep it to oneself." I encourage you to share your ideas, favorite pieces, your singing voice and musical talents with the class. At the same time, feel free to ask questions about course related materials, issues or concerns.
- ❖ In short: **Be respectful to the class and the people attending the class.**

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

*(Subject to change at the instructor's discretion)*

Week	Date	Topic	Due Date Assignments
Week 1	Aug. 23 (Mon) Aug. 25 (Wed) Aug. 27 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction, Questionnaire, Syllabus</li> <li>▪ Staff   Keyboard   Pitch Notation   Steps v.s. Leaps   Naming Systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read Ch. 1</li> <li>○ Hand in:</li> </ul>
Week 2	Aug. 30 (Mon) Sep. 1 (Wed) Sep. 3 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rhythm notation   Dots and ties   Clefs</li> <li>▪ Rhythm in the poems   Semitones vs Whole tones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read Ch. 2</li> <li>○ Hand in:</li> </ul>
Week 3	Sep. 6 (Mon) Sep. 8 (Wed) Sep. 10 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mon. 9/6 – Labor Day – No Class</li> <li>▪ Grand staff   Rhythm notation   Rests   Simple Meter   Conducting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read Ch. 3</li> <li>○ Hand in:</li> </ul>
Week 4	Sep. 13 (Mon) Sep. 15 (Wed) Sep. 17 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ideas of final projects</li> <li>▪ Simple Meter   Conducting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read Ch 4</li> <li>○ Hand in:</li> </ul>
Week 5	Sep. 20 (Mon) Sep. 22 (Wed) Sep. 24 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Major scales</li> <li>▪ Minor scales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read Ch 5, 7</li> </ul>
Week 6	Sep. 27 (Mon) Sep. 29 (Wed) Oct. 1 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key signatures</li> <li>▪ Intervals I</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read Ch. 5</li> <li>○ Hand in:</li> </ul>
Week 7	Oct. 4 (Mon) Oct. 6 (Wed) Oct. 8 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Compound Meter</li> <li>▪ Review I   <b>Exam I – Friday Oct. 8</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read Ch. 8</li> <li>○ Hand in:</li> </ul>
Week 8	Oct. 11 (Mon) Oct. 13 (Wed) Oct. 15 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mon. 10/11 – Fall Break – No Class</li> <li>▪ Intervals II   Syncopation</li> <li>▪ Triads   Triad inversions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read Ch. 9</li> <li>○ <b>Final Report: Topic Due Oct. 15</b></li> </ul>

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE – Cont'd**  
**(Subject to change at the instructor's discretion)**

Week	Date	Topic	Due Date Assignments
<b>Week 9</b>	Oct. 18 (Mon) Oct. 20 (Wed) Oct. 22 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Triads in Major Keys   Roman Numerals</li> <li>▪ How to accompany a song?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read Ch. 10, Handouts</li> <li>○ Hand in:</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b>	Oct. 25 (Mon) Oct. 27 (Wed) Oct. 29 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tonic and Dominant</li> <li>▪ Musical Forms in Classical Music</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read Ch. 9, Appendix 7</li> <li>○ Hand in:</li> </ul>
<b>Week 11</b>	Nov. 1 (Mon) Nov. 3 (Wed) Nov. 5 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Phrase and cadence</li> <li>▪ Predominant chords</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read Ch. 10, Appendix 6</li> <li>○ <b>Final Report: Outline Due Nov. 5</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 12</b>	Nov. 8 (Mon) Nov. 10 (Wed) Nov. 12 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Musical Forms in popular Music</li> <li>▪ Review 2</li> <li>▪ <b>Exam II: Nov. 12 (Fri.)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read Handouts</li> <li>○ Hand in:</li> </ul>
<b>Week 13</b>	Nov. 15 (Mon) Nov. 17 (Wed) Nov. 19 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Music Analysis</li> <li>▪ Seventh Chords</li> <li>▪ Individual Meetings re: final projects</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 14</b>	Nov. 22 (Mon) Nov. 24 (Wed) Nov. 26 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individual Meetings re: final projects</li> <li>▪ Review III / Q &amp; A</li> <li>▪ Thanksgiving Recess – Nov. 24 / Nov. 26</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read Appendix 9</li> </ul>
<b>Week 15</b>	Nov. 29 (Mon) Dec. 1 (Wed) Dec. 3 (Fri)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Music Analysis   Applied Chords</li> <li>▪ Final Reports</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 16</b>	Dec. 6 (Mon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Final Reports</li> </ul>	
<b>Final</b>	<b>Dec. 13 (Mon)</b> <b>1:30pm-4:00pm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Final Projects Due</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Written Reports – Due at Final Exam Time</p>