



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SAN ANTONIO

MUSI 1303.004 – FUNDAMENTALS OF MUSIC FALL 2026 – MW 2:00-3:15 – CLASSROOM HALL 301

COURSE INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Martha Saywell

COURSE NUMBER: 12981

DEPARTMENT: Language, Literature, and Arts

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OFFICE LOCATION: Classroom Hall 314H

OFFICE HOURS: Monday from 9:30-10:30, Wednesday from 9:30-11:30 or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to the basic elements of music theory for non-music majors: scales, intervals, keys, triads, elementary ear training, keyboard harmony, notation, meter, and rhythm. This course meets the standards for the Creative Arts category of courses under the core curriculum.

COURSE GOALS:

- To gain a broader understanding of basic analytical elements of music and how they fit together.
- To gain and demonstrate music literacy.
- To obtain the necessary tools for creating and notating original compositions effectively and efficiently.

ADDITIONAL CORE CURRICULUM GOALS:

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) requires a core curriculum for all undergraduate students at public higher education institutions in Texas. The purpose is to develop essential knowledge and skills to be successful in college, in a career, in communities, and in life. This course meets the standards for the Creative Arts category of courses under the core curriculum and incorporates the following four learning objectives as required by the THECB:

- Critical Thinking Skills (creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information)
- Communication Skills (effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication)

- Social Responsibility (intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities)
- Teamwork (ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal)

ONLINE TEXTBOOK and OTHER RESOURCES:

- Robert Hutchinson's *Music Theory for the 21st-Century Classroom*
<https://musictheory.pugetsound.edu/mt21c/MusicTheory.html>
- Pencil – mandatory for all quizzes and pop quizzes
- Folder with pockets to collect and organize print materials for easy accessibility
- Sign up for a free Noteflight account at www.noteflight.com.
- Keyboards are on reserve in the University Library (located in BLH) to be checked out for three-hour increments.
- Any additional materials will be provided through Blackboard.

GRADING SCALE:

- 90% or higher = A
- 80% to 89% = B
- 70% to 79% = C
- 60% to 69% = D
- Below 60% = F

ASSESSMENT:

- Quizzes = 50%
- Mini-Compositions = 15%
- Final Composition and Presentation = 25%
- Reflection Video = 10%
- Pop Quizzes = Extra Credit
- See also section on Academic Dishonesty and section on Attendance and Professionalism.

QUIZZES:

- Since learning music works like a pyramid, it is essential to master an individual skill/concept before proceeding to the next one. This is the key to success on the quizzes and the course in general. See the Course Schedule below for quiz dates.
- Per the university's final exam schedule, the final exam time assigned to this class is Monday, December 7 from 2:00-3:50. However, there is no traditional final exam for this class. Instead, students will have the option to retake up to two quizzes of their choice during that time. Students must notify the instructor at least 24 hours prior to the exam time of which quizzes they intend to retake.

MINI-COMPOSITIONS:

Students will be asked to create two, small, original compositions using the skills learned in class. A separate assignment sheet will be posted to Blackboard with details on the requirements for each mini-composition. See the Course Schedule below for due dates.

FINAL COMPOSITION AND PRESENTATION:

Students will receive a list of selected poems and will create a composition using the poem of their choice from that list. Students will then share their composition and their creative process via an oral presentation to the class. A separate assignment sheet will be posted to Blackboard with details on the requirements for the final composition and presentation. Students will also write peer responses as part of this assignment. See the Course Schedule below for due dates.

REFLECTION VIDEO:

Students will listen to a podcast and create their own reflection video in response to it. A separate assignment sheet will be posted to Blackboard with further details on the requirements for the video. See the Course Schedule below for due dates.

POP QUIZZES:

Pop quizzes are occasionally given as an additional measure for monitoring progress. Since pop quizzes are an unannounced surprise, they will only be for extra credit. However, this surprise nature also means that pop quizzes cannot be made up at a later time.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Due dates, quiz dates, and class cancellations are noted below. Otherwise, classes will consist of working through the first six chapters of the online textbook along with ear training and keyboard exploration.

- Monday, August 24 - Welcome and Syllabus Review
- Monday, September 7 – Labor Day – no class
- Monday, September 14 – Quiz 1
- Wednesday, September 23 – Mini-Composition 1 due
- Friday, October 2 – Optional Mini-Composition 1 revision due
- Wednesday, October 7 – Quiz 2
- Wednesday, October 28 – Reflection Video due
- Wednesday, November 4 – Quiz 3
- Monday, November 9 – Mini-Composition 2 due
- Wednesday, November 18 – Optional Mini-Composition 2 revision due
- Friday, November 20 – 1st draft of Final Composition due
- Wednesday, November 25 – No class – Happy Thanksgiving!
- Monday, November 30 – Quiz 4
- Wednesday, December 2 – Final Composition Presentations
- Monday, December 7 – ~~Final Exam~~ Optional retakes from 2:00-3:50 (See second bullet point under Quizzes above.)

ATTENDANCE and PROFESSIONALISM:

- Students are expected to refine and demonstrate soft skills that transcend all academic disciplines and are a fundamental part of success in the professional world. These soft skills include, but are not limited to, time management and punctuality, interpersonal skills, communication skills, work ethic, accountability, self-discipline, and a positive attitude.
- Five absences are allowed with no penalty. For each absence beyond five, the overall grade is dropped by 5%. Absences are simply absences, i.e. there is no such thing as excused vs. unexcused absences. Students are still responsible for any materials and information from a missed class. Therefore it is advised to obtain the name and contact information of at least two other students in the class.
- Late arrivals, early departures, and intermittent absence(s) during a class meeting accumulate in multiples of three to the equivalent of an absence.
- Use of electronics during class is permitted for class-related activities only. Please keep phones in silent mode and refrain from taking calls and/or texting. Auxiliary electronic accessories, including but not limited to headphones and earbuds, must be put away during class. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved *in advance* by the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to ban the use of electronics by any student.
- Unauthorized uses of electronics during class accumulate in multiples of three to the equivalent of an absence.
- The instructor reserves the right to expel any student from the class who does not demonstrate appropriate professionalism or violates the Student Code of Conduct. The instructor also reserves the right to notify a student's academic advisor, success coach, and/or other appropriate personnel and offices as deemed necessary.

COMMUNICATIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS:

- Please use only Jaguar email or the messages feature on Blackboard when contacting your professor. Emails from personal accounts are not accepted and will receive a response of *Please use Jaguar email*. An additional document describing appropriate email/messaging etiquette (with samples) is located on Blackboard in the Syllabus module. Correspondence that does not adhere to these standards will receive an automatic reply of *Please see syllabus information on email/messaging etiquette*.
- Email and Blackboard messages are monitored Monday-Friday during standard business hours. Please allow up to two business days for message replies.
- Blackboard's Announcements feature will be used to communicate to the class as a whole. Therefore, it is advised to check Blackboard regularly.
- Difficulties with Jaguar email, Blackboard, or other IT services should be addressed through the Office of Information Technology Services in Room 233 of the Central Academic Building. They can also be reached at helpdesk@tamusa.edu or 210-784-4357.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

- TAMUSA Academic Misconduct Policy: Students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, multiple submissions, misrepresentation of academic records, facilitating academic dishonesty, unfair advantage, violating known safety requirements and ethical misconduct. This includes holding other students to the same standards and reporting any incidents of alleged violation of the honesty policy to the instructor involved or, if necessary, to the appropriate academic department head. All students are responsible for being familiar with the Academic Misconduct Policy, which may be found in the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy: All work submitted by students should be generated by the students themselves. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using AI tools like ChatGPT. Use of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.
- All materials are subject to analysis by anti-plagiarism software and AI detection software. Instances of academic dishonesty result in an automatic grade of 'O'.

ADDITIONAL MUSIC OPPORTUNITIES:

- Interested in mariachi? **Mariachi Los Jaguares Del Sur** is dedicated to honoring and preserving the art of mariachi music. The group prides itself on a shared love of music, performance, and Mexican culture. If you are interested in joining, email director Gabriel Perez at Gabriel.Perez@tamusa.edu for more information.
- Interested in band? The **San Antonio Community Wind Ensemble** meets in the TAMUSA Auditorium on Sunday afternoons and gives several concerts throughout the year. Membership dues are waived for all TAMUSA students. If you are interested in joining, email director Albert Aguilar at sacwe@crossmen.org for more information.
- Interested in choir? **University Voices** is comprised of students, alumni, and staff who have a shared love of singing. The ensemble performs at university-sponsored events such as Lights of Esperanza, Jaguars Remembered, etc. in addition to presenting a featured public concert each semester. No audition required. If you are interested in joining, email director Dr. Martha Saywell at Martha.Saywell@tamusa.edu.

INTERDISCIPLINARY MINOR IN CREATIVE ARTS AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES:

The interdisciplinary Creative Arts and Performance Studies (CAPS) program encompasses visual art, music, theatre, and creative writing. It prepares students to participate in arts fields, both as working artists, musicians, writers, and performers, and in nonprofit, public, and private sectors. Emphasis on public art and arts administration prepares students to work as arts educators, curators, content creators, and administrators. The CAPS program also provides opportunities for the community to attend arts events on campus including concerts, exhibits, and other performances, thus reinforcing the relationship between the university and the

community. Firmly rooted in San Antonio's flourishing arts community, CAPS offers particular emphasis on Hispanic and Indigenous artistic traditions, and promoting diverse, multilingual approaches and performances. Broadly, this program increases access and exposure to a range of art forms.

ADDITIONAL UNIVERSITY RESOURCES:

Additional university resources and policies can be found on Blackboard in the Additional University Resources module. These include, but are not limited to, accommodations for persons with disabilities, counseling and mental health resources, the Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center, Military Affairs, and important dates. Links to helpful websites are also provided in the module.

DISCLAIMER:

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Students will be notified as soon as possible of any changes.