The SOMD Undergraduate Committee herewith notifies the faculty of the motion to consider the following course for approval:

Course Proposal from the Theory Area

MUS 249 Popular Music Analysis

Rationale:
Our undergraduate theory curriculum, originally designed for classical performance majors, has few classes dedicated to popular music. In particular, a written-theory class devoted to popular music is particularly necessary for our growing population of students in the Popular Music Studies concentration of our BA/BS music major; this class will be required in that concentration. In addition, though the class is primarily aimed at popular music concentrators, it may also provide a diversifying option for other BA/BS concentrations (General Music, Music History and Culture, etc.), probably as an alternative to the classically based Theory 3. This analysis-heavy class will fit well alongside our existing historically oriented popular music classes, such as the three-term US Pop Music sequence, as well as the more hands-on musicianship offerings, such as Popular Songwriting and the Pop Piano & Musicianship sequence.

The course will be required for Popular Music concentrators as a 200-level music theory class. This course will be offered in the spring term, allowing these concentrators to take the prerequisites in fall and winter (Theory 1, Aural Skills 1, and Popular Songwriting). The course may also become an option for other BA/BS concentrators as an alternative to Theory 3.

POPULAR MUSIC ANALYSIS

MUS 249, University of Oregon
Instructor: Prof. Drew Nobile
MW 9–9:50am + F lab

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a music theory course focusing on popular music. "Popular music" here is broadly construed, but our main repertoire will be English-language rock, pop, R&B, and hip-hop from the 1960s to the present. We will begin by looking at how some of the traditional music theory topics—form, harmony, etc.—apply to this vernacular repertoire. In the second half of the course, we will expand our theoretical tools to more pop-specific methodologies, looking at lyrics, rap flow, texture, and timbre. Friday lab sessions will focus on aural skills and songwriting techniques. In addition to weekly assignments consisting of writing, analyzing, and transcribing, students will write and record two complete original songs using the tools discussed in the course.

COURSE GOALS

After this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe and identify common elements of popular songs, including standard formal structures (AABA, verse–chorus, etc.), chord progressions, lyrical structures, and timbral elements (including standard production effects and vocal styles).
2. Aurally recognize and transcribe these and other elements from recordings of popular songs.
3. Analyze and interpret individual songs on the basis of their form, harmony, lyrics, and timbre.
4. Compose and record original songs, including chords, lyrics, instrumentation, and DAW production, resulting in a shareable digital audio file.

MATERIALS

There is no textbook for this class; all materials will be posted on Canvas. However, students will need the following:

- Access to a streaming music service such as Spotify, Apple Music, etc.
- Headphones or speakers good enough to represent timbral nuances of recordings
- Access to the following software (available in the music computer lab):
  - Audacity (free)
  - Sonic Visualizer (free)
  - Garage Band (free on Apple computers) or similar DAW software
  - Music notation software, such as MuseScore (free), Finale, or Sibelius

PREREQUISITES

- MUS 131 (Theory 1)
- MUS 134 (Aural Skills 1)
- MUS 151 (Popular Songwriting)
  Recommended: MUS 132 (Theory 2)

HOW TO TAKE THIS COURSE

This course sticks to a regular weekly schedule involving three class meetings, an online quiz due Wednesday, and a homework assignment due Friday. Each week's material will be disseminated on a Canvas page and/or PDF handout. If you attend class and complete assignments on time, this course should require around 4–6 hours of out-of-class work per week. Here's our general weekly schedule:

Monday's class: lecture on the week's topic

Between Monday and Wednesday: take online quiz; revise and resubmit last week's HW if not passed

Wednesday's class: groupwork to prep for HW

Between Wednesday and Friday: finish and submit HW

Friday's lab: go over HW; aural skills and/or songwriting workshop

Between Friday and Monday: look through next week's Canvas page/handout

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance

The course centers on the interactions and discussions that happen during class. Because of that, it is vital that you attend and participate in every class session. If you must miss a class session for a legitimate reason (illness, school-sponsored trip, e.g.), please email me before class with the reason for your absence. If an assignment is due, submit it on Canvas or via email; an absence does not extend the due date for any assignment.

Online quizzes

Each week, there will be a 10-point online quiz administered through Canvas. These quizzes are intended to be low-stakes learning tools rather than summative assessments. The quizzes are auto-graded instantaneously, and you may retake them as many times as you wish before the due date.

Weekly homework assignments

Weekly homework assignments will involve songwriting, transcription, and/or analysis in relation to the week's topic. You'll submit these assignments on Canvas before your Friday lab session. By Monday morning, you will receive detailed feedback on your assignment along with a grade of pass or no-pass. If you receive a no-pass grade, you may revise and resubmit the assignment based on the feedback you received; if you resubmit by Wednesday morning, your grade may be updated to a pass. Students who submit their assignment after the due

---

GRADING

Weekly HW assignments   40%
Graded P/NP, entered as 100%/50%. (Non-submissions earn 0%.)

Songwriting projects   40%
Two projects, each worth 20%. Graded on 100 points.

Online quizzes   20%
One quiz score is dropped. Graded out of 10 points.

Numerical grade equivalents

A	93–100%	A–	90–92%
B+	87–89%	B	83–86%
B–	80–82%	C+	77–79%
C	73–76%	C–	70–72%
D	60–69%	F	0–59%

Students must earn a C– or better to apply this course to a music major.

date will not have an opportunity to revise and resubmit, and will also receive a 10% grade penalty (no credit if more than a week late).

Songwriting projects

Students will submit two songwriting projects in this course, which you can think of as the course's midterm and final. For these projects, students will write an original song (at a minimum, chords, lyrics, and melody) and record it using Garage Band or other DAW software (at a minimum, bass, drums, chordal instrument, and vocals). Recording and performance help is available.

COURSE SCHEDULE

UNIT	WEEKS	TOPICS
Pop song forms	Weeks 1–3	Verses versus choruses: verse–chorus forms Verses without choruses: AABA and strophic forms Prechoruses, bridges, and other sections
Chord progressions	Weeks 4–5	Chord loops Blues progressions, the chord row, and other schematic harmonic designs

Songwriting Project 1 due Monday of week 6

UNIT	WEEKS	TOPICS
Lyrics	Weeks 6–7	Rhyme schemes Rap flow Persona and voice
Texture and timbre	Weeks 8–9	Textural layers and groove Vocal timbre
Songwriting workshop	Week 10	Writing your project Recording your project

Songwriting Project 2 due at scheduled final exam time

UO POLICIES

These policies are also available at https://provost.uoregon.edu/syllabus-guidelines

ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

It is generally expected that class will meet unless the University is officially closed for inclement weather. If it becomes necessary to cancel class while the University remains open, this will be announced on Canvas and by email. Updates on inclement weather and closure are also communicated in other ways described here: https://hr.uoregon.edu/about-hr/campus-notifications/inclement-weather/inclement-weather-immediate-updates.

ACADEMIC DISRUPTION DUE TO CAMPUS EMERGENCY

In the event of a campus emergency that disrupts academic activities, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. Information about changes in this course will be communicated as soon as possible by email, and on Canvas. If we are not able to meet face-to-face, students should immediately log onto Canvas and read any announcements and/or access alternative assignments. Students are also encouraged to continue the readings and other assignments as outlined in this syllabus or subsequent syllabi.

REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

I am a designated reporter. For information about my reporting obligations as an employee, please see Employee Reporting Obligations on the Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance (OICRC) website. Students experiencing any form of prohibited discrimination or harassment, including sex or gender-based violence, may seek information and resources at safe.uoregon.edu, respect.uoregon.edu, or investigations.uoregon.edu or contact the non-confidential Title IX office/Office of Civil Rights Compliance (541-346-3123), or Dean of Students offices (541-346-3216), or call the 24-7 hotline 541-346-SAFE for help. I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse. Please find more information at Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Life at college can be very complicated. Students often feel overwhelmed or stressed, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationships, or just need help navigating challenges in their life. If you're facing such challenges, you don't need to handle them on your own—there's help and support on campus.

As your instructor if I believe you may need additional support, I will express my concerns, the reasons for them, and refer you to resources that might be helpful. It is not my intention to know the details of what might be bothering you, but simply to let you know I care and that help is available. Getting help is a courageous thing to do—for yourself and those you care about.

University Health Services help students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. If you need general resources on coping with stress or want to talk with another student who has been in the same place as you, visit the Duck Nest (located in the EMU on the ground floor) and get help from one of the specially trained Peer Wellness Advocates. Find out more at health.uoregon.edu/ducknest.

University Counseling Services (UCS) has a team of dedicated staff members to support you with your concerns, many of whom can provide identity-based support. All clinical services are free and confidential. Find out more at counseling.uoregon.edu or by calling 541-346-3227 (anytime UCS is closed, the After-Hours Support and Crisis Line is available by calling this same number).

BASIC NEEDS

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (346-3216, 164 Oregon Hall) for support. This UO webpage includes resources for food, housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, technology, finances, and legal support: https://blogs.uoregon.edu/basicneeds/food/.

ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

The university makes reasonable accommodations, upon request, for students who are unable to attend a class for religious obligations or observance reasons, in accordance with the university discrimination policy which says "Any student who, because of religious beliefs, is unable to attend classes on a particular day shall be excused from attendance requirements and from any examination or other assignment on that day. The student shall make up the examination or other assignment missed because of the absence." To request accommodations for this course for religious observance, visit the Office of the Registrar's website (https://registrar.uoregon.edu/calendars/religious-observances) and complete and submit to the instructor the "Student Religious Accommodation Request" form prior to the end of the second week of the term.