



**MUSTH101: Music Theory Fundamentals (3cr) | Syllabus | Spring 2024**  
TUE and FRI 8:30-9:45AM

Room #407 Hunter North

Professor: Nicholas Tran (They/them)

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Office Hours: Fridays 10:30-11:30AM via Zoom or by appointment

**Course Learning Outcomes**

- Identify and apply principles of pitch, rhythm, meter, major and minor scales, keys and key signatures, intervals, and triads and seventh chords.
- Recognize and analyze various musical parameters in a musical performance.
- Compose a melody for a given chord progression, harmonize a simple melody, and draft a short piece of music.
- Survey a variety of music theory content ranging from TikToks to academic articles.

**Course Description**

What is “music theory,” and what are its “fundamentals?” Whose theory is it anyway? In order to scratch the surface of these questions, we will immerse ourselves in concepts of harmony, melody, rhythm, meter, form, and style—and we will use the melodica to do so! We will explore western classical music and identify various stylistic trends. The class will culminate in you writing a short piece of music. The knowledge gained in this course lays the groundwork for further studies in music theory, strengthen music compositional thought, and foster general explorations of music. No prior musical experience is necessary for this course.

**Textbook and Materials**

**Textbook:** *Elements of Music*, Joseph N. Straus. (Any edition is fine)

**Melodica** – This is a breath-operated keyboard instrument that will be integral to our class. I prefer that you buy a **37-key melodica** but if you can only find a 32-key melodica then that is fine. Melodicas usually cost between \$25-40.

**Artusi** – Most homework assignments will come from the online Artusi platform. The price is \$34.99 for four months. ***I will invite you to join Artusi via email.***

**Musescore** – This is a music engraving software that is **free** and opensource. If you have another engraving software (i.e. Sibelius or Finale), then you may use that program instead.

**Staff paper** – You can [download and print staff paper](#) for free, but I do recommend buying a staff paper notepad.

**Pencils** – Please bring a pencil to class. While not required, I highly suggest that you have multi-colored pencils. Do not use pens for this class.

**Grading**

There are 400 points total for this class. Each point is weighted the same. Final grades will be distributed according to the chart below:



Grade	Points to Earn	Grade	Points to Earn	Grade	Points to Earn
A+	388	A	368	A-	360
B+	348	B	328	B-	320
C+	308	C	280	D	240
F	<240	Withdraw (W)	Last day to drop the course with a W is May 15.		

### **Assignments (100 points)**

This course has 20 assignments. Assignments will consist of Artusi drills, melodica exercises, and/or Muscores assignments. Artusi and Muscores assignments are eligible for revisions, while melodica assignments must be completed on time.

### **Midterm Exam (50 points)**

This is the only exam!

### **Composition Project (100 points)**

It's your turn to compose something! Specific details to come.

### **Concert Report (100 points)**

The music theory examples that we look at in class are all chosen carefully to exemplify the concepts of tonal harmony. However, can we actually hear these music theory concepts at a live concert? In groups of 3-4, you will attend a concert together and discuss whether any of the theory we learned in class is applicable/unapplicable.

### **Participation (50 points)**

We will make music in class! Your participation will be measured by your engagement with the melodica class exercises. Therefore, it is imperative that you come with your instrument on the designated melodica days.

### **Late Work Policy**

Please communicate with me in a *timely manner* if you need an extension. I am usually inclined to give you the extension, but you must ask *well in advance* of the deadline.

I will accept **assignments** up to one week late with no penalty. If your assignment is two weeks late, then you will get half credit. Assignments more than two weeks late will receive a zero.

### **Extra Credit**

There will be sporadic extra credit opportunities throughout the semester!

### **Attendance**

This is a practice-based class, which means you are expected to show up to class. If you must be absent, please email me to let me know.

“Hunter 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 Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.”

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### **Americans with Disabilities Act Statement**

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical, and/or Learning) consult the Office of Accessibility, located in Room E1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772- 4857 or (212) 650-3230.

### **Hunter College Policy on Sexual Harassment**

In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the **Bill** of Rights for Hunter College.

- a. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting **NYPD** Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444).
- b. All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose [trose@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:trose@hunter.cuny.edu) or (212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry ([colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu) or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123.

CUNY Policy on Sexual Harassment link: <http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Policy-on-Sexual-Misconduct-12-1-14-with-links.pdf>



**Course Schedule (subject to change)**

1/26	F	Introduction and Intro to Pitch		<b>DUE</b>
1/30	T	Pitch and treble clef <i>Oliveros</i>		Syllabus Assignment
2/2	F	Pitch and bass clef		HW1 (Artusi)
2/6	T	Rhythm Pt.1	<b>Computer</b>	HW2 (Artusi)
2/9	F	Rhythm Pt.2	<b>Melodica</b>	HW3 (Melodica and Artusi)
2/13	T	Rhythm Pt. 3		HW4 (Musescore)
2/16	F	Rhythm Game Day <i>Class in Appel Hall?</i>	<b>Melodica</b>	HW5 (Melodica) HW6, Artusi, compound meter
2/20	T	Major Scales; key signatures		HW6 (Artusi) (Enharmonics)
2/23	F	Major and Minor Scales; key signatures	<b>Melodica</b>	HW7 (Musescore and Artusi) HW7, Major scales generally
2/27	T	Intervals Sizes		HW8 (Artusi) (Generic Intervals and C Major Scale)
3/1	F	Intervals Quality	<b>Melodica</b>	HW9 (Melodica and Artusi)( Key sig and circle of fifths)
3/5	T	Interval Review		HW10 (Artusi) Minor scales (two Artusi asg)
3/8	F	<b>Exam Review</b>	<b>Computer</b>	NO HW
3/12	T	<b>Midterm Exam</b>		NO HW
3/15	F	Crash course on writing melodies <i>Introduce Composition Final</i>	<b>Melodica</b>	HW11 (paper assignment)
3/19	T	Triads (root position)		HW12 (Artusi 10)
3/22	F	Triads (intro to part writing)	<b>Melodica</b>	HW13 (Artusi 11)
3/26	T	Seventh Chords and Harmonic Progressions Pt. 1 (Tonic/Dominant)		Class canceled.
3/29	F	<b>NO CLASS</b>		
4/2	T	Harmonic Progressions Pt. 1 (I, IV, and V chords) and melody writing.		HW14 (Artusi 12) HW15 (Musescore)
4/5	F	Harmonic Progressions Pt. 2 (inversions and cadences). Developing melodies.	<b>Melodica</b>	HW16 (Melodica)
4/9	T	Composition Workshop	<b>Laptops</b>	HW17 (Musescore)
4/12	F	Musical Form	<b>Laptops</b>	HW18 (Musescore/Repertoire)
4/16	T	Musical Texture	<b>Laptops</b>	HW19 (Musescore/Repertoire)
4/19	F	Musical Style	<b>Laptops</b>	HW20 (Repertoire) <b>Composition First Draft Due</b>
4/23	T	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
4/26	F	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
4/30	T	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
5/3	F	Public Music Theory <i>Burstein article</i>	Extra Credit	<b>Composition Final Draft Due</b>
5/7	T	<b>Performance/Improv Workshop</b>	Melodica	
5/10	F	<b>NO CLASS</b>		
5/14	T	<b>Final Composition "Concert"</b>	<b>Laptops</b>	<b>Concert Report Due</b>