

Course Syllabus

MU-016-01 Contemporary Writing and Arranging

Offered every odd fall term

Eben Drost

Required Texts:

Feist, Jonathan. *Berklee Contemporary Music Notation*. Boston: Berklee Press, 2017.

Keys, Scarlet. *The Craft of Songwriting: Music, Meaning, & Emotion*. Boston: Berklee Press, 2018.

Course Overview:

An introduction to the principles and techniques of songwriting and arranging for modern band. Topics include writing lyrics, using and harmonizing chords effectively, contemporary forms of music notation (chord charts, rhythm charts, lead sheets, Nashville numbering system, etc.), and understanding each instrument and its possibilities in a modern band. Special emphasis will be placed on music used in the worshipping church.

General Education:

This course fulfills the category of *Working Artistically of the Common Inquiries* of the General Education curriculum.

Description of this category as found in the Westmont College Catalogue: Students will expand their understanding of the fine arts and performing arts, including music, visual arts, or theatre. Students will develop and expand perceptual faculties, develop physical practices integral to the art form, and explore the critical principles which guide artists in the area.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will learn to write compelling songs, utilizing principles of melody, harmony, rhythm, and instrumentation
2. Students will gain tools to evaluate songwriting critically
3. Students will be able to effectively notate music in a variety of ways
4. Students will have familiarity with the modern band instruments and modern vocal

Course Requirements and Policies:

According to Westmont's Attendance Policies, you may be asked to withdraw from the course if you have more than four (4) unexcused absences

Completion of assigned readings/Reading Reflections. You are required to read the assigned pages before the class period for which they are assigned. Reading reflections will be assigned on Canvas.

Completion of Writing and Arranging Assignments. You are required to complete writing and arranging assignments, which will be the bulk of the class work and what you will be graded on.

Commented [MOU5]: Writing (composing) and arranging assignments are the most central aspect of this course.

Grading:

Weekly Writing/Arranging Assignments:	40%
Reading Reflections:	20%
Final Arranging Project:	20%
Final Songwriting Project:	20%

Commented [MOU6]: The bulk of the grade is based on writing music.

Course Schedule:

Week 1:

Read: Keys, Chapters 1-5 (answer reflection question on Canvas)

Lecture: Understanding lyrics and the flow of speech in music

Assignment: Set new lyrics to a familiar tune

Week 2:

Read: Keys, Chapters 6-10 (answer reflection question on Canvas)

Lecture: Understanding effective melodies

Assignment: Students will be given a recorded harmonic progression, and asked to write melodies (a melodic hook, verse, chorus and bridge) that fits the harmonies.

Week 3:

Read: Keys, Chapters 11-14 (answer reflection question on Canvas)

Lecture: Melodic Rhythm

Assignment: Rework previous melodic assignment to improve, based on feedback.

Week 4:

Read: Keys, Chapters 15-20 (answer reflection question on Canvas)

Lecture: Chord theory part one

Assignment: Students will be given a melody, and required to write a two different harmonic progressions to support it.

Week 5:

Read: Keys, Chapters 20-25 (answer reflection question on Canvas)

Lecture: Chord theory part two / Nashville Numbering System

Assignment: Students will be given a melody, and required to write a two different harmonic progressions to support it, using seventh and diminished chords.

Week 6:

Read: Keys, Chapters 26-29 (answer reflection question on Canvas)

Lecture: Chord theory part two

Assignment: Students will be given a melody, and required to write a two different harmonic progressions to support it, utilizing seventh and diminished chords.

Week 7:

Read: Keys, Chapters 30-33 (answer reflection question on Canvas)

Lecture: Song Forms

Assignment: Students will analyze the form of five different songs.

Week 8:

Songwriting Project 1 Due

Assignment: Present original song to class

Week 9:

Read: Feist, Parts 1-2 (answer reflection question on Canvas)

Lecture: Chord Charts

Assignment: Students will make a basic chord chart of a worship song

Week 10:

Read: Feist, Parts 3-4 [TJETQ.0003(me)-3(n)5(t)-4(:)-4(S)9 \$wo

