

COURSE OUTLINE

Music 176 Introduction to Songwriting

I. Catalog Statement

Music 176 is designed for students who would like to acquire the skills to write a popular song. Students learn how the components of lyrics, melody, and chords fit together within the structure of a popular song. In addition, students develop an awareness of the stylistic elements of different types of popular music and songs. Students are introduced to the relevant aspects of the music publishing industry, including copyright law. During the semester students write songs in different styles and learn how to make simple recordings of their songs.

Total Lecture Units: 3.0

Total Laboratory Units: 0.0

Total Course Units: 3.0

Total Lecture Hours: 48.0

Total Laboratory Hours: 0.0

Total Laboratory Hours To Be Arranged: 0.0

Total Faculty Contact Hours: 48.0

Recommended Preparation: Music 101 or equivalent

II. Course Entry Expectations

Prior to enrolling in the course, the student should be able to:

- read, write, and converse in English.

III. Course Exit Standards

Upon successful completion of the required coursework, the student will be able to:

- analyze the structure of a popular song;
- identify distinguishing characteristics of popular songs in different styles;
- compose a popular song in one or more styles;
- apply key features of current copyright law to songwriting;
- compare the functions of publishers, producers, and performing-rights societies as they relate to songwriting.

IV. Course Content

Total Faculty Contact Hours = 48

- A. Song Components (**8 hours**)
 1. Musical intervals and melody
 2. Harmony and chord structures
 3. Elements of composition
 4. Song structure
 5. Words, rhyme, and meter
 6. Syncopation
- B. Analysis of Current Songs in Different Styles (**16 hours**)
 1. The evolution of popular styles
 2. Rock and its sub-categories
 3. Country
 4. Jazz
 5. Blues
 6. Songs for musicals
 7. Jingles
 8. Special material for television and multimedia
- C. In-Class Presentation and Critique of Student Songs (**16 hours**)
 1. Discussion of the structural elements of the song
 2. Relationship of words to music
 3. Market potential for songs
 4. Suggestions for improvement
- D. Components of the Music Industry (**4 hours**)
 1. Publishers, producers and agents
 2. Performance-rights societies
 3. Understanding contracts
 4. Expenses, finances, and budgets
 5. Networking with other songwriters
 6. Alternative outlets for songwriters
- E. Copyright Law (**4 hours**)
 1. Basic information about copyrights
 2. Recent modifications in the law
 3. Protecting your songs

V. Methods of Instruction

The following methods of instruction may be used in the course:

- classroom lecture and demonstration of basic concepts;
- analysis of commercially-recorded musical examples;
- instructor-directed critique of student projects.
- on-line.

VI. Out of Class Assignments

The following out of class assignments may be used in the course:

- reading;
- listening and song analysis (e.g. analyzing the form of lyrics in the blues);
- songwriting exercises (e.g. writing a verse in a specific form that expresses the emotion of longing);
- songwriting projects (e.g. creating an entire song in the country music style including melody, harmony, and lyrics).

VII. Methods of Evaluation

The following methods of evaluation may be used in the course:

- participation;
- project evaluations;
- midterm examinations;
- final examination.

VIII. Textbook(s)

Austin, Dave and Jim Peterik. *Songwriting for Dummies*. Hoboken: Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2010. Print.

12th Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: 9780470615140.

Braheny, John. *Craft and Business of Songwriting*. Georgetown, ON, Canada: F & W Publishing, Inc., 2010. Print.

12th Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: 9781582974668.

IX. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the required coursework, the student will be able to:

- demonstrate recognition of the structure of a popular song;
- demonstrate recognition of distinguishing characteristics of popular songs in different styles;
- demonstrate the ability to compose a popular song in one or more styles;
- explain key features of current copyright law as it applies to songwriting;
- recognize current and emerging methods of monetizing intellectual property;
- explain the functions of publishers, producers, and performing-rights societies as they relate to songwriting.