

Montgomery County Community College  
 MUS 240  
 The Art and Business of Songwriting  
 3-3-0

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The Art and Business of Songwriting is an elective course which teaches the art of musical composition with an emphasis on the genre of contemporary song. It is designed for the student with some knowledge of or background in the basics of music who wishes to apply that knowledge to the creation of music in contemporary popular genres. Students will explore the various musical forms employed by songwriters and apply them to their own compositional projects. The course provides an overview of the historical development of the art of popular song in Western culture, exploring in particular the significant contributions made by America's immigrant and African-American populations. Students will also examine the business of songwriting and its place in the overall music industry.

**REQUISITES:***Previous Course Requirements*

- MUS 120 Music Fundamentals with a minimum grade of "C"

*Concurrent Course Requirements*

None

LEARNING OUTCOMES Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:	LEARNING ACTIVITIES	EVALUATION METHODS
1. Compose music and write lyrics for songs in several of the popular forms in use during the last century.	Lecture Analysis of Classic and Contemporary Songs (Written and Recorded) Written Assignments In-Class Musical Performances	Written Compositional Exercises In-Class Performance
2. Explain the significance of popular song in Western culture.	Lecture Class Discussion Reading Assignments Web Assignments	Written Assignments Written Tests
3. Describe the contributions made by America's immigrant and African-American populations to Western song repertory.	Lecture Class Discussion Reading Assignments Web Assignments	Written Assignments Written Tests

LEARNING OUTCOMES	LEARNING ACTIVITIES	EVALUATION METHODS
4. Explain the fundamentals of the business of songwriting and its central role in the recording industry, including copyright laws, and the production of demonstration recordings.	Lecture Class Discussion Reading Assignments Web Assignments	Written Assignments Written Tests
5. Prepare a final composition project using one of the popular forms studied in class.	Class Discussion Lecture Analysis of Classic and Contemporary Songs (Written and Recorded) In-Class Musical Performances	Final Written Composition Project In-Class Performance

At the conclusion of each semester/session, assessment of the learning outcomes will be completed by course faculty using the listed evaluation method(s). Aggregated results will be submitted to the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs. The benchmark for each learning outcome is that *70% of students will meet or exceed outcome criteria.*

#### SEQUENCE OF TOPICS:

1. Overview of Class Objectives and Requirements
2. Review of Major and Minor Scales, Diatonic Chords, and Chord Symbols
3. Introduction of the Small Two Part Song Form
4. Harmonic Motion and Common Chord Progressions
5. Introduction of Form in Music
6. Small Two Part and Large Two Part Song Forms
7. Pentatonic Melodies
8. Analysis of Small and Large Two Part Songs from the Literature
9. Introduction to the Music Publishing Business
10. Getting Published – Demonstration Records; Solicitation Procedures; Alternative Outlets for Creative Musicians
11. The Business of Songwriting; Commercial Recordings; Record Production Business; Rights and Copyrights; Royalties; Performing Rights Societies
12. The Craft of Lyric Writing
13. Introduction to Bar Form: The AABA “Standard” Song Form
14. The Bridge
15. Introduction to Verse/Chorus Song Form
16. Introduction to Expanded Song Forms
17. Presentation of Final Projects

LEARNING MATERIALS:

Required Text:

Frederick, Robin (2008). *Shortcuts to Hit Songwriting: 126 Proven Techniques for Writing Songs That Sell*. Taxi Music (ISBN 978-0982004005).

Other learning materials may be required and made available directly to the student and/or via the College's Libraries and/or course management system.

COURSE APPROVAL:

Prepared by: Lou DeLise Date: 10/10/2005

VPAA/Provost Compliance Verification: Dr. John C. Flynn, Jr. Date: 10/10/2005

Revised by: Andrew Kosciesza Date: 7/6/2013

VPAA/Provost or designee Compliance Verification: Victoria L. Bastecki-Perez, Ed.D. Date: 8/8/2013

Revised by: Andrew Kosciesza Date: 12/27/2017

VPAA/Provost or designee Compliance Verification: Date: 1/10/2018



*This course is consistent with Montgomery County Community College's mission. It was developed, approved and will be delivered in full compliance with the policies and procedures established by the College.*