

MUS 294: SONGWRITING
Class # 79726
Fall, 2017

Instructor information:

Dr. Jeffrey Libman
email: jeffrey.libman@asu.edu

Students are encouraged to contact the course email address with any questions or concerns. Office visits or telephone conferences may sometimes be necessary, and can be arranged via email.

Course URL: <https://songwriting.hol.asu.edu>

There is no required textbook for this course.

Course Description:

This online course is an exploration of the craft of songwriting. After an introduction to general music terms and concepts along various song structures, students will have their first opportunity to submit a song or song fragment. After the study of five song genres (blues, folk, punk, country, and hip-hop), students will choose three of the styles and submit three corresponding songs or song fragments. The course concludes with students submitting a full-length song based on concepts discussed during the semester. Along the way, there are quizzes and exams based on lecture content as well as discussion board/participatory activities.

No previous formal music study is assumed for this class. However, for the purposes of this class, a song must have vocals with lyrics and accompaniment. Students need not be experienced singers but must willing to record themselves singing with their accompanying instrument. It will also be necessary for students to have some facility performing on an instrument (a computer sequencer/music production program will suffice). Students must have the ability to record sound files to mp3.

Exams and Quizzes:

All exams and quizzes will be taken online through the course website. ***Do not use a wireless internet connection when taking exams or quizzes.*** Use the “practice test” immediately before each exam and quiz to verify that your computer is properly configured. ***Once the exam/quiz period begins, the related course content will not be accessible until after that exam/quiz is completed. Therefore, it will be necessary for students to review online lecture content in advance of the opening of each exam/quiz period.***

Exam Reviews:

If you are surprised or concerned about your exam grade, please contact me at the course email address. We will examine the questions that you got wrong and reply with study suggestions for the next exam. Students are encouraged to contact the course email

address with any concerns or questions about study strategies or other aspects of this course.

Exam Resets:

If you experience computer or technical problems during an exam, DO NOT SUBMIT IT! Exams that have been submitted can NOT be reset, and those grades will stand as posted. Instead, exit the browser, and take appropriate steps to identify and solve the problem with your computer (by using the practice test, moving to a different computer, or contacting technical support). Once you have resolved the problem, then return to the exams page on your course web site to reset your exam. Use the practice test again before taking the reset. The system will allow you to reset your own exam if you have not already submitted or reset that exam. NOTE: only one online reset per exam is allowed, so you must take all reasonable steps to resolve any technical difficulties before attempting the reset. Two total resets are allowed for the semester. No resets will be allowed outside of the exam period.

Make Up Exams:

Make up exams will only be allowed in documented cases of bereavement or hospitalization. If one of these unfortunate circumstances befalls you, please notify your professor within 1 week (7 days) of the exam and be prepared to present documentation of your reason for missing the exam. No make-up exams will be given to students who “miss” or “forget to take” an exam, encounter work or transportation conflicts, do not follow the technical support guidelines outlined above, or do not notify the instructor of an illness or bereavement within 1 week of the test. Do not submit false documentation.

Confirmation Numbers:

All submitted exams and assignments are given a confirmation number via a submission results page if the submission is successful. It is your responsibility to print or write out each confirmation number you receive for each exam or assignment you submit. Inquires about missing grades sent to faculty, staff, or to the help page will be ignored if they do not have the confirmation number(s) for the exam/posts in question.

Technical Minimums:

Access to a high-speed Internet connection is required to take this course. Access to a non-wireless, high-speed Internet connection is required for exams in this course. The examinations will include audio and still images. Adequate bandwidth is essential. Because this course is entirely delivered via the Internet, you are responsible for making sure that the computer you use to access all course materials meets or exceeds the specified computer minimum qualifications as listed on the following site <https://herbergeronline.asu.edu/services/requirements.php>. Also, due to the high media content of this course, you will be required to set up and configure a media player that will consistently play the .mp3 files and the .mp4 digital clips delivered via the course website.

Technical Support:

Please do not contact your instructor with technical questions. Herberger Online handles all technical questions and issues that may arise in this course.

Please contact the support team immediately if you encounter technical issues while completing an assignment and you are unable to resolve the problem and reset your work. The Herberger Online support team is available to assist you 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You may reach them anytime at:

- holsupport@asu.edu
- 1-888-298-4117
- 480-965-3057 (International)

When contacting support, please provide:

- The full name of this course (ABC 123: Long Name)
- The title(s) of any assignment(s) you're having trouble with
- A brief description of the problem
- Detailed, step-by-step instructions to reproduce the problem

Student Conduct:

All students are expected to abide by the ASU code of student conduct, which is available at: <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/judicial/>, and the Student Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found at: www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/judicial/academic_integrity.htm

No collaboration or use of outside sources of any kind is allowed on any tests, assignments, etc. This includes attempting to view lecture content during exams and quizzes, listening to audio excerpts on another student's exam, discussing the exam with another student who has already taken it, and other such behavior. The exams are not open-book or open-note. All words and ideas included in your work that are not your own must be cited.

Do not share your course ID and password with anyone. Log out of the course website when you are finished with it. Do not allow another student to use the course website under your password, even if s/he is also in the course. Each student is fully responsible for all activity that takes place on the course website under his/her password.

Any violation of this policy will result in sanctions and may result in further disciplinary action. Sanctions may include failure of the course (E), failure by reason of academic dishonesty (XE), and others as outlined by the ASU policy. All violations of the Code detected during the term will be sanctioned, even if the assessment has already been graded and points assigned. All necessary and appropriate sanctions will be issued to all parties involved with plagiarizing any and all course work. Plagiarism and any other form of academic dishonesty that is in violation with the Student Code of Conduct will not be tolerated. For more information, please see the ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy: http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/judicial/academic_integrity.htm

Special Accommodations:

To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the ASU Disability Resource Center (www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/# ; Phone: (480) 965-1234; TDD: (480) 965-9000). This is a very important step as accommodations cannot be made retroactively. If you have a letter from their office indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodations, in order to assure that you receive your accommodations in a timely manner, please present this documentation to me no later than the end of the first week of the semester so that your needs can be addressed effectively.

Adding, Dropping, and Withdrawing:

The following dates have been established by Arizona State University and the Herberger Institute of Design and the Arts; your professor cannot make exceptions to them or change them.

August 17	1 st Day of classes
August 23	Last day to register or drop/add without college approval
August 30	Tuition & Fees 100% Refund Deadline
September 4	Labor Day Observed – no classes
September 6	Herberger Institute Extended Registration Add/Withdraw Deadline
October 2	Academic Status Report #1 Deadline
October 7-10	FALL BREAK – No classes
October 30	Academic Status Report #2 Deadline
November 1	Course Withdrawal Deadline
November 10	Veterans Day Observed – no classes
November 23-24	Thanksgiving Holiday Observed – no classes
December 1	Complete Session Withdrawal Deadline
December 1	Last Day of Classes
December 11	Final Grades Due

Course registration changes are processed through MyASU: <http://my.asu.edu>.

Accommodation for Religious Practices:

The university community should in all its activities be sensitive to the religious practices of the various religious faiths represented in its student body and employees. Faculty are asked to recognize the obligations of their students who may be participating in the observance of religious holidays. (See the Council of Religious Advisors for more information about various religious holidays.) Students should notify faculty at the beginning of the semester about the need to be absent from class due to religious observances.

Board of Regents policy prohibits discrimination against any student, employee, or other individual because of such individual's religious belief or practice, or any absence thereof.

Administrators and faculty members are expected to reasonably accommodate individual religious practices (e.g., by an adjustment to the academic or workplace environment,

such as rescheduling, flexibility in scheduling, voluntary substitutions, job reassignments, modification of grooming requirements). A refusal to accommodate is justified only when undue hardship to the university's legitimate business purposes would result from each available alternative of reasonable accommodation (e.g., requires more than ordinary administrative costs, diminishes the efficiency in other jobs, infringes on other employees' job rights or benefits, or impairs campus/workplace safety). Contact the Office of the Provost of the University or the Office of Equity and Inclusion for assistance in determining undue hardship or reasonable accommodation.

Employees subject to this policy who will be absent from assigned responsibilities, including teaching assignments, to observe religious holidays, are not required to obtain administrative approval for the absence provided they do one of the following in advance of the absence:

1. arrange to have another qualified individual assume job responsibilities, including the teaching of classes, in their absence or
2. arrange directly with students to reschedule the class or otherwise make up the class time missed, provided the needs of students are considered.

Within ten working days after the semester commences, employees observing religious holidays must notify their immediate supervisors (generally chairs, heads, or directors) of the days during the semester that they will be absent and that arrangements no. 1 or no. 2 listed above have been or will be made prior to the absences.

Missed Assignments Due to University-Sanctioned Activities:

Students who participate in university-sanctioned activities that require classes to be missed, should be given opportunities to make up examinations and other graded in-class work. However, absence from class or examinations due to university-sanctioned activities does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of the absence.

The provost of the university or designee shall determine, for the purposes of this policy, whether a particular event qualifies as a university-sanctioned activity.

In each college, a specific individual (e.g., dean's designee) should be responsible for facilitating adherence to this policy. In particular, students who participate in university-sanctioned activities should be given the opportunity to make up examinations or other graded in-class work due to classes missed because of that activity, unless it can be shown that such an accommodation would constitute an unreasonable burden on the instructor. Should disagreement arise over what constitutes such a burden, the instructor and the student should initially contact the academic unit chair or the dean's designee.

The specific activity program coordinator (e.g., assistant athletics director for academic services, director of forensics, director of bands) should, as early as possible, provide the college-designated individual with the class schedule of any student who may be required to miss class because of a university-sanctioned activity.

Students should inform their instructors early in the semester of required class absences. Instructors should attempt to provide opportunities for equivalent work, either before or

after the class absence, in accordance with any academic unit or college requirements, which may apply.

Incomplete grades (I) should not be used unless deemed necessary by the respective faculty.

Classroom Conduct:

Students are asked to refrain from distracting their colleagues or instructor. Yes, this can be done even in an online class! Please respect the “Student Code of Conduct” <https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct>. The automatic drop policy may be enforced if codes of conduct are not followed. Recording of music performed in class is encouraged for practice only, and cannot be posted on the internet, performed in public, used for any monetary gain, or reproduced without permission. Any music written for the class is the property of the student, and music be cited and referenced appropriately. The policy for disruptive behavior on campus is in accordance with the following: <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm104-02.html>.

Academic Integrity:

All necessary and appropriate sanctions will be issued to all parties involved with plagiarizing any and all course work. Plagiarism and any other form of academic dishonesty that is in violation with the Student Code of Conduct will not be tolerated. <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.

Academic Calendar:

Please check <http://students.asu.edu/academic-calendar> for important dates regarding drop, add, and withdrawal. You are responsible for withdrawing from the class, should you wish to do so.

Offensive Content:

Some course content may be deemed offensive by some students. If you are uncomfortable with any of the content, it is your responsibility to bring this to the attention of the instructor to request an alternative assignment.

Handling Disruptive, Threatening, or Violent Individuals on Campus:

Students, faculty, staff, and other individuals do not have an unqualified right of access to university grounds, property, or services.

Interfering with the peaceful conduct of university-related business or activities or remaining on campus grounds after a request to leave may be considered a crime.

All incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student (whether on- or off-campus) must be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students. If either office determines that the behavior poses or has posed a serious threat to personal safety or to the welfare of the campus, the student will not be permitted to return to campus or reside in any ASU residence hall until an appropriate threat assessment has been completed and, if necessary, conditions for return are imposed. ASU PD, the Office of the Dean of Students, and other appropriate offices will coordinate the assessment in light of the relevant circumstances.

Student Evaluation Breakdown

UNIT 1 - Intro and Song Elements	
Exam 1- Song Elements	80 points
UNIT 2 - Song Forms	
Exam 2 - Song Forms	80
Songwriting Experiment	80
UNIT 3 - Genre Studies	
Quiz 1 - Blues	50
Quiz 2 - Folk Music	50
Quiz 3 - Country Music	50
Quiz 4 - Punk Music	50
Quiz 5 - Hip-hop	50
Genre Studies Songwriting Projects	80
	80
	80
Participation (Discussion Board/ Song Reviews)	150
Final Songwriting Project	120
TOTAL:	1000 points

Grade scale: 895-1000 = A 795-894 = B 696-794 = C 595-694 = D Below 595 = E

Assignment Descriptions

Quizzes and Exams: All quizzes and exams are based on lecture content, including the listening examples found within the lectures. They are comprised of multiple choice and true/false questions. Exams are 80 points and quizzes are 50 points. The total number of points for the three exams and the five quizzes is 410 points.

Songwriting Experiment: Remember, for the purposes of this class, a song must have vocals with lyrics and accompaniment, so you will have to sing and find some way to accompany yourself, whether with a physical or digital instrument. This is not an instrumental only composition class. This is true for this project and all subsequent songwriting projects.

This is your first songwriting assignment for this class. Being that some of you are likely experienced songwriters while others may be just getting started, I am allowing you to tailor this assignment to your experience. For the songwriting experiment, you will have the option to write either a part of a song, which I will call a song fragment, or you can

write a complete song. Should you choose to write a song fragment, it should be at least two sections long -- i.e., a verse and a chorus, or two verses, a chorus and a bridge, etc. The song/song fragment should be an original work. Though many songs have some similarities to preexisting songs, the good ones all have unique elements that differentiate them from all others. Song fragments will be eligible for full credit. Challenge yourself if you would like to complete a full song. Though your later genre studies songwriting projects will receive feedback from other students, this project will only be evaluated by the instructor. Since this may be your first ever songwriting experiment, you get a little more privacy to start with. You will need to save your songwriting assignments as mp3 files and upload them as instructed. The recording/vocal quality does not have to be immaculate, but make an effort to make it as clean as possible.

When you upload a song or song fragment, you will also be asked to submit it with a description of the process you went through to write your music. These are called process papers, and they can be relatively brief (one page double-spaced, 12-point font; it can be longer if you wish). What style did you write in? What musical elements and/or forms that we discussed were utilized? Did you stick with the conventions of that style, or did you bend them somewhat? What came easily in the composition process? What was difficult? How could you complete this song or make it better? Is this song supposed to sound similar to a particular artist (or artists) that inspires you? These are the kinds of questions you can write about in your process paper.

The recorded songwriting experiment itself is worth 60 points, and the process paper is worth 20 points, for a total of 80 points.

Genre Studies Songwriting Projects: For these three songwriting projects, you will compose songs/song fragments in three different styles chosen from the five genres discussed in the class: blues, punk, folk, country, and hip-hop. The same general rules of the songwriting experiment apply: submissions are to be updated in mp3 format, song fragments should be at least two sections long, the submissions should be your own original material, and process papers are also due. Again, song fragments are eligible for full credit, but feel free to challenge yourself and write more. These projects, however, will receive song reviews, or constructive commentary, from other members of the class. See the Participation description below.

Each recorded genre studies song/song fragment is worth 60 points, while each corresponding process paper is worth 20 points. Therefore, each of the three projects is worth 80 points, bringing the total to 240 for all three projects.

Participation (Discussion Board/Song Reviews): Throughout the course on Fridays, I will be posting discussion questions related to songwriting. Your assignment will be to post a response by the following Friday at 2:00pm. When you do so, you can either respond to the question itself, or you can respond to another student. Full credit for this participation will be determined by whether your comments are substantive. Also, it's fine to disagree with another member of the class, just do it cordially and defend your point. There will be twelve questions over the course of the semester on the discussion

board. These questions can be found under the Discussion Board forum called Discussion Questions.

You will also be asked to write song reviews. These are comments on other students' songs/song fragments from the genre studies projects. After you've uploaded your own songs/song fragments, you'll be assigned three others at random, and you'll be asked to make comments for your fellow students. Please make these comments constructive and substantive.

The twelve discussion questions responses and the three song reviews are all 10 points for a maximum total of 150 points.

Please note there is also a Discussion Board forum called Student Topics, where you can create either your own discussion threads and/or respond to other members of the class. There is no grade related to this portion of the course website, but it provides a forum for class members to communicate with each other, where groupthink can occur for the benefit of everyone's songwriting development or related skills.

Final Songwriting Project: Like the previous songwriting projects, the final project is comprised of an mp3 submission and a process paper. The original song for your final project may be of any style of your choosing. It does NOT have to be in any of the styles mentioned in class, but if you opt to go a different route, you should briefly discuss the characteristics of that style in your process paper. The song may be of any style, instrumentation, subject, tempo, mood (etc!) that you like. There is no time minimum or limit, but the song must be a complete song, with a beginning, middle, and end. Most submissions will be between two and six minutes long.

The song portion of the final project is worth 100 points, and the process paper is worth 20 points, for a total of 120 points.

Important Course Dates and Windows

****LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.****

Please note that make-up exams and quizzes will NOT be offered in the case of “forgetting” or “missing” the exam windows, so be aware of these dates!

UNIT 1

Opens Thu, Aug 17 at 8:00am
Exam 1 Thu, Aug 31 at 9:00am - Fri, Sep 1 at 2:00pm

UNIT 2

Opens Fri, Sep 1 at 2:00pm (*immediately after Unit 1 exam*)
Exam 2 Thu, Sep 14 at 9:00am - Fri, Sep 15 at 2:00pm
Song Experiment (song or song fragment)
Students have two weeks to upload this project.
Fri, Sep 15 at 2:00pm - Fri, Sep 29 at 2:00pm

UNIT 3

Opens Fri, Sep 29 at 2:00 pm (*immediately following song experiment deadline*)
Quiz 1 Thu, Oct 5 at 9:00am - Fri, Oct 6 at 2:00pm
Quiz 2 Thu, Oct 12 at 9:00am - Mon, Oct 16 at 2:00pm (*extended for fall break - the previous week is a short week*)
Quiz 3 Thu, Oct 19 at 9:00am - Fri, Oct 20 at 2:00pm
Quiz 4 Thu, Oct 26 at 9:00am - Fri, Oct 27 at 2:00pm
Quiz 5 Thu, Nov 2 at 9:00am - Fri, Nov 3 at 2:00pm

Students have an entire week to upload each genre studies songwriting project.
Upload 1: Mon, Nov 6 at 9:00am - Sun, Nov 12 at 11:59 pm
Upload 2: Mon, Nov 13 at 9:00am - Sun, Nov 19 at 11:59 pm
Upload 3: Mon, Nov 20 at 9:00am - Tue, Nov 28 at 11:59 pm (*extended for Thanksgiving*)

Song Review 1: Mon, Nov 13 at 10:00am - Wed, Nov 15 at 11:59pm
Song Review 2: Mon, Nov 20 at 10:00am - Wed, Nov 22 at 11:59pm
Song Review 3: Wed, Nov 29 at 10:00am – Fri, Dec 1 at 11:59pm

UNIT 4

Opens Wed, Nov 29 at 9:00am
Final Project Wed, Nov 29 at 9:00am - Fri, Dec 8 at 11:59pm

Schedule of Discussion Board Questions:

Question 1: opens Thu, Aug 17 @ start of day, closes Fri, Aug 25 @ 2pm

Question 2: opens Fri, Aug 25 @ 2pm, closes Fri, Sep 1 @ 2pm

Question 3: opens Fri, Sep 1 @ 2pm, closes Fri, Sep 8 @ 2pm

Question 4: opens Fri, Sep 8 @ 2pm, closes Fri, Sep 15 @ 2pm

Question 5: opens Fri, Sep 15 @ 2pm, closes Fri, Sep 22 @ 2pm

Question 6: opens Fri, Sep 22 @ 2pm, closes Fri, Sep 29 @ 2pm

Question 7: opens Fri, Sep 29 @ 2pm, closes Fri, Oct 6 @ 2pm

Question 8: opens Fri, Oct 6 @ 2pm, closes Fri, Oct 13 @ 2pm

Question 9: opens Fri, Oct 13 @ 2pm, closes Fri, Oct 20 @ 2pm

Question 10: opens Fri, Oct 20 @ 2pm, closes Fri, Oct 27 @ 2pm

Question 11: opens Fri, Oct 27 @ 2pm, closes Fri, Nov 3 @ 2pm

Question 12: opens Fri, Nov 3 @ 2pm, closes Mon, Nov 13 @ 2pm (*extended for Veteran's Day*)

As you can see, answers to discussion board questions will be due Fridays* at 2:00pm starting the first full week of the semester. There will be discussion questions for 12 consecutive weeks.

*with the exception of the last question

Disclaimer: The instructor reserves the right to adjust this syllabus as necessary to meet the needs of the class. Any changes made by the instructor or staff will be posted on the course homepage.