

MASTERING THE FUNDAMENTALS OF MUSIC
MUSF
Syllabus and Course Outline

This is a skills based class where students learn practical skills that every young musician should have. In each unit, topics covered and then applied through written homework and listening/singing exercises.

Text

The course “text” is the CD-ROM *Essentials of Music Theory Complete Edition* (Volumes 1- 3) by Alfred publishing.

Grading:

Course grades will be based on the following criteria:

- Written Homework - 30%
- Quizzes - 30%
- Dictation - 10%
- Sight Singing - 10%
- Final Exam/Project - 20%

Homework

In each unit there is at least one written assignment and one aural skills assignment. In most units there are several assignments to complete.

WRITTEN HOMEWORK may be resubmitted up to 2 times. The final grade of the assignment will be the average of the three scores.

DICTATION ASSIGNMENTS may only be submitted once. **Points will be deducted for each incorrect pitch and rhythm.** As dictation will be a relatively new and challenging skill for most students, only the five highest scores will be counted toward the course grade.

AURAL SKILLS DRILLS are practice exercises to help students prepare for the listening questions that appear on each quiz. These exercises are not graded and may be used as often necessary.

SIGHT-SINGING exercises begin in Unit 3 and continue through the rest of the course. These exercises appear on the CTY web-site in two forms:

1. An interactive presentation to help you practice
2. A document with all the melodies that you can print and work on your own (best done at a piano or keyboard).

Once melodies are prepared students will schedule a session with the teacher via Skype. Grades for sight-singing will be based on your preparation of the exercises as well as how accurately you sing the rhythm and pitch.

Quizzes

Each unit contains at least one quiz that combines written and aural questions similar to those in homework assignments and the aural skills drills. Questions will be true/false, multiple choice and short answer. Students won't actually notate music on the quiz, but it is recommended that they have staff paper and pencil to use during the quiz as this will help answer questions more accurately.

Quizzes may be attempted twice, with the final grade being the average of the two scores.

Final Exam/Project

Option 1: A final exam made up of question from the quizzes you have taken throughout the course. Students will have two chances to take the test, and the grade will be the average of both scores.

Option 2: Guided Analysis Project

A complete score (solo piano or solo with accompaniment) will be given to students with a series of detailed questions that refer directly to the score. Questions will be based on the topics covered in class. An audio file of the score will be made available to assist students in preparing the analysis. Students may submit the project twice and will receive an average of the two scores.

COURSE OUTLINE

Unit 1: Basic Notation

WRITTEN SKILLS

- The 5 line staff
- Treble, bass and alto clefs
- Grand Staff
- Note names and octave names from C-c³
- Ledger lines
- The piano keyboard

AURAL SKILLS

- Distinguishing between higher and lower pitches
- Ascending and descending motion

Unit 2: Rhythm and Meter Part 1

WRITTEN SKILLS

- Note Values
 - Whole, half and quarter notes and rests
 - Dotted and tied note values
 - Slurs
 - Measures
 - Bar lines
 - Double bar lines
 - Repeat signs and endings
 - Meter
 - Construction
 - Definition of the top number
 - Definition of the bottom number
 - Simple Meter
 - Definition
 - Foreground/and background
 - Strong and weak beats
- 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 2/2, 3/2, 4/2, 2/8, 4/8, 8/8

AURAL SKILLS

- Recognizing simple meters by ear
- Matching a written rhythmic example to an aural example
- Rhythmic Dictation
 - Definition and “how to”
 - Exercises include all note and rest values covered.

Unit 3: Whole Steps, Half steps and Enharmonic Tones

WRITTEN SKILLS

Accidentals

Flats, Sharps, Naturals, Double Sharps and Double Flats

Enharmonic notes

Whole steps and half steps

Defined

At the keyboard

Spelling up and down from a given note

Identify a given pair of notes as a whole step or half step

AURAL SKILLS

Identifying whole steps and half steps by ear

Melodic ascending and descending

Harmonic

SIGHT-SINGING

Defined and introduced

“Fixed do” Syllables

Melodies consist of 3 and 4 note patterns of whole steps and half steps

Unit 4: Tetra-chords and Major Scales

WRITTEN SKILLS

Tetra-chords

Definition and construction

Whole step/half step pattern

Completing a tetra-chord from any given note within the pattern

Recognizing a given 4 note pattern as a tetra-chord

Major Scales

Construction

Two tetra-chords separated by a whole step

Whole step/half step pattern

Scale Degrees names and numbers

Spelling scales up from a given note

AURAL SKILLS

Ear Training

Recognizing major tetra-chords (T or F style)

Dictation

Melodic dictation is defined and introduced

Melodies are based on the major tetra-chord

SIGHT-SINGING

2-4 measure examples in simple meters using only the four notes of the major tetra-chord - syllables are given

Unit 5: Key Signatures and the Circle of Fifths

WRITTEN SKILLS

Major Key Signatures

Order of Sharps and Flats

Correct notation on all three clefs

Given a key signature, name the key

Given the tonic of a key, write the key signature

The Circle of Fifths

Simple interval numbering system (1-7)

Focus on the 5th

The circle defined

Order of Major keys around the circle

Enharmonic keys

AURAL SKILLS

Recognizing major scales (T or F style)

Melodic Dictation using the first 5 notes of the major scale, with the 6th used as an upper neighbor

SIGHT-SINGING

Melodies based on the major scale, using key signatures and simple meter
- syllables are given.

Unit 6: Intervals

WRITTEN SKILLS

Defining Major, minor, diminished, Perfect and Augmented intervals and their relationships - d-m-M-A and d-P-A

Identifying simple and compound intervals by number and type

Spelling simple and compound intervals up from a given note

Inversions of simple intervals

AURAL SKILLS

Identify 2nd's, 3rd's, 6th's or 7th's, as major or minor

Identify perfect intervals as 4ths, 5ths or octaves

Given any simple interval, identify the interval by type and number

Dictation – examples move beyond step-wise motion, introducing small melodic leaps (not exceeding a 5th)

SIGHT-SINGING

Slightly more advance melodies featuring the more “singalbe” simple intervals (3rds, 4ths, 5ths and 6ths)

Unit 7: Rhythm and Meter Part 2

WRITTEN SKILLS

16th and 32nd notes and rests

Dotted 8th and 16th notes

Compound meter

Defined and contrasted with Simple Meter

3/8, 6/8, 9/8, 12/8

AURAL SKILLS

Identifying musical excerpts as simple or compound meter

Matching a written example to an aural example

Rhythmic dictation using compound meters and rhythmic values up to and including the 16th note

Unit 8: Minor Scales

WRITTEN SKILLS

The natural, harmonic and melodic variations of the minor scale

Relative and Parallel scales and keys

Minor key signatures and the minor circle of 5ths

Using Bach's Invention in a minor to illustrate how minor is used in practice

AURAL SKILLS

Identifying minor scales as natural, harmonic or melodic

Dictation examples using both simple and compound meters and the various forms of the minor scale

SIGHT-SINGING

Melodies not exceeding one octave in range using the three forms of the minor scale

Unit 9: Triads

WRITTEN SKILLS

Triads defined

Triad Types – Major, minor diminished and augmented

Roman numerals and the triads of the major and minor scales

The V7 chord

Triad inversions and inversions of the V7 chord

Close vs. open position

AURAL SKILLS

Identifying root position triads by type

Identifying triads by inversion

SIGHT-SINGING

Melodies in both major and minor keys combining step-wise motion with triad patterns

Congratulations!
End of Course!