

Common Course Outline

MUSC 116
Popular Music Theory and Musicianship
3 Semester Hours

The Community College of Baltimore County

Description:

Popular Music Theory and Musicianship provides instruction in the fundamentals of music theory as applicable to popular/commercial music. Topics include musical notation, theoretical concepts, and analyses of popular songs. Basic performing skill on piano or guitar is recommended.

Prerequisite: MUSC 101

3 credits; 3 lecture hours

Overall Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course the student will:

1. Demonstrate proficiency in reading and performing musical notation;
2. Identify aurally and/or through written example, types of triads, seventh chords, and chords with added tones;
3. Use appropriate terminology, including proper musical terms as well as commercial music jargon to articulate ideas;
4. Complete an appropriate, performable transcription, in the form of a "lead sheet," with melody, lyrics, and chord symbols;
5. Identify, and distinguish the different parts of popular songs;
6. Perform formal analyses of popular songs in various genres and from various decades;
7. Perform harmonic analyses of popular songs using Roman numerals, chord names, and/or the "Nashville Numbering System;"
8. Relate melodic and harmonic characteristics in a popular song;
9. Evaluate the relationships between music and lyrics in a popular song; and
10. Identify and create appropriate examples of chord substitution, melodic variation, and vocal harmony.

Major Topics:

These topics will be covered in the following general order:

1. The elements of musical notation
2. Rhythm and duration, time signatures, rhythmic patterns
3. Scales and modes, keys and key signatures
4. Characteristics of melody
5. Chords, harmonic progression, cadences

6. Additional musical symbols
7. The parts of the popular song
8. Popular musical instruments, ranges, and characteristics
9. Notation vs. interpretation
10. Terminology in popular music and the music industry
11. Evaluating music/lyric relationships
12. Ear training, dictation, and transcription
13. Adding appropriate harmony to a melody
14. Substituting appropriate chords
15. Harmonic analysis systems: Roman numerals, chord names, “Nashville Numbers”
16. Analysis of popular songs in various genres and from various decades

Course Requirements:

The Community College of Baltimore County is committed to providing a high-quality learning experience that results in growth in knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to function successfully as a transfer student, in a career and as a citizen. To accomplish this goal, we maintain high academic standards and expect students to accept responsibility for their individual growth by attending classes, completing all homework and other assignments, participating in class activities and preparing for tests.

Assessment is based on:

1. Class attendance
2. Participation in classroom activities and discussions
3. Completion of classroom and homework assignments and tasks
4. Written evaluations
5. Written analysis projects

Other Course Information:

This course is required for the 30-credit certificate in Music Production and Audio Recording Technology.

We take seriously our responsibility to maintain high-quality programs and will periodically ask you to participate in assessment activities to determine whether our students are attaining the knowledge, attitudes and skills appropriate to various courses and programs. The assessment activities may take many different forms such as surveys, standardized or faculty-developed tests, discussion groups or portfolio evaluations. We ask that you take these activities seriously so that we can obtain valid data to use for the continuous improvement of CCBC’s courses and programs.