



MERCER
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Number	Course Title	Credits
MUS105	Fundamentals of Music Theory	3
Hours: Lecture/Lab/Other	Co- or Pre-requisite	Implementation Semester & Year
2 lecture/2 lab	None	Fall 2021
<u>Catalog description:</u>		

Offers the student with no prior musical training an introduction to the basics of music theory. Topics include notation of pitch and rhythm, scale structure, key signatures in major and minor keys, plus chord construction and voice leading. Also includes a comparison of Western and non-Western scales and rhythms. Fall offering.

General Education Category:
Not GenEd

Course coordinator:
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Required texts & Other materials:

Clendinning, Marvin, and Phillips *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis* (4th edition), W.W. Norton & Company. 2020. With total Access code ISBN: 978-0393442304

Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate proficiency in the proper notation of music on treble and bass clefs on the levels of both pitch and rhythm. [Supports ILG's #1, 11; PLO's #1, 2, 3, 5]
2. Internalize the layout and structure of the piano keyboard, using it as a cognitive template for the measurement of pitch relationships, intervallic distance, and the proper construction of scalar and chordal configurations. [Supports ILG #11; PLO's #2, 3, 5]
3. Comprehend and demonstrate a working command of the structural rudiments of tonal music including pitch, intervals, scales, and chords. [Supports ILG's #10, 11; PLO's #1, 2, 3, 4, 5]
4. Understand the formal principles that govern the interplay of the structural elements of music in the creation of cohesive musical statements and ideas. [Supports ILG's #10, 11; PLO's #1, 2, 3, 4, 5]
5. Understand music as a mode of thought whose elements of expression find coherence through both syntactic and mathematical forms of organization. [Supports ILG's #1, 2, 10, 11; PLO's #1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

Course-specific Institutional Learning Goals (ILG):

Institutional Learning Goal 1. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Institutional Learning Goal 2. Mathematics. Students will use appropriate mathematical and statistical concepts and operations to interpret data and to solve problems.

Institutional Learning Goal 10. Information Literacy: Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

Institutional Learning Goal 11. Critical Thinking: Students will use critical thinking skills understand, analyze, or apply information or solve problems.

Program Learning Outcomes for Music AS Program (PLO)

1. Demonstrate a professional level of fluency in both the reading and writing of musical notation.
2. Demonstrate a working knowledge of the theoretical principles that underlie all the primary genres of music of Western culture, including scale and chord construction; the tonal system of keys and chord relationships; harmonic analysis; figured bass; the principles and procedures of four-part writing; and modulation.
3. Analyze excerpts of musical compositions, working from a printed score, on the levels of harmony, rhythm, melodic contour, phrase structure, and large-scale formal structure.
4. Notate short melodic fragments of two to four measures in length upon hearing them performed.
5. Sing at sight melodies of intermediate difficulty in both major and minor keys.
6. Identify and distinguish the major periods in the history of Western music from the Middle Ages into the 21st century and cite the primary composers whose works exemplify the stylistic trends of each period.
7. Demonstrate a level of proficiency at the piano keyboard suitable for teaching, arranging, composing, and analyzing music.
8. Cultivate and demonstrate a level of proficiency on a chosen primary instrument (or voice) suitable for transfer to a baccalaureate music program.
9. Apply his/her instrumental or vocal skill in the context of ensemble performance.

Units of study in detail – Unit Student Learning Outcomes:

Unit I [The Concept of Notation and Pitch] [Supports Course SLO #1]

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Understand and articulate the concept of pitch as a discrete tone of specific vibrational frequency that serves as the basic structural unit of melody.
- Comprehend and explain how tones of different pitch are organized incrementally from “low to high”, resulting in the phenomenon of acoustic space.
- Know the seven letter names (A through G) used to designate pitches and understand that these seven letters are employed as a repeating series to identify the 90 or so pitches that exist in the audible spectrum.
- Understand the concept and the phenomenon of the octave and explain its structural significance.
- Execute the proper notation of pitch by placing the appropriate symbols (notes) onto a system of five lines and four spaces (staff) using both the treble and bass clefs.
- Correctly identify at sight the letter name of any pitch from its symbolic representation in the form of a note.

Unit II **[The Piano Keyboard: Whole Steps and Half Steps]** [Supports Course SLOs #1,2,3,5]

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Understand and explain the patterned configuration of keys on the piano keyboard.
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of the correspondence between a notated pitch and its location on the piano keyboard.
- Comprehend and explain the half steps as the smallest structurally significant increment of pitch change in Western tonal music.
- Cite the distance of the half as being represented by the span of two adjacent keys on the piano keyboard.
- Expand the modifying symbols of sharp, flat, and natural and correctly employ these symbols to indicate directional half step inflections to notes of specific names. E.g. F-F#, B-Bb
- Understand the whole step constitutes the next most important increment of pitch change in tonal music and comprises the distance of two half steps.
- Notate on staff paper any two pitches separated by a whole step, using the necessary accidentals.
- Locate the position of any notated whole step on the piano keyboard.
- Explain and demonstrate a working knowledge of the concept of enharmonic equivalence, especially as it applies to the identification of black keys on the piano. E.g.: G#=Ab, C#=Db
- Notate the chromatic scale, ascending and descending, throughout the range of four octaves and know each note's location on the piano keyboard.

Unit III **[Rhythmic Notation]** [Supports Course SLOs #1,3,4]

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Understand that the written musical line consists of a series of notated pitches, each of which bears a specific durational value that is indicated in the notation.
- Comprehend and explain that the rhythmic aspect of notation conveys the duration of a pitch as measured against an underlying, evenly recurring pulse or beat.
- Understand rhythmic symbols as representations of specific composites of subdivisions of beats, each bearing an exact fractional value relative to the unit of pulse.
- Correctly identify, notate, and execute the rhythmic values of a whole note, half note, quarter note, and eighth note.
- Understand, explain, and execute time signatures that employ the quarter note as the unit of pulse.

Unit IV **[The Major Scale]** [Supports Course SLOs #1,2,3,4,5]

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Understand the concept of scale as a logically and incrementally ordered series of pitches that forms the basis of melodic construction.
- Memorize and articulate the whole step, half step pattern that constitutes the major scale.
- Spell, notate, and play at the piano the scale of C major and employ it as a template for the construction of other major scales.

- Spell and notate the major scale on each of fifteen starting notes, correctly using the appropriate accidentals necessary to preserve the whole step, half step template in each transposition.
- Memorize and construct the key signature for each of the fifteen major keys, using the appropriate configuration of accidentals.
- Memorize the circle of 5ths and understand its significance as an organizing principle in tonal music.
- Transpose simple diatonic melodies notated in a given key up or down to a specified different key, using the appropriate accidentals needed to preserve the intervallic profile of the original melody.

Unit V [Rhythmic Notation II] [Supports Course SLOs #1,3,4,5]

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Execute the notation of more minute and complex subdivisions of the beat using sixteenth notes and dotted notes.
- Execute and notate rhythmic figures in time signatures employing note values other than the quarter note as the basic pulse of the unit.

Unit VI [Intervals] [Supports Course SLOs #1,2,3,4,5]

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Understand and explain the term “interval” as the distance between any two pitches measured in terms of the composite of half steps that separate them.
- Identify the broad-based categories of interval (2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, octave) as measured by the number of scale steps separating any two pitches.
- Apply the modifying terms of major, minor, augmented, diminished, and perfect to achieve a more finely calibrated distinction within each of the broad-based numerical interval categories (*major 3rd vs minor 3rd, perfect 5th vs diminished 5th or augmented 5th, etc.*).
- Precisely identify the interval between two pitches in terms of both its numerical value and the appropriate modifier. E.g.: G to Eb=minor 6th, D to Cb = diminished 7th.
- Understand, explain, and apply the concept of interval inversion.
- Notate on staff paper and locate on the piano keyboard any intervallic dyad throughout the range of four octaves,
- Transpose and correctly notate any intervallic dyad up or down a specified intervallic distance, maintaining the integrity of the original interval.
- Understand and explain the structural significance of intervals and the role they play in the proper construction of scales, chords, and melodies.

Unit VII [The Minor Scales] [Supports Course SLOs #1,2,3,4,5]

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Memorize and articulate the whole step – half step pattern that constitutes the minor scale in each of its three forms – natural, harmonic, and melodic.
- Understand and explain that the three distinct forms of the minor scale are the result of half-step modifications of scale degrees 6 and 7.
- Cite and identify the melodic conditions under which each, or both, scale degree modifications occur.

- Spell and notate the minor scale in each of its three forms at each of the fifteen levels of transposition, using the appropriate accidentals.
- Memorize and construct the key signature for each of the fifteen minor keys.
- Understand and explain the concept of relative minor, noting that each minor scale is related to a parent scale and is governed by the same key signature.
- Know and demonstrate the precise intervallic distance between the tonic of any major key and the tonic of its relative minor.
- Cite from memory the relative minor of all fifteen major keys.
- Execute at the piano keyboard the three forms of the minor scale in a variety of keys.

Unit VIII [Triads and the Concept of Harmony] [Supports Course SLOs #1,3,4,5]

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Understand and explain the structure of the triad as a specific intervallic configuration of three pitches that serves as the basic structural unit of harmony.
- Identify and define the four classes of triad (major, minor, augmented and diminished) citing the specific intervallic structure of each.
- Spell, notate, and name any triad in each of its four forms from any given root note.
- Construct and play at the piano keyboard any triad proceeding from its name: D major, F minor, C diminished, etc.
- Proceed from a given notated triad and apply the necessary structural modifications to transform it into its other three forms, both on staff paper and at the piano keyboard.
- Identify by name any triad as notated in either normal form or spread position, as well as in each of its two inverted forms.

Unit IX [The Tonal System and the Functional Hierarchy of Triads within a Key] [Supports Course SLOs #1,3,4,5]

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Understand and explain the concept of tonality or key as the functional interaction of melody and harmony.
- Understand and demonstrate the derivation of triads from a parent major scale.
- Ascribe a Roman numeral designation to each of seven triads derived from the major scale corresponding to the scale degree from which each is derived and reflecting the quality of each triad through the use of upper- and lower-case numerals.
- Understand the relative functional strength of each triad and explain the role that each plays in establishing the primacy of the tonic.
- Understand the context of minor keys noting the additional triads engendered by the chromatic alterations of scale degrees 6 and 7.
- Perform a harmonic analysis on a passage of music using the Roman numeral designations.
- Ascertain the key implied by a fragmentary chord progression that employs only two or three triads.
- Play at the piano, short progressions in a variety of major and minor keys.

Evaluation of student learning: [Evaluates SLOs #1,2,3,4,5]

Evaluation Tools	% of Grade
Completion of and performance on weekly reading and written homework assignments	30%
Periodic Quizzes (6-8) designed to assess the student's level of mastery of concepts and procedures studied in class	30%
Comprehensive and inclusive final examination	25%
Total	100%