



MUS-101: MUSIC FUNDAMENTALS

Effective Term

Fall 2026

BOT Approval Date

12/11/2025

Discipline

MUS - Music

Course Number

101

Course Title

Music Fundamentals

Short Title

Music Fundamentals

Credit Status (CB 04)

D - Credit - Degree applicable

Units**Lecture Units**

3.00

Total Units

3.00

Hours**Lecture Contact Hours**

48-54

Out of Class Hours Lecture

96-108

Total Contact Hours

48 - 54

Total Out of Class Hours

96 - 108

Total Student Learning Hours

144 - 162

Distance Education

Yes

Distance Education**Distance Education Type**

Hybrid Only

What will be done in face-to-face meetings

Face-to-Face meetings will consist of lectures on course concepts, student-led discussions on weekly assignments, and realtime, direct feedback from the instructor on coursework. Face-to-face meetings will be once a week for the duration of the term.

Are you using publisher content?

Yes

Link to VPAT<https://www.norton.com/accessibility/norton-learning-tools/norton-ebook-reader-including-norton-illumine>**Attach VPAT**

VPAT_InQuizitive.pdf

VPAT_NortonEbookReader.pdf

Regular Substantive Interaction

Instructor-to-student, student-to-student, and student-to-content contact shall be distributed in a manner that will ensure regular substantive interaction (RSI) is maintained not only weekly but also for the duration of the course. Instructor interactions should be equivalent in time, quality and consistency to the engagement students would receive in a face-to-face course—for example, through announcements, discussion participation, personalized feedback, video messages, or other instructional communications. Instructors are expected to be responsive to student inquiries within a 24-72 hour time frame excluding holidays. RSI will be maintained through a variety of methods:

- Orientation - Students must be oriented to the online and face-to-face portions at the start of the course.
- Announcements - Announcements using the course management system must be posted at least weekly to keep students current on course events, due dates, materials, etc.
- Discussion Forums - Content-related discussion forums within the designated CMS will include appropriate instructor participation and will be initiated and maintained, with timely feedback provided. Instructors are required to monitor the discussions and related activities to provide guidance and direction. Open-ended discussion boards may be used to further learning and interaction.
- MSJC Communication – Instructor will use MSJC-administered communication tools (such as email or the designated CMS communication tools) to regularly communicate with and provide ease of access to students.
- Timely Feedback - Timely feedback on student work will be provided by the instructor, which may include comments and/or rubrics, within the Grades area of the designated CMS.
- Scheduled Meetings – Hybrid and synchronous courses will meet at regularly scheduled times.

ADA Compliance - All course interactions and content must be designed with accessibility in mind and meet ADA requirements.

C-ID (Admin Only)

C-ID MUS 110

Catalog Description

This course introduces the primary elements of music and develops beginning-level skills in handwritten musical notation and aural skills. Students will be introduced to the arrangement of the keyboard and musical staff, the basic properties of sound, intervals, diatonic scales, and diatonic chords.

Codes**TOP Code (CB 03)**

1004.00 - Music

CIP Code

50.0904 - Music Theory and Composition.

Repeatability Code

No

Grading Option

Letter grade OR P/NP

Minimum Qualifications

Minimum Qualifications	And/Or
Music (Masters Required)	End

GE Information**Check GE Types Requested**

AA/AS C - Humanities

Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

Learning Objective

- | |
|--|
| 1. Analyze and write basic pitch and rhythmic notation using traditional symbols of Western music including notes, clefs, rests, accidentals, and the grand staff. |
| 2. Identify simple and compound meters, both aurally and as written time signatures. |
| 3. Relate the layout of the piano keyboard to the layout of the musical staff. |
| 4. Construct and identify major and minor scales, key signatures, and intervals up to an octave. |
| 5. Recognize and compose triads and seventh chords, including their inversions. |
| 6. Define and explain interpretive symbols related to dynamics, tempo, and expression. |
| 7. Perform simple written melodies and rhythms. |
| 8. Assess and interpret musical examples representing a diversity of styles and cultures within the United States and abroad. |

Learning Outcome Information

Course Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome

- | |
|--|
| 1. Students will identify the correlation between the musical staff and the piano keyboard. |
| 2. Students will recognize and identify the chord progression of a musical excerpt. |
| 3. Students will analyze and interpret written rhythms using established counting syllables. |

Content

Course Lecture Content

1. Pitch Notation and the Grand Staff
 - a. Contour
 - b. Letter Names
 - c. Staff Notation
 - d. Octave Numbers
 - e. Ledger Lines
 - f. The Grand Staff
 - g. Writing Music
2. Accidentals and Half and Whole Steps
 - a. Sharps, Flats, and Naturals
 - b. Writing with Accidentals
 - c. Half Steps and Whole Steps
 - d. Double Sharps and Flats
 - e. Enharmonic Spellings
3. Simple Meters
 - a. Duple, Triple, and Quadruple Meters
 - b. Tempo Markings
 - c. Conducting Patterns
 - d. Rhythmic Notation
 - e. Meter Signatures
 - f. Counting Rhythms
 - g. Rests
4. Beat Subdivisions
 - a. Subdivisions
 - b. Tie and Slurs
 - c. Syncopation
 - d. Triplets
 - e. Rhythmic Subdivisions Beyond the Western Canon

5. Compound Meters
 - a. Meter Signatures
 - b. Subdivisions
 - c. Duplets and Syncopations
6. Major Scales and Keys
 - a. Major Scales
 - b. Scale Degrees
 - c. Writing Major Scales
 - d. Major Key Signatures
 - e. The Circle of Fifths
 - f. Chromatic Scales
7. Minor Scales and Keys and Additional Scales
 - a. Parallel Keys
 - b. Natural Minor
 - c. Harmonic Minor
 - d. Melodic Minor
 - e. Scale Types
 - f. Relative Keys
 - g. Minor Keys and the Circle of Fifths
 - h. Identifying Minor Keys
 - i. Scales Around the World (for example, China's *Wu Sheng* and India's *Melakarta*)
8. Intervals
 - a. Intervals
 - b. Interval Quality
 - c. Spelling Intervals
 - d. Inverting Intervals
 - e. Augmented and Diminished Intervals
 - f. Compound Intervals
 - g. Consonance and Dissonance
9. Triads and Seventh Chords
 - a. Triads in Major Keys
 - b. Triads in Minor Keys
 - c. Spelling Triads
 - d. Triad Inversions
 - e. The Dominant Seventh Chord
 - f. Seventh Chord Inversions
10. Harmonization and Roman Numerals
 - a. Introduction to Roman Numerals
 - b. Harmonizing Major Melodies
 - c. Harmonizing Minor Melodies
 - d. Writing Chord Progressions

Methods of Instruction

Method

Directed Study

Integration

Directed study will involve musical practice of concepts introduced in each class. For example, the instructor may involve the class in problem solving issues such as writing notes, completing examples based upon time signatures, and constructing scales, key signatures, triads, and other chords.

DE Adaptations for MOI

In lieu of in-class practice, students will access practice materials through the course e-Book embedded in the CMS, providing real-time feedback on their responses. Accessible audio and video examples of course material (such as captioned videos and transcripts) can be incorporated into the assignment.

Method

In-class Exercises

Integration

In-class exercises for this course include students clapping or speaking written rhythms, as well as singing written melodies.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Students will record themselves performing assigned materials and submit videos of their performances via the CMS. Students may also meet virtually with the instructor as needed. Students unable to perform these exercises may complete an accessible alternative assignment, such as analyzing performances of the assigned materials, evaluating overall accuracy, and providing suggestions for improvement.

Method

Individualized Instruction

Integration

Student needs in this class are often unique. The most common examples of individualized instruction in this class are working with students to learn to match pitch and accurately sing intervals.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Students will regularly submit work via the CMS to ensure comprehension and improvement. Audio and/or video recordings will be submitted as necessary, and virtual meetings scheduled as needed. Students unable to complete assigned materials may complete an accessible alternative assignment, such as evaluating the overall accuracy of a performance and providing suggestions for improvement.

Method

Lecture

Integration

Instructor will lecture and lead discussions on topics such as pitch notation, rhythms in simple and compound meters, scales, key signatures, intervals, triads, and dominant 7th chords.

DE Adaptations for MOI

In-person lectures can be replaced with accessible captioned audio and video resources and other visual guides along with e-Lectures embedded or linked in the CMS.

Method

Observation and Demonstration

Integration

The instructor should demonstrate various concepts using the piano and the marker board. Topics include identifying major and minor key signatures, writing scales, writing triads, conducting, performing in both simple and compound meters, and singing various melodies.

DE Adaptations for MOI

The instructor will offer a variety of online materials (both visual and audio) to support the development and practice of this material. Students will submit their work through the CMS as drafts before the final due date, allowing the instructor to provide timely feedback. In-person demonstrations can be replaced with recordings of musical performances for student viewing. Additional accessible videos of educational performances for streaming will be embedded into the CMS.

Method

Film/video Viewing and Discussion

Integration

Instructor will guide students to view video examples including recorded performances and documentary excerpts to better understand fundamental musical concepts, such as pitch and rhythm, in cultures around the world. This leads to a recognition of music's universal role across diverse populations in a multitude of capacities.

DE Adaptations for MOI

In lieu of in-class or real-time directed listening, written listening guides can be provided to the student or directed listening can be incorporated into audio/video lecture materials such as accessible captioned videos and podcasts with transcripts and other visual guides. Discussion components will be adapted to an online format within the CMS. Discussions begin with a prompt from the instructor. Students post and reply to each other, with the instructor taking an active role to facilitate discussion over a set, limited time period, with grading and feedback provided within a week of the discussion closing.

Methods of Evaluation**Method**

Class Performance

Integration

Class performances will consist of prepared and/or sight-read performances of music and may also be evaluated individually or in small groups for a grade. For example, a simple melody may be introduced in class, assigned as out-of-class practice, then performed in a later class for a grade. Students will be graded using a rubric provided prior to assessment, focusing on accuracy of pitch and rhythm, particularly as it relates to Learning Objective 7. Verbal feedback will be provided by the instructor upon completion of the performance in class and via the CMS in a timely manner.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Students will be assigned specific melodies to perform and record and submit via the CMS. Students may also meet with the instructor virtually as needed. Students will receive feedback through the CMS in a timely manner, with responses graded individually based on the provided rubric.

Method

Exams/Tests

Integration

Quizzes and Exams test written music theory skills as well as aural skills (sight singing and dictation) to assess progress towards Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Students' recognition of scales, intervals, key signatures, and rhythmic concepts will be evaluated. Exams and quizzes are a combination of multiple choice, true/false, short answers, and performances of prepared musical excerpts.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Exams are formatted to use the CMS exam/quiz feature, with students completing and submitting work via the CMS. Accessible visual and audio components can be embedded into questions. Students will receive feedback through the CMS in a timely manner, with many questions being auto-graded by the CMS, and any written responses graded individually.

Method

Homework

Integration

Homework assignments based upon each topic covered in the course will be evaluated based on students' mastery of the topic. For example, to support Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, students will receive written assignments in note writing, note reading, scale reading and writing, key signatures, and writing chords and their inversions.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Students will have the option to annotate a PDF directly on the CMS or scan and submit their work on the CMS. Students will receive feedback through the CMS in a timely manner, with written responses graded individually.

Method

Projects

Integration

Composition projects are evaluated based on the student's ability to wholly incorporate the fundamental elements of music as studied in class and focuses on Learning Objectives 1, 4, and 5. Whereas most written work deals with individual elements of music, composing requires students to understand how these elements form a larger whole. Grading is based on a rubric provided to students, consisting of accurate incorporation of musical components, analysis of the composition, and formatting of the assignment.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Students will scan and submit their project to the CMS for evaluation and feedback. Students will receive feedback through the CMS in a timely manner, with written work graded individually.

Method

Oral Presentation

Integration

Students will research and present on a fundamental music topic relevant to the class and discuss how this concept is expressed within the context of a specific musical culture from around the world. Examples include "Rhythm in Gamelan Music" and "Scales on the Guqin." Students will be evaluated based on their comprehension of specific course concepts and their ability to effectively and clearly present on these concepts within a global musical tradition, particularly as it relates to Learning Objective 8. Students may choose from a provided list of global traditions or propose one they are interested in (with Instructor approval).

DE Adaptations for MOE

This research project can be formatted as a written term paper and submitted via the CMS, rather than an oral presentation. Students may opt to submit a pre-recorded audio/video file to the CMS. Feedback is provided via the CMS in a timely manner.

Assignments**Assignment Type**

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Dictation: Listen to the melody and transcribe it onto the staff paper provided. The melody will be performed four times and is a total of four measures in common time.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

Students will access a recording on the CMS that can only be played a limited number of times (determined by the instructor).

Assignment Type

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

Concert Report:

Attend a live concert of music related to this course and submit a report (at least 2 pages) that describes the concert experience, using specific musical vocabulary learned in class. A list of eligible performances in the area (including options with free admission) will be provided. If there is a concert not on the list, you must reach out for pre-approval from the instructor.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

Complete instructions will be provided in the CMS and the paper will be submitted electronically. Students may be eligible to view live streaming performances as available.

Assignment Type

Reading

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Discussion: Why Does Meter Matter?

Read the following introductory article by Professor Kimberly Juanita Brown on the legacy of Marvin Gaye's performance of the Star-Spangled Banner at the 1983 NBA All-Star Game: <https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/the-most-mournful-rendition-of-the-star-spangled-banner-ever-performed/>

After reading the article, listen to Marvin Gaye's performance and in approximately 100-150 words, discuss the following: What are some ways this rendition of the anthem integrates the diverse musical styles identified in Dr. Brown's article (such as gospel, R&B, and blues)? How does Gaye's performance reflect these elements sonically? Support your descriptions with specific musical characteristics related to tempo, rhythm, and meter as heard in this performance.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

This assignment will be adapted to use the CMS discussion boards. A link to Professor Brown's article will be included in the assignment instructions, and Gaye's performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner" will be embedded. Students submit answers to the prompts as discussion board posts and as replies to other students' posts. The instructor gives feedback through the CMS grading system and by posting and replying to student posts.

Assignment Type

Other

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

Composition Project: Create an original work that is four measures in duration, with a melody in the treble clef and block chords in the bass clef. Your melody must include: a time signature of 3/4 or 4/4, a key signature with at least two flats or two sharps, a harmonic progression that adheres to the patterns studied in class, and no more than one whole note in the melody. The minimum note duration will be an eighth note. You must present your composition to the class and explain your process in creating the music and how you have met all the requirements of the assignment.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

The composition project will be submitted and discussed via the CMS, allowing for direct student-to-student and instructor-to-student interaction on the student's composition. Students are encouraged to submit a video discussing their work, but are welcome to submit a written discussion on their composition. Feedback is provided via the Grading feature of the CMS in a timely manner.

Course Materials

Textbooks

Clendinning, Jane Piper, Elizabeth West Marvin, and Joel Phillips (2023). The Musician's Guide to Fundamentals, 3rd ed. W.W. Norton. ISBN: 978-1-324-04613-4

Henry, E., Snodgrass, J., Piagentini, S. (2019). Fundamentals of Music, Pearson. ISBN: 9780134491387

Gerhold, J. (2018). A Plain English Guide to Music Fundamentals: An Outcome Based Approach, Kendall-Hunt. ISBN: 9781524985851

Musso, Paul (2014). Introduction to Music: An Interactive Approach, National Social Science Press. ISBN: 978-1-936306-79-4

Class Size Information

Class Size

35

Class Size Category

B - Facilitated learning 35

Diversity and Inclusion

Course Design and Materials: Course will incorporate diverse perspectives, authors, and examples that reflect a variety of cultures, identities, and lived experiences. Instructional materials will be reviewed regularly to ensure representation, inclusivity, and alignment with equity-minded practices across disciplines.

Inclusive Learning Environment: Instructors will establish classroom norms and policies that promote respect, civil discourse, and belonging in both online and face-to-face classes. Clear expectations for communication and engagement will support a learning space where all students feel valued and heard.

Accessible Instruction: Course content will be delivered using accessible design. Materials will follow accessibility guidelines within the CMS, including captioned media, readable document formats, and multiple means of engagement to support diverse learning.

Equitable Teaching Practices: Instructors will use transparent and grading criteria, varied assessment methods, and timely feedback to promote fairness and student success. Opportunities for revision, reflection, and multiple demonstrations of learning may be incorporated when appropriate to the discipline.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogies: Instructional strategies will encourage critical thinking about diverse perspectives and systems of power relevant to the course content. Faculty will foster opportunities for students to connect course material to real-world contexts.

Ongoing Reflection and Improvement: Faculty will engage in continuous professional development related to IDEAA principles and reflect on course practices using metacognition to identify opportunities for increased equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Explain how diversity and inclusion(e.g., gender, culture/race, sexuality, etc.) is infused into the course.

Learning Objective 8 focuses on assessing and interpreting musical examples that represent a diversity of styles and cultures within the United States and abroad. In this course, students will examine the universality of music both in Western classical music and across cultures, whether it is studying rhythmic concepts and their role in Gamelan music or analyzing the usage of scales in Chinese folk music, such as in Oral Presentations. Discussions and film/video viewing on the role of these musical elements in various cultures helps students connect and identify music's global reach. Likewise, by researching and presenting on a particular musical culture, students share their unique perspective and how this knowledge enhances their understanding of core musical concepts.

Describe how assignments, instruction, evaluation, course content, and interactions are contextualized for diverse learners promoting an equitable course.

As an introductory level course, the content assumes no prior knowledge of music. Written and aural skills are developed through explanation and demonstration, supported by guided, in-class assignments, ultimately preparing students for larger assignments, such as dictation, written exams, and concert reports.

Collaborative activities, such as group discussions, enable students to check their understanding and gain confidence in their responses and analysis.

Instruction and evaluation in the class is varied, giving students the opportunity to learn and be graded in multiple ways, including lecture, written assignments, discussion, quizzes, exams, and interactive materials (such as online course components and in-class singing). The content balances analytical activities with listening activities that might be found in a typical college music theory course.

Interactions

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-student interaction.

Students will regularly be asked to share their writing and analysis to check for accuracy with musical notation. Assignments such as composition projects will facilitate meaningful student-to-student interactions, as each presenting student will lead the class in a discussion on their original music, fostering peer interactions that embed course content. For online modalities, this is accomplished via discussion assignments in the CMS (at least once every week). As students discuss specific course topics, such as analyzing written rhythms, they must engage with posts from their peers on the CMS, and explain why they agree or disagree with a particular analysis of the music heard.

Explain how the course will incorporate instructor-to-student interaction.

The instructor will interact with students as a class through weekly lectures (in-person, video, or written), and by performing assigned musical materials together. As this is an introductory music course, ensuring the instructor regularly sings and performs with the students is essential for them to develop their own level of comfort with this aspect of the class. Likewise, the instructor will provide individual feedback on students' written analysis of music and support students with regular feedback as they learn to write music and refine their compositions. The instructor will also participate in weekly group discussions (in the classroom or in the CMS), responding to student comments either individually or as a group. The instructor will also communicate to the class via weekly announcement posts, providing reminders about upcoming musical performances in the community related to course content.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-content interaction.

For in-person components, students engage with content via assigned readings, analyzing music, watching videos of music performances, and attending live music performances. In the online class, students engage with the content by taking interactive online quizzes, watching digital concerts, reading assigned materials, and listening to recordings.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-self interaction (metacognitive).

In both the face to face and online classes, students will reflect on their personal responses as they listen to and analyze various musical examples and consider the ways in which they hear the music. For instance, in their discussion on meter, students will reflect on how their perception of an established song shapes their understanding of the music, and how a slight alteration in a fundamental music component reveals new ways of appreciating and understanding this very same song.