

College of San Mateo
Official Course Outline

1. **COURSE ID:** MUS. 120 **TITLE:** Songwriting

Units: 3.0 units **Hours/Semester:** 40.0-45.0 Lecture hours; 24.0-27.0 Lab hours; and 80.0-90.0 Homework hours

Method of Grading: Grade Option (Letter Grade or Pass/No Pass)

Recommended Preparation:

MUS. 100 or equivalent experience/knowledge

2. **COURSE DESIGNATION:**

Degree Credit

Transfer credit: CSU; UC

3. **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:**

Catalog Description:

Explores the process of songwriting, allowing students to use their creativity while building skills in songwriting and performance. Specific topics include: contemporary song chord structures and harmony; form; melody; rhythm; lyric creation and original compositions and performances. No song-writing experience necessary.

4. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME(S) (SLO'S):**

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:

1. Compose original songs and lyrics
2. Analyze and critique songs with respect to genre, form, structure, and lyrical elements
3. Perform original songs as a soloist or with an ensemble
4. Create a lead sheet for original compositions

5. **SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**

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

1. Compose original songs and lyrics
2. Analyze and critique songs with respect to genre, form, structure, and lyrical elements
3. Perform original songs as a soloist or with an ensemble
4. Create a lead sheet for original compositions

6. **COURSE CONTENT:**

Lecture Content:

This course builds theoretical knowledge and explores the creative process and skills needed to compose and perform songs. Specific topics covered include:

I. Theoretical Concepts

- History of songwriting
- Structure of contemporary songs (form, harmony, rhythm, melody)
- Lyric Writing
- Critical analysis of songs

II. Creative Compositional Processes

- Harmonic models and structures
- Composing the melody
- Use of rhythm
- Creating lyrics

III. Performance experience - individual and/or ensemble

Lab Content:

1. Listening and discussion of representative songs related to the themes covered in lecture
2. Practical harmony exercises at the keyboard - use of basic progressions, keys and modes, borrowed chords
3. Collaborative work - rehearsing, arranging, and performing
4. Class demonstrations/performances including class discussion/critiques

7. **REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

Typical methods of instruction may include:

- A. Lecture

- B. Lab
- C. Activity
- D. Critique
- E. Discussion
- F. Guest Speakers
- G. Individualized Instruction
- H. Observation and Demonstration

8. REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Representative assignments in this course may include, but are not limited to the following:

Writing Assignments:

Assignments may include, but are not limited to:

- analyses of songs
- critiques of songs
- lyric writing assignments (titles, verse, chorus)
- chord progression written exercises
- writing melodies and rhythms
- critiques of fellow students' compositions

Reading Assignments:

weekly reading assignments on relevant topics from the textbook

Other Outside Assignments:

none

To be Arranged Assignments:

not applicable

9. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF EVALUATION

Representative methods of evaluation may include:

- A. Class Participation
- B. Class Performance
- C. Class Work
- D. Exams/Tests
- E. Final Class Performance
- F. Final Performance
- G. Group Projects
- H. Homework
- I. Lab Activities
- J. Projects
- K. Quizzes
- L. Written examination

10. REPRESENTATIVE TEXT(S):

Possible textbooks include:

- A. Stolpe, A.. *Beginning Songwriting: Writing Your Own Lyrics, Melodies, and Chords*, ed. Berklee Press, 2015
- B. Harrison, C.. *The Songwriting Labyrinth: Practical tools to Decode the Mysterious Craft*, ed. CreateSpace Independent Pub Platform, 2015

Origination Date: October 2019
Curriculum Committee Approval Date: January 2020
Effective Term: Fall 2020
Course Originator: Jane Jackson