

MUSIC 171: Dictation I (Section 02)
Mr. Stephen Gomez
Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College, CUNY

Fall 2021
Thursdays, 9:35 am–10:25 am
Online (synchronous)
Zoom meeting ID: 966 793 5024

Instructor Information

sgomez@gradcenter.cuny.edu • Office hours: by appointment only (email me for extra help and we will set up a Zoom meeting or chat after a regular class meeting) • Link to course Spotify playlist: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5Wh8xYJRxYlAl9C8lbFsHv?si=912571bc459541e5>

Student Learning Objectives

- 1) Develop inner hearing, flexibility and understanding within the tonal language, and working musical memory
- 2) Dictate pitch patterns and simple melodies in major and minor modes in a variety of registers and timbres
- 3) Recognize various tonal entities (major vs. minor triads, intervals, etc.)
- 4) Dictate rhythms in simple and compound meters
- 5) Dictate harmonic progressions including diatonic triads and the dominant seventh chord, mostly in root position

Course Description

The main goal of this course is to establish a foundation in audiating diatonic tonal music. Students will develop the ability to remember what they heard, sing it back, visualize what it looks like in standard music notation, and understand it in terms of music-theoretical terminology and concepts. Most exercises will be short and fabricated for the specific needs of the course but some will be taken from the actual tonal repertoire.

We are in unique circumstances right now, and few classes are affected more directly than a dictation one. But just because we cannot meet in person does not mean we cannot have a meaningful learning experience and become better musicians. Remind yourself at the outset of this semester what your goals are in terms of improving as a musician and take responsibility for your own learning in this class (and every other class you take this semester).

Required Materials

- Staff paper (can be downloaded for free at <https://www.blanksheetmusic.net>)
- Pencil and eraser (if you do not have easy access to printing, then a tablet with stylus will work, but it is recommend that you try to do work on hard paper with pencil)
- Piano or keyboard (this can take the form of a real piano or keyboard *or* a keyboard app; GarageBand has a suitable electronic keyboard)

Grading Breakdown (MUSIC 171 grade=2/3 sight singing + 1/3 dictation)

- Classwork and Participation—35%
- Exams (three)—45%
- Dictation Projects and other assignments—20% (graded once each for first half and second half of semester)

In accordance with School of Music policy, a minimum of 65% in each component of the course (both sight-singing and dictation) and a minimum overall average grade of C– (70%) in MUSIC 171 is required in order to continue into Music 172 (sight-singing/dictation 2). The grade of INC may not be given. The course may not be taken more than twice without the permission of the Chairman.

Classwork and Participation

This part of your grade consists of your attendance record and your efforts in class. See below for attendance policy. You will receive credit (pass/fail) for classwork and participation in a given class period based on two things: (1) if it is clear to me that you are engaged—this could mean that you are literally participating by answering questions, singing along, etc. or also possibly just making it clear that you are focusing on the dictation we are working on; and (2) that you hand in a dictation exercise to me when requested and have tried your best at it.

Exams

Three times throughout the semester (see schedule, below) we will have dictation exams. Each exam will consist of some or all of the following: melodic dictation, rhythmic dictation, harmonic dictation, interval identification, chord identification, and error detection. Exams must be submitted to me through Blackboard immediately at the end of the class period when we finish the dictation. Exams are cumulative, but will always emphasize the new topic or topics we learn as the semester goes on.

If you foresee a scheduling conflict with the dictation exams, tell me as far ahead of time as you possibly can. Except for extreme circumstances, the exams will not be given any time outside of what is scheduled at the start of the semester.

Dictation Project and Other Assignments

Informal homework assignments may be given periodically to supplement in-class practice. They will be graded based on completion. In other words, if you turn something in when assigned, you receive full credit. The first of these assignments is the “Intro. assignment” (see schedule below), due Thursday, 9/2. Others will be announced at least a week before they are due.

The dictation project is a culminating and more challenging assignment done on your own at home. It is due via electronic submission through Blackboard by the end of the day on Thursday, 12/2. You will be given a list of several recordings to choose from, required to transcribe an excerpt of the recording in music notation, and asked to answer some technical questions about the music. Options will include both music from the common practice era and more modern popular music.

Projects will be accepted late with a penalty of 15% per class period they are submitted late. For example, if your first project is not submitted by the end of the day on Thursday, 12/2, the highest grade you can receive on it is an 85% (B). Projects initially submitted on time with full effort may be revised and *resubmitted* to receive an improved grade (this is true for various other assignments too).

Attendance and Classroom Policies

Attendance will be taken at every class meeting. You are allowed one (1) unexcused absences over the course of the semester, no questions asked. Beyond this, you are expected to attend every class meeting. If you have to miss class, please email me as soon as you’re sure you can’t make it. The key here is honest and timely communication. You are expected to be at class on time, ready to participate. If you show up to a class more than ten minutes late, your attendance/participation grade for the day will be negatively affected. I will start class promptly at 9:35 am each meeting.

We are in unique circumstances right now, such that the responsibility of learning falls on you—the individual student—more so than normal. I cannot control your behavior or learning environment during class, and I understand that everyone has a different living situation/space to

work at home. But if possible, I would *highly recommend* you to set yourself up in the following way for each class meeting:

- Attend class in a quiet and private space
- Attend class from a laptop or tablet (instead of a phone) if possible
- Sit up in a chair at a desk or table
- Have your class materials out and easily-accessible
- Turn off and put your phone away during class

CUNY Statement on Academic Integrity/Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is prohibited in the City University of New York. Penalties for academic dishonesty include academic sanctions, such as failing or otherwise reduced grades, and/or disciplinary sanctions, including suspension and/or expulsion.

Queens College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The college is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Queens College Academic Integrity Procedures.

Queens College Counseling, Health, and Wellness Center

Website: <https://www.qc.cuny.edu/StudentLife/services/counseling/Pages/default.aspx>

Statement from the Queens College Counseling site: “The Counseling, Health and Wellness Center in Frese Hall seeks to support the physical, psychological, educational, and social well-being of Queens College students. It comprises five departments: The Office of Special Services, The College Counseling and Resource Center, Minority Student Affairs, Health Services, and Peer Support Services. Here, students can seek accommodations and support for their disabilities; consult a nurse and health educator about health, diet, and reproductive concerns; discuss academic and personal issues with licensed mental health professionals; receive pre-professional personal advisement for minority students; and learn about the peer support services program. Each department attempts to address students’ overall adjustment to college and assist them in any way it can to facilitate that adjustment. All services are confidential and free of charge.”

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) statement

Website: <https://www.qc.cuny.edu/StudentLife/services/specialserv/Pages/default.aspx>

Students who require special accommodation because of physical, mental, or other disability are encouraged to contact the Queens College Office of Special Services for Students with Disabilities, which will be online this fall but still open to assist students. Every effort will be made to accommodate students with documented disabilities. Please get in touch with me and the director of the Office of Special Services—Dr. Mirian Detres-Hickey at QC_SPSV@qc.cuny.edu or (718) 997-5870—as soon as possible if you need accommodation regarding this course.

Scheduled Meeting and Important Dates (subject to change)

Th-8/26: Welcome!	Th-10/14	Th-12/2
Th-9/2: Intro. assignment	Th-10/21	Th-12/9: Dictation project
Th-9/9	Th-10/28	TBA: Final exam (exam #3)
Th-9/23	Th-11/4	
Th-9/30: Dictation exam #1	Th-11/11: Dictation exam #2	
Th-10/7	Th-11/18	