

Music Theory I (MUS 110)

Professor Stilwell, Term 4 Fall 2019, 144 Armstrong Hall

Class Meeting Times:	M, T, Th 9:30-11 and 1:00-3:00 W, F 9:30-11:30 only
Office:	246 Armstrong Hall
Office Phone:	x4229
Cell Phone:	319/210-7824 (before 10:00 PM please)
Office Hours:	WF 1:00-2:30, other times by appointment- or whenever you see me in my office
Daily Assignments:	Due by 4:30 PM, to me or to envelope on my office bulletin board
Email:	jstilwell@cornellcollege.edu

Note: in the evenings, or on weekends, please call or text instead of emailing

Course Goals & Objectives:

At some point in your life, you have probably heard music described as a “universal language,” or even as a kind of “poetry” or “prose.” Regardless of whether you accept these particular comparisons or not, it is hard to deny that music does share many similarities with language. Sounds are grouped and organized in order to communicate with us, and we receive the communicated message by listening, or by studying written symbols. And, just like language, true understanding of the musical message requires practice and training beyond just being able to identify pitches and rhythms- the equivalent of only being able to recognize but not comprehend words in a foreign language.

Our main goal in Music Theory will be to work toward fluency in this “language.” To do this, we will work with a variety of different kinds of assignments—including written and aural analysis, as well as singing and listening activities—in order to better understand the communication that is happening in the music you are studying, performing, creating, and hearing every day. Some of our specific smaller goals along the path to musical fluency are to work toward:

- mastery of the fundamentals – including pitch, rhythm, as well as the basics of melody & harmony
- developing a sensitive and accurate musical ear
- an understanding of the construction and structure of music
- an understanding of the historical and cultural context surrounding the production of Western music
- effectively expressing your musical observations and conclusions in both verbal and written forms

In sum, this course supports the Education Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphases on knowledge, inquiry, reasoning, and communication.

Textbooks:

We will use three texts this block, along with a software program designed to help develop your aural skills:

- 1) Stefan Kostka & Dorothy Payne, *Tonal Harmony* (8th edition, 2018)
- 2) Kostka & Payne, workbook to accompany *Tonal Harmony*
- 3) Robert Ottman & Nancy Rogers, *Music for Sight Singing* (10th edition, 2019)
- 4) Ann K. Blombach, *MacGamut 6* (software)

These texts are all available at the Cornell bookstore – with the exception of the Macgamut 6 software, which you will need to purchase and download from www.macgamut.com. The purchase of the software and all books is mandatory (keep in mind though that you will be able to use these same texts for all four theory courses!). You do not need to bring the hardcover text or the software to class, but your workbook and sight-singing book should be with you every day. You also need to provide your own music staff paper for this

course. If you do not already have some, it can be purchased at local music stores, or acquired for free at various online locations.

Assignments:

Your daily work for Theory I will take many forms. These include:

- 1) **Readings in Textbook**—I will assign reading from *Tonal Harmony* as we progress through the various topics. You will notice that your reading assignments will often be very short. This is rather deceptive: although these concepts are often presented quite briefly, they need lots of thought and practice to be understood. Allow yourself time to carefully consider each concept. You should also always complete the “Self Test” sections found in the textbook. Although I won’t ask you to turn in these pages, they are a great way to be sure you understand the material, since the answers appear in the back of our textbook.
- 2) **Workbook**—For each topic covered in the textbook, there are corresponding exercises in the workbook. Usually I will assign workbook pages to work on overnight, to be discussed at the next day’s class. (If you would like to work ahead, all of the workbook assignments for this block are listed on the “Workbook Syllabus” handout.) These assignments will be mostly self-graded – enabling you to get immediate feedback on your understanding of each concept, in a relatively stress-free/grade-free environment. I will still ask that you turn in workbook assignments, however, so that I can get a sense for how the class is doing. Here is how this will work:
 - a. By 4:30 on the day that assignments are due, you will turn in your workbook assignment to me or to the envelope on my office door. This assignment will include your work, as well as evidence that you have checked your own work – referring to the answer key posted on “Moodle,” and showing any errors using a different color than your original answers.
 - b. For each workbook assignment, there will be two opportunities to earn credit. Completed work that is turned in on-time will receive a mark of “completion credit.” In addition, work checked with self-graded answers will receive a mark of “grading credit.” If your work is late or substantively incomplete, you will receive a grade of “no-completion-credit.” If your work is lacking self-checked answers, you will receive a mark of “no-grading-credit.” It is possible to get completion credit for doing the work, even if you have not done the self-grading. Work that is received late is not accepted for credit of any sort.
 - c. Sometimes there will be workbook assignments that have open-ended questions (such as part-writing exercises toward the end of the block). Since it is not possible for you to check these exercises against a key, I will assess your performance, and this work will earn only completion credit. Please note, however, that you will not get completion credit for these exercises if it seems that you have not taken them seriously. (In other words, if the number of errors would have resulted in a failing grade had this been a graded assignment, you will not receive completion credit.)
 - d. There will be one “freebie” assignment this block – one daily workbook assignment that you can skip without any impact on your grade.
 - e. Please see the “Grading” section below for a break-down of how this self-graded work will fit into the overall grading scheme for MUS 110.

- 3) ***Aural Skills Practice***—This aspect of your daily work will practice the aural skills (sight-singing and ear training) we will be working on in class. Your practice time out of class will include singing and recognizing/transcribing various assigned intervals, melodies, scales, and chords. Suggestions for effective practice will be discussed in class. Suffice it to say here that this kind of aural material will require very consistent and persistent study, just like practicing an instrument. As a result, you should plan on spending at least some time working on aural skills every day (even weekends!) during this block. I have two important reasons for including this work in our course: first, they are crucial to our goal of “speaking” the language of music. Second, all students who are planning to major in Music will need to demonstrate proficiency in these skills prior to graduation. Proficiency for Majors will be assessed in four stages; you can work at your own pace, and pass these stages when you feel ready. Please see below for more details about the Aural Skills Proficiency Exams.
- 4) ***Computer Exercises***—We will use a software program (“MacGamut 6”) to help strengthen your aural skills. Suggestions for using MacGamut effectively are discussed on a separate handout. As with your other forms of aural skills practice described above, you can work on the Macgamut exercises at your own pace. During this course, however, I will ask that you spend about 15 minutes per day (even weekends!) working on Macgamut. You will need to periodically submit your Macgamut file so that I can see what you have been working on (see due dates below, along with specific practice-time expectations). Late submissions will not be accepted. As with the non-computerized aural practice discussed above, your computer work will be most effective when it is done in small increments each day. During the terms that you are not taking a Theory course, Macgamut will serve as a self-study tool as you prepare to take the various stages of the Aural Proficiency Exam (again, see below for more details).
- 5) ***Listening List***—Finally, I will ask you to become familiar with a group of important musical works during the course of this block. This part of your daily work will involve listening to assigned pieces out of class, discussing them in class, and identifying and responding to excerpts on exams. The listening list is described in more detail on a separate handout.

A few additional comments: although this list of assignments may seem a little daunting, be sure that you always keep up with the things I have assigned for each day. Falling behind with one concept will likely make the rest of the block very difficult. I urge you to talk with me at any time if you feel you are having problems. Please feel free to email, to call me at home, or to stop by or call my office (see contact info listed above). Although I will always be happy to spend extra time working with you, **the fast pace of this class will not allow me to accept any late assignments.**

For most written & aural assignments, I encourage you to work with other students—this can often be a wonderful way for everyone to learn. Aural skills is an especially good subject to work on together, since you may be able to play intervals or melodies for your friends to practice with, and vice versa. Keep in mind, however, that you will have to take all quizzes and exams on your own.

Attendance & Participation:

Participation is a very important aspect of this class. This is partly because our subject matter demands that we participate—it is impossible to listen to music without responding to it in some way, even if only to silently consider its effect, sound, and/or meaning. For this class though, I will ask you to participate in some more demonstrative ways, including discussion, singing, analysis, and conducting. In the course of our class discussions and analysis, there may be times when you do not agree with me, or with one of your classmates. This is not only inevitable, it is also desirable. Investigating and explaining differing opinions on a given topic is a very important part of the learning process, especially in a class dealing with an interpretive topic like

music. So, be prepared to express your ideas freely and often. Please note that participation will be part of your “daily work” grade (see grading synopsis below); come talk with me immediately if you have trouble speaking in class.

Absence from class will greatly affect your participation grade, as well as your understanding of the material. I will take attendance at both morning and afternoon sessions, and you are expected to be present at both. You may miss one class session (not entire day) without any impact on your participation grade – this is a “freebie” absence. Absences in excess of this one will be treated as unexcused. These will affect your participation grade. They will also affect your grade in other ways, since I will not “reteach” material you have missed, or allow you to make up missed exams on days when you have an unexcused absence.

If you miss class, regardless of whether your absence is a “freebie,” or an unexcused absence:

- it is your responsibility to get assignments & make up missed material, either by contacting me or by asking another student
- material will still be due as assigned – unless you have made prior arrangements with me.

If some kind of emergency situation arises, there may be reasons for me to alter the attendance policies outlined above. Please speak with me immediately.

Finally, in keeping with Cornell’s 15-day drop policy, “W”s will be granted only to students who have made good-faith efforts to succeed in this course – i.e. students with good records of attendance, who have turned in assigned work and taken all exams.

Quizzes, Midterm, & Final Exam:

If you refer to the schedule of events below, you will see that I have indicated dates for our midterm and final exams. We will also have chapter quizzes, but I have intentionally left these unscheduled, so that we can move through the chapters at a flexible pace determined by the needs of the class. Please see the white board each day – there I will put information about upcoming quizzes, as well as assignments and other kinds of announcements. Please note: quizzes and exams cannot be made up, except in cases of absences excused by me ahead of time.

Schedule of Events:

- Wednesday, November 20: Computer “trial run” due by 4:30 PM – scale level 1 (submit file via email)
- Monday, December 2: Turn in Computer File #1 by 4:30 PM (reflecting 100 minutes of work)
- Friday, December 6: Midterm Exam (Written Concepts & Listening List)
- Monday, December 9: Turn in Computer File #2 by 4:30 PM (90 minutes of work)
- Monday, December 16: Turn in Computer File #3 by 4:30 PM (90 minutes of work)
- Wednesday December 18: Final Exam (Written Concepts & Listening List)

Grading:

Your grade will consist of the following components:

Average of written chapter quizzes: 25%

Written midterm exam: 20%

Written final exam: 20%

Daily work: 35% including...

Workbook completion credit / grading credit: 15%

Computer work: 10%

Class participation: 10%

Aural Skills Proficiency Exams

All BA and BMus Music majors must pass the Aural Skills Proficiency Requirement in order to complete the Music Major. These students must pass each of a series of graduated exams (3 levels required for the BA; 4 levels required for the BMus) that test in the following Aural Skills areas: intervals, chords, scales, melodic dictation, harmonic dictation, and sight singing. These topics will be taught both within the four required Music Theory courses, as well as in a longer-term self-paced, computer-program-assisted, proficiency-based mode. Exams will be offered twice per semester. We intend the four stages of the exam to parallel the four courses in the Theory sequence. As a result, it would be ideal to attempt the first stage of the exam at the end of the block, or sometime soon after you complete this class, early in the Spring semester. Please let me know if you have questions.

Academic Honesty

Please be sure that you understand the college's policy on honesty in academic work (see below). Violations of this policy will result in some form of academic sanction, such as an F for the exam, or possibly for the entire course. Please consult with me if you have questions. Also, please note that working together on workbook assignments and aural skills does NOT constitute academic dishonesty. I invite and encourage you to work on these assignments with others.

“Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty.” The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Compass, our student handbook, under the heading “Academic Policies – Honesty in Academic Work.”

Accommodations for Students with Learning Disabilities

I would like to hear from anyone who has a documented disability that may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements, so that appropriate arrangements may be made. To receive accommodation, you must notify me of your request within the first three days of our course. You must also have on file documentation from a professional qualified to diagnose learning disabilities. For more information, please consult cornellcollege.edu/disabilities/documentation/index.shtml.