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Office Hours: For any class business, please email me to schedule an appointment.

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**Course Description:** An initial study of music fundamentals, theory, literature, score reading, and SATB part writing. MUSC 1401 must be taken concurrently. Students complete assignments by using traditional methods and by using the tools of music technology.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student must demonstrate...

1. knowledge and understandings of the elements of music (duration, intensity, pitch, and timbre).
2. the ability to write notation following proper manuscript procedures using traditional methods and the tools of music technology.
3. an understanding of and the ability to write and use staves, clefs, note symbols, rest symbols, grand staff, accidentals, intervals, harmonic series, meter, rhythm, pulse, meter signatures, division and subdivision of beat, and tempo.
4. an understanding of and the ability to analyze and compose tetrachords, scales, circle of fourths/ fifths, and key signatures.
5. an understanding of and the ability to analyze and compose melody and form, including periods, phrases, motives, double periods, contour, repetition, and two- and three-part forms.
6. an understanding of and the ability to analyze and compose textures, including monophony, polyphony, and homophony.
7. an understanding of and the ability to analyze and compose harmony, including major, minor, diminished triads in root position and in first and second inversion.
8. an understanding of and the ability to analyze and compose four-part writing, including doubling, spacing, and voice leading.
9. an understanding of and the ability to analyze and compose functional harmony, including tonic-dominant and tonic-subdominant progressions; authentic (perfect and imperfect), plagal, half, deceptive, and Phrygian cadences.
10. an understanding of and the ability to analyze and compose dominant seventh chords, chord qualities, figured bass, inversions, resolutions, function of the chord in tonal harmony.
11. an understanding of and the ability to analyze and compose nonharmonic tones, including passing tones (unaccented, accented, consecutive), neighboring tones (upper and lower), changing tones (double auxiliary), pedal points, appoggiatura, escape tones, anticipation, suspension, and retardation.

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### Required Materials:

- Course Pack, available for purchase from the bookstore.
- Medium-sized 3-ring binder, staff paper, lined paper, mechanical pencils, erasers.
- Access to a computer with internet connectivity and the software “Audacity” (free to download). You can use the university computer labs if you can be on campus outside of class.
- Electronic device, charged and ready for class each day. If you do not own a device or if you run into a problem with your device, please email me immediately and I will help you find a solution.
- Headphones. You will sometimes be required to bring headphones to class. It makes sense (though it isn’t required) to invest in a good pair if possible. I love the ones I bought for \$70–80 (Grado SR-60).
- You’ll need a way to access popular music digitally, and you’ll need to download (not stream) an mp3 for the Unit 2 project, usually costing around \$1.

## Unit Makeup and Grading

### Unit Topics:

1. Fundamentals
2. Perceiving Rhythm
3. Chords in Pop Music

Assessments are weighted on a point scale (not a percentage) of around two hundred total semester points. Each unit has three stages involving assessments of increasing weight, giving you a chance to learn the material before you earn the majority of your points for a unit.

**Stage 1 - Low-Stakes.** Stage 1 occupies roughly six class meetings in which I introduce a topic along with a corresponding low-stakes assignment, generally due at the beginning of the following class meeting. These assignments are “formative”—designed to help you *learn* a skill, not to assess your competence on it—and they are therefore worth only one semester point (about 0.5% of your semester grade). Even if you do not fully understand an assignment, your learning process and our classroom community depend on your organization and effort in completing it on time. I therefore grade low-stakes assignments according to

completion: they earn a “✓” for satisfactory and on-time completion (regardless of correctness), but they earn no credit for incomplete, late, or unsatisfactory work. Occasionally a quiz or in-class activity may count as a low-stakes assignment, or demanding assignments may be worth two semester points.

**Stage 2 - Medium-Stakes.** Stage 2 involves a medium-stakes project meant to help you synthesize what you learned in Stage 1. Medium-stakes projects are worth 10–20 points and are due 2–3 class meetings after the last low-stakes assignment. In Unit 1 a group of problem sets found on Course Den will count as your medium-stakes grade. In Units 2 and 3 you will complete a “Portfolio” including corrected and revised versions of every assignment from the unit (worth two points each) as well as a summary of the subject matter in your own words (four points) and a self-assessment of your learning (two points). The portfolio will lose 10% of its total value for each day it is late and it must be complete: I will not assign a grade until I have all components, and I may assign a late penalty to the *entire* portfolio for even one missing component. It is your responsibility to make sure you include all required components. I will provide a detailed description of each portfolio before you begin to work on it.

**Stage 3 - High-Stakes.** After learning the unit’s material through low-stakes formative assessments and synthesizing it through a medium-stakes project, you will demonstrate your competence in it through a high-stakes “summative” assessment weighted at thirty semester points. In this class high-stakes assessments will include an exam for Unit 1 and projects for Units 2 and 3.

**Attendance and Preparation.** I will take attendance at the start time of each class meeting and assign one point (around 0.5% of your semester grade) to each student who is in the room and prepared with all required course materials. I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences, because either way you are missing learning time that is a part of the class. I also do not differentiate between lateness and absence because it would be unfair for your late arrival to divert my attention from the rest of the class to mark you present once class has begun. It is built into the grading scheme that a couple of absences will have negligible effect on your grade. In my view, you are entitled to a few personal days per semester; please try to take them when no new material is introduced. *If you are frequently absent, your grade will suffer more because of the learning opportunities you miss than because of the attendance points you lose.* Finally, the single exception to this attendance policy is for high-stakes assessment: you may not make up a high stakes assessment without a university-sanctioned excuse with proper documentation.

### Grading Summary

Assessment	Value Per Assessment	Value Per Unit	Value Per Semester
<b>Attendance</b>	1		44
<b>Low-Stakes Assignments</b>	1	~6	~18
<b>Portfolio</b>			
Assignment Revisions	2	~12	~36
Content Summary	4	4	8 (not in Unit 1)
Self-Assessment	2	2	4 (not in Unit 1)
<b>High Stakes</b>	30	30	90
<b>Total</b>			<b>~200</b>

**Grading Rubric.** Medium-stakes and high-stakes projects will be graded either on a percentage of correct questions or on the following rubric, which measures your command over the assignment and your demonstrated commitment to the work:

- 100%: complete command and commitment
- 90%: “almost there” except for a minor problem
- 80%: Satisfactory
- 67%: Struggling
- 0%: Incomplete or unsatisfactory

**Final Grade Calculation.** Your final semester grade will be calculated as a percentage of total points earned out of the total points available, and converted into a letter grade according to the following scale:

90–100%: A    80–89%: B    70–79%: C    60–69%: D    59% and under: F

*Note: the Music Education major requires a minimum of a C in all Music Theory classes.*

### Other Policies

**Intellectual Personhood.** I wish to help you develop “intellectual personhood,” which involves commitment to the learning *process* rather than the *product*. The product-driven approach to school is about getting correct answers immediately regardless of the learning that takes place, and it gets in the way of your personal development. To focus on the process, try to be continuously aware of what we’re learning, why we’re learning it, and the deeper concepts that it connects to. There is nothing wrong with mistakes, and the syllabus is specifically designed to allow you to make mistakes without penalty during Stage 1 of each unit. However, please be disciplined enough to address your struggles as soon as you notice them: take control of your own learning by being bold in your questions and asking for help when you need it. If you are missing parts of the process, I expect you to come directly to me because I’m the one who designed the process, and I take responsibility for it. Please trust that **if you commit to process-based learning, your grade will take care of itself and you will understand the material more deeply in the long run.**

**Academic Integrity.** Please focus on your individual student–teacher relationship with me, not your relationships with your peers. When students struggle in this class and lean too heavily on stronger students, it can keep them from developing on their own. However, if you are conscious of how you approach it, peer-based learning can be incredibly valuable. I therefore encourage you work with peers on low-stakes assessments as long as you sincerely honor six conditions:

1. Work with no more than two other people on any assignment.
2. Write all collaborators’ names on your paper.
3. Each student completes their own work: teamwork is for consultation on the process for completing a problem or checking completed answers once all group members have done a problem, and absolutely not for copying answers. If you understand and your peer doesn’t, think as a teacher and help them learn rather than giving the answer.
4. Most importantly: make group work a learning experience, not a short-cut. This is subjective, but I expect you to approach this condition with integrity.
5. You may not consult peers on high-stakes assessments unless they have been specifically assigned as group work.
6. I reserve the right to revoke peer learning privileges if I find that they are causing problems for individual learners.

The departure from any of these procedures will be treated as a violation of UWG’s academic integrity policy. However, as long as you make a good faith effort to understand and follow these conditions, you should not hesitate to work with your peers.

**Communication.** If the policies for this course seem strict, it’s because we are all members of a learning community and we rely on each other to create a thriving environment. The class will work best if everyone is on their game. However, I understand that you may encounter personal circumstances beyond your control. If there is any problem (class-related or otherwise) that effects your ability to be comfortable and successful in this class, please do not hesitate to set up a time to talk with me in person (arranged through email). I will not push you to share personal details, but I’m happy to listen if you’d like. I also may be able to help by giving you advice or connecting you to the many resources we have on campus. I am on your side, and I have some discretion to exercise compassion in the way I enforce course policies. However, I can only account for your personal situation if you keep me in the loop about your learning and the things that may affect it.

**Common Language for UWG Syllabi:** For policies pertaining to all classes (including this one) please go to <https://www.westga.edu/UWGSyllabusPolicies/>.

**Information on Wellness:** <https://www.westga.edu/music/wellness/>

**Schedule**  
(Subject to Change)

**Unit 1: Fundamentals**

First pass through material: 8/14–8/28  
Improve skills on problem set until 9/9  
High-Stakes Assessment 1 (Exam): 9/9

(No class 9/2 for Labor Day)

**Unit 2: Perceiving Rhythm**

First pass through material: 9/11–9/20  
Portfolio due 9/30  
High-Stakes project due 10/11

(No class 10/4 for Fall Break)

**Unit 3: Introduction to Analytical Tools**

First pass through material: 10/14–10/25  
Medium-Stakes Assessment due 11/14  
High-Stakes Project due 11/15  
Project Recordings: 11/18–12/6

(No class 11/8 for Society for Music Theory Conference or 11/25–11/29 for Thanksgiving)

## Unit 1 Details

The bulk of the problem sets for Unit 1 on “Fundamentals” are on musictheory.net. You’ll practice for fluency by trying each exercises multiple times. Once you are satisfied that you have demonstrated competence in a problem set, you will sign a report to generate a link, which you’ll copy into a text box for the assignment as listed in Course Den. All of the problem sets for the day must be completed and reported by the beginning of class. You will get full credit for each day of completed problem sets; if any problem sets are missing, you forfeit credit for the entire day’s assignment. I do not excuse missing homework in general, but your consistency in this unit is especially important.

Your priorities in these exercises should be (1) **accuracy** and (2) **speed**: “It’s not how fast you mow, it’s how well you mow fast.”<sup>1</sup> For each problem set, start by working slowly and accurately. Once you get a feel for the exercise, aim to speed up without sacrificing accuracy.

For many reasons beyond any individual student’s control, students have varied levels of success with fundamentals. If on your first try you score 80% or better, you do not need to continue working, though it will serve you well in the long run to aim for 100%. If you tend to struggle, expect to practice the problem sets multiple times until your skills improve. As a principle, if you score under 80% on a problem set, please review the PowerPoint and then try it again.

**Pay careful attention to this:** If you try an exercise three times and your score is still substantially lower than 80%, please (please, please) immediately email [bgeyer@westga.edu](mailto:bgeyer@westga.edu) to make an appointment for an office hour. Here’s why: when you’re struggling on an exercise it usually means you need to improve a simpler skill that we’ve already covered; you’re unlikely to fix a later issue without addressing an earlier one. I am very quick at diagnosing skill gaps and will develop an individual plan for you to catch up efficiently. The moment you notice that you are struggling, I expect you to come straight to me for help. *Please do not allow yourself to endure significant frustration or to spend an unreasonable amount of time on these problem sets!!*

After completing the low-stakes portion of Unit 1, we will spend multiple class meetings reviewing. During that time, you will work to improve your scores on select exercise sets (posted on Course Den under “Medium-Stakes Exercises”). Those scores will be weighted at 2 semester points each as your medium-stakes grade for the unit. These problem types will then be tested on a pencil-and-paper exam.

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<sup>1</sup> John Deere commercial. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aWdn63bNh4>