

MUSC 110: Introduction to Music Reading and Notation

Fall 2024

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Hayden Hall - Room 105
Tues, Wed, and Fri 10:00-10:50

This class is a point of entry for students who are just beginning with reading and writing musical notation. We will focus on a variety of activities that will develop the ability to read notes on the staff, execute rhythms, transcribe melodies by ear, use our voices, and play our instruments. We will also become acquainted with the world of music theory, learning about chords and scales. By the end of the semester you will ideally emerge as a more confident musician and music-reader, well-prepared for further study and exploration.

Music 110 vs. 220

Our department also offers Music 220: Fundamentals of Music Theory, which is similar to this course but faster-paced. 220 is designed for students who have experience with reading sheet music. If you are a Sound Studies major you may begin your music theory studies with either 110 or 220, and you must complete a total of two courses. (Students who begin with 220 are expected to continue on to Music 320: Advanced Theory.)

Textbooks + Daily Class Requirements

I'll provide free materials at the beginning of the semester, and I'll add to them as we go along. Our official textbook will be in a hard binder which you can leave at home, if you want.

I'll also give you a soft binder full of materials that we will use in class. Please bring this one to each session, as well as a pencil and eraser. Music paper will be provided as needed, but it may help to have one's own supply.

Class Website

We will have a class blog on davesmey.com, where we will archive all of our documents, keep track of class activities, and keep up-to-the-minute grade information. All students should visit the site within the first week of classes and register a personal account.

Grading

The overall grade in the class will be calculated with the following plan:

- Homework (20%)
- Three performance quizzes (12% each)
- Two theory quizzes (12% each)
- Final theory exam (20%)

Homework

Homework will be a mix of journal entries, worksheets, in-class dictation exercises, and simple Digital Audio Workstation projects. Some work is graded on a check/plus/minus basis (where a check plus is worth 100 points, a check is 92, and a check minus is 60.) Redos are often possible on low scores. I usually accept late work up to four weeks after the due date with a slight grade penalty (i.e. max grade is a check or 92 points).

Performance quizzes

These are one-on-one appointments in which you will be asked to perform musical tasks. These may include naming the notes on a musical staff, executing rhythms, singing melodies, or playing an instrument (piano and/or your personal instrument of choice.) There will be an ungraded, diagnostic appointment at the beginning of the semester and three graded quizzes, each worth 12% on your final grade.

Topics

We will try to progress through a variety of subjects that gradually increase in difficulty. Since the goal is to cater to the needs of individual students and improve skill levels the pacing of these topics is flexible.

- Reading pitches in treble and bass clef
- Finding notes on the piano
- Reading, writing and executing simple rhythms
- Conducting in 4/4 and 3/4
- Singing simple melodies in solfege
- Executing melodies on piano and/or your instrument
- Transcribing melodies by ear

Converting written melodies + rhythms to the Digital Audio Workstation grid notation

Notation in Musescore

Performing ensemble music from notation

Theory Topics:

Whole Steps and half steps

Constructing major scales

Key signatures and the circle of fifths

Minor scales

Triads

Attendance + Participation

Class is your opportunity to practice your skills along with your peers, so is it important that you be present for most of our sessions. There will be a slight bonus to your overall grade for good attendance and a penalty for absences greater than five.

0-2 absences	3 point bonus
3 absences	2 point bonus
4 absences	1 point bonus
5-6 absences	no bonus, no penalty
6+ absences	3 point penalty for each absence over 6

Note that this is a “no excuses” or “everything counts” policy. Please treat your attendance tally like a budget in which you can only afford 6 absences, regardless of the reason. However, if something truly extreme or traumatic occurs we can talk about alternate arrangements that will allow you to complete the course.

Rude, disruptive or inattentive behavior in class may also result in you being marked absent.

Schedule

Week 1 (Aug 27, 28 and 30)

Week 2 (Sept 3, 4, and 6)

Ungraded Performance Quiz (for evaluation)

Week 3 (Sept 10, 11 and 13)

Week 4 (Sept 17, 18, and 20)

Week 5 (Sept 24, 25 and 27)

Performance Quiz #1

Week 6 (Oct 1, 2, and 4)

Theory Quiz #1

Week 7 (Oct 8, 9, and 11)

Week 8 (Oct 16 and 18)

Tuesday, Oct 15 will follow a Monday schedule

Week 9 (Oct 22, 23 and 25)

Performance Quiz #2

Week 10 (Oct 29, 30 and Nov 1)

Week 11 (Nov 5, 6 and 8)

Week 12 (Nov 12, 13 and 15)

Theory Quiz #2

Week 13 (Nov 19, 20 and 22)

Performance quiz #3

Week 14 (Nov 26)

Wednesday and Friday are off for Thanksgiving.

Week 15 (Dec 3, 5 and 6)

Final Exam (Dec 11)

Our Final Exam is currently scheduled for Wed, Dec 11 at 11:00am