



Course Outline

2026-2027 Catalog

MUS 3 - Music Fundamentals

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

Total: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

Course Description: An introduction to the fundamentals of Western music with emphasis on theoretical concepts and practical applications. Topics include the six basic elements of music (pitch, rhythm, timbre, dynamics, texture, form), staff notation, scales, intervals, basic tonal harmony and musicianship, and basic music technology. Students develop skills in music notation with emphasis on handwritten notation, critical listening, and creativity with sound. The course integrates diverse musical examples to explore the fundamentals of Western music while providing hands-on experience with basic music technology, performance, and composition. (C-ID MUS 110).

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Write, recognize, and perform basic elements of diatonic tonal music in staff notation, including pitch and rhythm.
2. Identify and construct major and minor scales, key signatures, intervals up to the octave, and diatonic triads and seventh chords.
3. Identify simple and compound meters and demonstrate the ability to perform basic rhythmic patterns.
4. Discuss essential music technology concepts.
5. Analyze music to describe it in terms of musical elements and cultural concepts.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic	
	<u>Lecture</u>
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
Staff notation: treble and bass clefs, grand staff, and ledger lines	6.00
Half and whole steps: accidentals, and pitch on keyboard	3.00
Introduction to fundamental musical elements: pitch, rhythm, timbre, dynamic, texture, and form	6.00
Intervals	6.00
Simple and compound beats, meters, and time signatures	6.00
Diatonic triads and seventh chords	6.00
Major and minor scales	6.00
Introduction to music technology, including music notation software and digital audio workstations (DAWs)	6.00
Introduction to critical thinking in music, including the application of musical elements to style, with consideration of broader cultural and historical contexts	6.00
Total Hours: 51.00	

Methods of Instruction

- A. Class Activities
- B. Demonstrations
- C. Discussion
- D. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- E. Lecture

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Exams/Tests
- B. Projects
- C. Homework
- D. Written Assignments
- E. Short papers
- F. Class Discussion

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read Cook's article "An Imaginary Object" and take a moment to reflect on what music means to you, and then explain what you believe music is. Share your findings with the class.
2. Review the lecture and lecture slides, then visit the "Open Music Theory" website and review its page on intervals. Point out at least two concepts that you found more clearly explained on the website compared to the lecture videos and slides, and in a few sentences, explain why you find the website's explanation clearer.

Writing Assignments

1. Write a 1-page informative essay about your musical self. You will find a list of helpful questions posted online that can help prompt your thoughts regarding your current music knowledge.
2. Develop a 1-page written listening guide for a song or piece of music of your choice. A listening guide is a visual and text representation of a song or piece of music that allows you to understand the overall structure. Incorporate course terminology and concepts in the guide.

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Notate all the specific intervals above the given pitches. Start with finding the correct letter name (numerical name), and then add accidentals to adjust the quality as needed.
2. In each example provided below, incorrect beamings are marked for you. Rewrite the rhythms with correct beaming.

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Takesue, S. (2025). Music Fundamentals: A Balanced Approach. *Routledge*, 4th. 9781032290447.

Clendinning, J.P., Marvin, E.W., & Phillips, J. (2023). The Musician's Guide to Fundamentals. *W. W. Norton & Company*, 3rd. 9781324046059.

Henry, E., Snodgrass, J., & Piagentini, S. (2021). Fundamentals of Music: Rudiments, Musicianship, and Composition. *Pearson*, 7th. 9780134491387.

Zero Cost Textbook

Gothman, M., et al. (2023). Open Music Theory, Version 2. (OER). <https://viva.pressbooks.pub/openmusictheory/>

Other Learning Materials

Blank music staff paper

Minimum Qualifications

Music (Masters Required)

Created/Revised by: Heimlich, Ryan

Date: 05/04/2026