

MUSC 330: Advanced Music Theory

Spring 2024

Professor David Smey
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Hayden Hall, room 105
Tuesdays and Fridays, 2:00 - 2:15

Welcome to Advanced Theory. In this class we'll pick up where we left off in MUSC 220, learning the basics of how music is constructed. By the time we are finished you will hopefully have a good technical foundation that can help you understand a wide variety of musical genres.

In the broadest sense we'll cover five different topic areas in the following sequence:

- I. Chromatic harmony
- II. Modulation
- III. Rock harmony
- IV. Modernist scales and chords
- V. "Atonal" music theory

Required Materials

Students should try to bring a pencil, eraser, and musical staff paper to each lesson, as well as some sort of folder to organize handouts and homework assignments.

Textbook

We will use my own free materials for class. I'll give you our textbook in a hard binder at the beginning of the semester. You don't need to bring it to class each day

Class Website

We will have a class blog on davesmey.com, where we will archive all of our documents, keep track of class activities, and keep up-to-the-minute grade information. All students should visit the site within the first week of classes and register a personal account.

Grade

Your overall grade in the class will be calculated with the following structure:

Homework 45%

Two theory quizzes, 15% each (= 30%)

Final Paper 25%

(We *may* expand this to include three tests and adjust the percentages. Of course I will let you know if the final grade formula changes.)

Homework Grading

Homework is graded on a “check plus” (= excellent, worth 100 points), “check” (= pretty good, 92 points) and “check minus” (60 points) system. The criteria for what constitutes a check plus varies from assignment to assignment and depends somewhat on how your work compares to that of your classmates. I accept late homework up to a month after the due date, but the best grade you can get on it is a check.

Attendance + Participation

In addition, an attendance-and-participation modifier will be added to your overall grade. This can give you a modest bonus or cost you a significant penalty. We’ll use the following table to calculate your score:

0-2 absences: 3 point bonus

3 absences: 1.5 point bonus

4-5: no bonus, no penalty

6+ absences: 3-point penalty for each absence over 5

Note that this is a “no excuses” or “everything counts” policy – all of the typical causes of absence (like illness, work conflicts, and maybe even a covid quarantine) count toward your attendance total. My hope is that all students can meet our attendance goals, regardless of what happens. However, if something truly extreme or traumatic does occur I will try to work with you to help you complete the class without a penalty.

In general this also is a fairly “liberal” attendance policy, since one can still pass with a large number of absences. I strongly recommend that all students strive for that 3 point bonus, since being present for most of your classes is simply the best approach to college, and good attendance usually correlates with better grades.

Being late to class may be counted as a quarter or half of an absence.

Failure to meet the expectations of positive in-class participation can also cause additional demerits to be added to your attendance tally. Rude, disruptive, or inattentive behavior can cause you to be marked absent for the class.

Finally, it is very important that you make it to our quizzes at their scheduled times. If something will prevent you from attending, you must contact me ASAP. I reserve the right to give you a zero if I don't think you have a legitimate reason for missing a test.

Class Schedule

We'll meet every Tuesday and Friday from 2:00-3:15.

First class is Tuesday, January 16.

There is no class during the week of March 11-15 due to **Spring Break**.

No class on Friday March 29 due to **Easter**.

No class on Tuesday April 16 for **Wellness Day**.

Last class is Friday May 3.