

BAIN MUSC 115
Music Theory I

SYLLABUS

Instructor

Dr. Reginald Bain, Professor
Composition & Theory

Contact Information

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Office: Music Building, R227
Office Hours: MTW 3:50-4:10, and by appointment

Course Information

Term: Summer 2026, 3-Week Session III (3S5),
June 22 - July 8¹
Location: Music Building, R214
Format: MTW 12:20-3:50 pm, B3WEB²
Blackboard: <https://blackboard.sc.edu>
Course Website: <https://reginaldbain.com/vc/musc115s/>

COURSE MODULES

1. Fundamentals Review
2. Harmonic Schemas in Popular Music
3. Diatonic Harmony
4. Sentences & Periods
5. Form in Popular Music

Course Description

A survey of the sound, harmony, melody, rhythm, and form of diatonic tonal music in a variety of styles.
Prerequisite: MUSC 114 or passing score on the Undergraduate Theory Diagnostic Exam.

Learning Outcomes

Students will learn how to:

- Harmonize melodies with triads
- Identify paradigmatic chord progressions
- Identify cadences
- Analyze music with Roman numerals, lead-sheet symbols, and Nashville number notation
- Compare music of different styles
- Compose melodies with embellishing tones
- Compose small formal units
- Speak and write critically about musical examples

Required Textbook (Open Access)

Gotham, Mark, et al. 2023. *Open Music Theory*, Version 2 (OMT2). Viva Press Books.
Available online at: <https://viva.pressbooks.pub/openmusictheory/>.

Supplemental readings, worksheets, and recordings will be made available via Blackboard.

Course Requirements

Daily reading, listening, and assignments/activities (see *Daily Schedule*). Daily use of Blackboard and the course website to access digital course materials. Three projects: 1. *Chord Loop Project*, 2. *Melody Harmonization Project*, and 3. *Form Project*. Three CAI Activities: 1. *Major Scales & Key Signatures*, 2. *Intervals & Triads*, and 3. *Seventh Chords*. Two in-class exams (1 hour each) and a comprehensive 2.5-hour online final exam. *Exams are extremely important course requirements and make-ups will only be offered under the most exceptional of circumstances.*

¹ The university-scheduled final exam day is July 10.

² Blended/Hybrid Up to 49% web. Course that is taught both face-to-face and online with 49% or less of the course offered online. Course meets in-person on Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday and assignments/activities are completed asynchronously online by students in lieu of a Thursday meeting.

I am always happy to help you. Please don't hesitate to ask for help. The earlier you ask for assistance the better.

Technical Requirements

A computer, Web access, and a university-provided Blackboard account are required to access the digital course materials and complete the online activities in Blackboard. If you run into technical difficulties at any point in the course, please e-mail me so I may assist you. For a more detailed explanation, see *Links for Students > Blended Course Information* on the course website.

Class Polices

All handwritten work (e.g., in-class worksheets and exams) must be done in pencil (pen is NOT acceptable). Assignment/activity due dates are available in the *Daily Schedule* and in Blackboard. Late work cannot be accepted – except in the case of an *excused absence*. Work that is not submitted is averaged into the student's grade using a score of zero. In the case of an *excused* or *extended absence*, the student must make arrangements with the instructor via e-mail to make up missed work.

Attendance Policy

This course will follow the university's attendance policy which is available online at:

<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations/#text>

Attendance will be taken at every f2f meeting and the record posted in Blackboard. It is the student's responsibility to sign the daily *attendance sheet* and check the Blackboard record for accuracy. Attendance is subject to the university's "5% Rule." The instructor may exact a one letter-grade penalty if the student exceeds this threshold.

University Policies and Student Services

Information about the university's **academic integrity** policy, **Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC)**, **Student Success Center**, **Wellness at the School of Music**, and **other student services** is available on the course website (see *Links for Students*). If you are registered with the SDRC, please be sure I receive a copy of your accommodation letter during the first week of class so I may work with you (and with SDRC as necessary) to make sure your accommodations are met. The SDRC is located in Close-Hipp, Suite 102. You may reach the SDRC via e-mail at sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu, or by phone at 777-6142. More information is available online at:

https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_disability_resource_center/index.php

Classroom Policies

I am committed to making each day we meet a safe, active, focused, positive, and distraction-free learning environment for everyone in the class. I expect all students to follow the university guidelines for classroom *safety* and *acceptable conduct*, as well as the guidelines for *classroom etiquette* and conduct below:

- Please do not enter the classroom while music is playing. You may enter the classroom (as quietly as possible) when the instructor indicates that the current group listening exercise has ended.
- Cell phones should be put in silent mode before the class begins and should typically be out of plain sight.
- The use of laptops, tablets and other electronic devices can be a significant distraction to others. Please be sensitive to this fact and limit their potential for distraction by using your electronic devices only for class-related activities.

Grading Scale

A = 90-100%; B+ = 85-89%; B = 80-84%; C+ = 75-79%; C = 70-74%; D+ = 65-69%; D = 60-64%; F = 0-59%.

Grade Distribution

Blackboard Quizzes – 20%	Projects (5% ea.) – 15%	Final Exam – 10%
Two Exams (20% ea.) – 40%	CAI Activities (5% ea.) – 15%	

Minimum Grade and Progression Requirements

- A minimum grade of 'C' is required for any course submitted for fulfillment of music major requirements.
- Acceptance as a music major does not guarantee progression to the upper division. This course, along with the entire music theory and aural skills sequence, is part of a sequence of courses that must be completed before you can enroll in upper division lessons. Students must complete a certain number of credits of upper division lessons (311 or 411) to complete a BM or BA degree plan. Therefore, failure to achieve a grade of "C" in this course could delay a timely graduation.

Course Overview

Calendar (Summer 2026)

	M	T	W	Th
June	22	23	24	25
June/July	29	30	1	2
July	6	7	8	

Asynchronous days are indicated in italics.

Course Schedule

June 22 – 25

1. Fundamentals Review

- Scales
- Key Signatures
- Intervals
- Triads & Seventh Chords

2. Harmonic Schemas in Popular Music

- Lead-Sheet Notation
- The Nashville Number System
- Roman Numerals
- The Blues
- Four-Chord Schemas
- Chords Over Lyrics Notation
- Textural Layers

<i>Week 1 Assignments & CAI Activity #1</i> Due: Fri., June 26, 11:59 pm	<i>Chord Loop Project</i> Due: Mon., June 29, 12:20 pm
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EXAM 1: Mon., June 29, in class

June 29 – July 2

3. Diatonic Harmony

- Cadences and Phrase Endings
- The Phrase Model
- Inversion and Figured Bass
- Embellishing Tones
- Prolongation
- Sequences
- Harmonization

<i>Week 2 Assignments & CAI Activity #2</i> Due: Fri., July 3, 11:59 pm	<i>Melody Harmonization Project</i> Due: Mon., July 6, 12:20 pm
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EXAM 2: Mon., July 6, in class

July 6-8

4. Sentences & Periods

- Sentences
- Periods

5. Form in Popular Music

- Strophic Form
- AABA Form
- Verse-Chorus Form
- Melody and Phrasing (*a a'*, *a a' b*, and *srdc*)

<i>Week 3 Assignments & CAI Activity #3</i> Due: Thurs., July 9, 11:59 pm	<i>Form Project</i> Due: Fri., July 10, 11:59 pm
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ONLINE FINAL EXAM

Due: Fri., July 10, 11:59 pm