

CATALOG INFORMATION

Dept and Nbr: MUSC 55

Title: SONGWRITING

Full Title: Songwriting

Last Reviewed: 2/27/2023

Units		Course Hours per Week		Nbr of Weeks	Course Hours Total	
Maximum	3.00	Lecture Scheduled	3.00	17.5	Lecture Scheduled	52.50
Minimum	3.00	Lab Scheduled	0	8	Lab Scheduled	0
		Contact DHR	0		Contact DHR	0
		Contact Total	3.00		Contact Total	52.50
		Non-contact DHR	0		Non-contact DHR	0

Total Out of Class Hours: 105.00

Total Student Learning Hours: 157.50

Title 5 Category: AA Degree Applicable

Grading: Grade or P/NP

Repeatability: 00 - Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

Also Listed As:

Formerly: MUS 55

Catalog Description:
This course is a popular songwriting workshop designed for aspiring and semi-professional songwriters. Students will create songs in several styles by analyzing and applying the lyrical, rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic strategies used in classic and contemporary songwriting. The subjects of copyrights, publishing, and distribution will also be presented.

Prerequisites/Corequisites:

Recommended Preparation:
Course Completion or Concurrent Enrollment in MUSC 2A

Limits on Enrollment:

Schedule of Classes Information:
Description: This course is a popular songwriting workshop designed for aspiring and semi-professional songwriters. Students will create songs in several styles by analyzing and applying the lyrical, rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic strategies used in classic and contemporary songwriting. The subjects of copyrights, publishing, and distribution will also be presented.
(Grade or P/NP)

Prerequisites/Corequisites:

Recommended: Course Completion or Concurrent Enrollment in MUSC 2A

Limits on Enrollment:

Transfer Credit: CSU;

Repeatability: Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

ARTICULATION, MAJOR, and CERTIFICATION INFORMATION:

AS Degree:	Area	Effective:	Inactive:
CSU GE:	Transfer Area	Effective:	Inactive:
IGETC:	Transfer Area	Effective:	Inactive:
CSU Transfer:	Transferable	Effective: Fall 2023	Inactive:
UC Transfer:		Effective:	Inactive:

CID:

Certificate/Major Applicable:

Not Certificate/Major Applicable

COURSE CONTENT

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Compose lyrics and music for original songs.
2. Analyze the form, structure, groove, and lyrical elements of songs from different genres.
3. Explain the mechanics and legal issues of copyright, publishing, and distribution.

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Craft song lyrics using a variety of poetic devices.
2. Analyze the lyrical and musical characteristics of popular songs in various genres.
3. Compose popular songs with stylistically appropriate rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and formal structure.
4. Create lead sheets for original compositions.
5. Explain the fundamentals of copyright, song publishing, performance rights organizations, and song distribution.

Topics and Scope:

I. Overview of the History of Popular Song

II. Song Lyrics

- A. A genuine idea and a memorable title
- B. Viewpoint, time frame, and setting
- C. Use of rhyme, metaphors, and similes
- D. Prosody

III. Musical Elements of Popular Song

- A. Beat, rhythm, meter, and groove
- B. Melody

1. Motif, sequence, and phrase
2. The "hook"
- C. Characteristic chord progressions
- D. Popular song forms
 1. Verse/chorus/bridge
 2. 12-bar blues (AAB)
 3. Standard (AABA)
 4. Other forms
- IV. Copyright Law
 - A. United States Copyright Act: forms, protection, durations
 - B. How to copyright your song
 - C. Public Domain, "fair use" and issues in covering pre-existing material
- V. Song Publishing
 - A. Publishing basics
 - B. Forming a publishing company
 - C. Performance Rights Organizations (PROs)
 1. American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP)
 2. Broadcast Music International (BMI)
 3. Society of European Stage Authors & Composers (SESAC), etc.
 4. Harry Fox Agency
- VI. Song Distribution
 - A. Placing songs with a recording artist
 - B. Royalties
 - C. Radio airplay, online streaming, and downloads

Assignment:

1. Reading (10-20 pages per week)
2. Quizzes (3-7) on lecture topics
3. Create song titles (3-6). Define the essence of the lyrics and articulate the emotion, situation, or meaning for each title.
4. Song projects (includes the final):
 - A. Take three titles and develop a plot strategy with a strong start and satisfying payoff.
 - B. Create a rhythm, melody, and chord progression that fit your song style and lyric.
 - C. Present songs in class (live or recorded). Include a chord sheet (with lyrics) and a focus sheet which defines the viewpoint, time frame, and setting for each song.

Methods of Evaluation/Basis of Grade:

Writing: Assessment tools that demonstrate writing skills and/or require students to select, organize and explain ideas in writing.

Song lyrics

Writing 25 - 45%

Problem Solving: Assessment tools, other than exams, that demonstrate competence in computational or non-computational problem solving skills.

Song composition

Problem solving 25 - 45%

Skill Demonstrations: All skill-based and physical demonstrations used for assessment purposes including skill performance exams.

None

Skill Demonstrations
0 - 0%

Exams: All forms of formal testing, other than skill performance exams.

Quizzes

Exams
10 - 15%

Other: Includes any assessment tools that do not logically fit into the above categories.

Attendance and participation

Other Category
10 - 15%

Representative Textbooks and Materials:

Beginning Songwriting: Writing Your Own Lyrics, Melodies, and Chords. Stolpe, Andrea and Jan Stolpe. Berklee Press. 2015 (classic).

The Songwriting Labyrinth: Practical Tools for Decoding the Mysterious Craft. Harrison, Clive. CreateSpace. 2015 (classic).

Successful Lyric Writing. Davis, Sheila. Beekman Books. 1990 (classic).

Instructor prepared materials