

MUS1649A: Studies in Music Theory I

Fall 2023 / Don Wright Faculty of Music / Western University

Instructor: Dr. [Jonathan De Souza](#)

Email: jdesou22@uwo.ca

Overview and Outcomes

Why do certain notes sound “good” together? Why do some chords feel stable or predictable, while others feel tense or surprising? And how does harmony relate to melody, rhythm, or other musical features? This course explores such questions, introducing principles of tonal harmony and voice leading. It examines functional relationships among notes and chords in a key, and how they are combined in musical phrases. We’ll study these concepts in Western art music from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and in various genres of popular music.

By the end of this course, you’ll know how to generate basic musical building blocks (e.g., intervals and chords) and represent them in multiple ways. More importantly, you’ll learn how to compose and analyze diatonic tonal music. For example, you’ll be able to create a four-part harmonization for a melody or bass line, and you’ll be able to explain harmony and phrase structure in short pieces of classical and popular music. You’ll also start to understand how musical phrases are organized into larger formal units.

Materials

The course’s OWL site (owl.uwo.ca) will host videos, supplementary readings, and other materials. Much of this material has been created specifically for students in this course, and I’d ask that you do not repost it online or share it publicly without permission. Please check OWL regularly for updates.

All of our assignments will be submitted through [Harmonia \(https://harmonia.illiacsoftware.com/\)](https://harmonia.illiacsoftware.com/). I will also share additional exercises in this app, which will let you practice music theory with immediate feedback. After September 21, you will need a license to access course content on Harmonia. The twelve-week non-renewable course license costs \$23.95 USD. Specific instructions for setting up

Harmonia are available on OWL.

Our textbook is the fourth edition of *The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Tonal Theory, Analysis, and Listening* by Steven G. Laitz (Oxford University Press, 2016). This text and its associated workbooks will be used throughout various theory and musicianship courses at Western. It is available at the Book Store (see https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2023A&courses%5B0%5D=001_UW/MUS1649A). Note that the textbook's companion website includes many audio examples and practice exercises (see <http://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780199347094/stu/>).

I regularly use iClicker polls in lectures, and if you want to participate, you'll need a device. Any WiFi-enabled device—a laptop, tablet, or smartphone—will work. For more information on clickers at Western, see presswestern.uwo.ca/students.html.

Finally, you will need some kind of notation software. I recommend the free and open-source program MuseScore, but you can use another program if you like. I also suggest that you get some staff paper, pencils, and a good eraser. They'll be useful for making notes (pun intended) in lectures and tutorials.

Evaluation

Most weeks, there will be a homework *assignment*, involving exercises and analysis related to the week's material. You will complete assignments using Harmonia, and they must be submitted by the following Tuesday at 10:30 am. (For example, the assignment for Week 1 is due before the first lecture in Week 2.) Your lowest assignment score will not factor into your final grade.

Quizzes are short, timed exercises, designed to assess skills that are central to the course. These quizzes will be completed online in OWL, and you may retake each one as many times as you like. (Because these quizzes are timed, students with disabilities who require extra time will have access to accommodated versions.) All quizzes will be available in the first half of the term (for dates and topics, see below). Note, however, that you may not take the quizzes after the end of classes (i.e., after December 8). These quizzes will be graded on a pass/fail basis, with at least 90% required for a pass.

The *midterm exam* and *final exam* will include analysis of brief excerpts, composition exercises, and short-answer questions. The midterm will be a take-home exam, available

on Monday, October 23 and due by Sunday, October 29 at 11:55 pm. The final exam will be three hours long, during the Exam Period (December 10–22). (Please do not make holiday travel plans until the exam date has been announced!)

These elements will combine in your final grade as follows:

Assignments	25%
Quizzes	20%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	35%

Quiz Topics

1. Syllabus (*opens September 7, closes September 19*)
2. Key signatures (*opens September 7*)
3. Intervals (*opens September 11*)
4. Triads (*opens September 18*)
5. Scale degrees (*opens September 25*)
6. Seventh chords (*opens October 2*)
7. Inversions of V7 (*opens October 10*)

Quizzes 2–7 will automatically close at 11:55 pm on December 8 (the last day of classes).

Policies/Expectations

Accessibility

We are committed to making this course accessible to all students. If we can make this course more accessible to you, please don't hesitate to contact us. Also, if you require specific accommodations, please make sure that your accommodations are active on the Accommodated Exams website (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/Accommodatedexamssignup/>). (The university's official policies related to accessibility and accommodations appear below.)

Communication

If you have general questions about course content, assignments, and so on, please post them on the OWL Forums. For individual issues, please contact me or your tutorial

leader through OWL Messages. If OWL isn't working, then email me at jdesou22@uwo.ca. I aim to reply to messages within 24 hours from Monday to Friday and within 48 hours on weekends and holidays. (Generally, I'm not able to read or respond to email outside of business hours.)

I'm also happy to meet with you, and this is often the best way for me to help you with any course-related problems. After each lecture, I'll hold "Office Hours" (also known as "Drop-in Hours")—that is, regularly scheduled times when you can come and talk with me without making an appointment. Please feel free to stop by my office (TC 117) then. We can also set up individual appointments at other times. Just send me a message, and we'll find a suitable date and time.

Attendance

We expect you to participate in this course, regularly attending lectures and tutorials. You should go to the tutorial section in which you are enrolled, and if you wish to change sections, this must be done before November 13 (the last day to drop a first-term half course without academic penalty). After that, you may switch sections only in extraordinary circumstances, and you must officially register the change with the Administrative Assistant for the Department of Music Research and Composition (TC 210). Please notify your tutorial leader in advance if you'll be absent.

University Policies

i) **Course Prerequisites:** Demonstrated competence in theory rudiments or Music 0601A/B. Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

ii) **Grading scale:** A+=90-100%, A=80-89%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, D=50-59%, F=0-49%.

iii) **Academic Consideration for Student Absence & Missing Work (≥10%):** Students are responsible for making up any missed classes or assignments as soon as possible. The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. Academic Consideration provides students with consistent, fair, and pedagogically appropriate consideration, without compromising the academic integrity of the course or program, when they have been unable to complete some component of a course due to short-term extenuating circumstances. Students who have long-term or chronic medical conditions (physical or mental) that may impede their ability to complete academic responsibilities are directed to seek Academic Accommodation through

Accessible Education (Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities).

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the end of the period of absence covered, to the Academic Counselling unit or Office of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (TC210), of the student's Home Faculty together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the academic consideration being requested. Students are directed to read the Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness at the following website for further details regarding various requirements and procedures for the supporting documentation: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf

Whenever possible, students who require academic consideration should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

iv) **Academic Consideration for Missing Work (<10%)**: In cases where students miss work that is worth less than 10% of the total course grade (i.e., two or fewer assignments) due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if documentation is voluntarily submitted to the Associate Dean's office and the Associate Dean grants an accommodation, then the missed assignment(s) or quiz(zes) will be discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course. If documentation is not voluntarily submitted then the missed assignment(s) will receive a grade of zero. Students who have been denied accommodation by an instructor may appeal this decision to the Associate Dean's office but will be required to present appropriate documentation.

v) **Academic Offences**: Submission of work with which you have received help from someone else (other than the course instructor or TA) is an example of plagiarism, which is considered a major academic offence. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, as found at: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

vi) **Mental Health & Wellness**: Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to the Health and Wellness at Western page (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or to go to the Wellness Education Centre located in Thames Hall room 2170. Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in Thames Hall 2170 or to click on the big green "I Need Help Now" button on the Health and Wellness page above.

vii) **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**: Students work with Accessible Education which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

viii) **Religious Accommodation**: Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays (other than statutory holidays), and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. The Diversity Calendar from the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion provides information on multifaith, multicultural and diversity related holidays and observances and links to resources for more information. <https://www.edi.uwo.ca/resources/2816-2023-Diversity->

ix) **Contingency Plan:** Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, should any university-declared emergency require some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience), the course will adapt accordingly. The grading scheme will not change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

x) **Gender-Based and Sexual Violence:** Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, either recently or in the past, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca or call 519-661-3568.

MUS1649A / Fall 2023 Schedule

Dates	Topic	Reading	Due
Sept 7	0. Introduction	Ch. 1 (3–25; 49–57)	
Sept 12/14	1. Intervals	Ch. 1 (27–41), 2 (78–96)	
Sept 19/21	2. Triads	Ch. 3 (107–16), 2 (97–105)	A. 1/Quiz 1
Sept 21	<i>Free access to Harmonia ends (course license required after this date)</i>		
Sept 26/28	3. Tonality	Ch. 3 (117–21, 130–36), 4–5	Assignment 2
Oct 3/5	4. Seventh Chords	Ch. 3 (123–26), 6	Assignment 3
Oct 10/12	5. Contrapuntal Expansions	Ch. 7–8	Assignment 4
Oct 17/19	6. Predominants	Ch. 9–10, 23 (554–57)	Assignment 5
Oct 24/26	7. Six-Fours and Tonic Subs	Ch. 11–14	Assignment 6
Oct 29	<i>Take-home Midterm Exam is due by 11:55 pm. It will be available from Oct 24.</i>		
Oct 30-Nov 5	<i>Reading Week</i>		
Nov 7/9	8. Themes	Supplement	
Nov 13	<i>Last day to drop a first-term half course without academic penalty</i>		
Nov 14/16	9. Tonicization	Ch. 18 (435–48)	Assignment 7
Nov 21/23	10. Modulation	Ch. 19 (461–73)	Assignment 8
Nov 28/30	11. Binary Forms	Ch. 20 (483–89)	Assignment 9
Dec 5/7	12. Conclusion		Assignment 10
Dec 8	<i>Fall/Winter Term classes end</i>		Quizzes 2–7
Dec 9	<i>Study Day</i>		
Dec 10–22	<i>Exam Period</i>		Final Exam (TBA)