

Spring 2026

Meeting days:	MTWThF	Instructor title and name:	Dr. Bill Clemmons
Meeting times:	730—820a	Phone:	x2326
Meeting location:	CMC 116	E-mail:	billclemmons@pointloma.edu
Final Exam:	Fri 8 May 730a	Office location and hours:	CMC212

PLNU Mission**To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send**

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The catalog describes this course as the “study of the notation, sound, and syntax of fundamental musical materials such as scales, intervals, and diatonic harmony. Includes laboratory experience in ear training and sight singing.”

Music Theory I is the first in a set of four courses that deal with a broad set of topics subsumed under the general heading of “music theory.” While we will indeed cover a broad set of topics, we do—as implied in the catalogue description—give priority to two topics in particular: harmony and ear training.

I do assume that all students in the class are capable of handling all of the basic concepts of music theory: key signatures, intervals, triads, seventh chords and basic note reading. We will start from the basics and move our way quickly to more complex usages. For those with a strong background in reading music, you may find that we will be reviewing for a few weeks. For those with less preparation, you may find the pace a bit fast.

COURSE OBJECTIVES (what I hope to accomplish)

- the basic elements of tonal music:
 - keys and key signatures
 - scales
 - intervals
 - triads and seventh chords
 - rhythm and meter
- elementary diatonic harmony, and part writing as an exercise in the use of harmony
- elementary harmonic analysis
- all of the above will enable us to perform elementary exercises in composition
- the knowledge gained from these will be drilled through exercises in keyboard harmony
- beginning composition and a final project of a composed and performed hymn
- Sight singing using numbers and pitch names
- Clef reading in bass and treble clefs
- Basic conducting
- Dictation of intervals, triads, seventh chords and rhythm

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (what I need for you to demonstrate)

- Competence with all of the basic materials of music (scales, key signatures, intervals and chords) as demonstrated by a score of no less than 80% on the final exam
- The ability to set words to a melody, as demonstrated by the composition of a hymn tune to a standard hymn text
- The ability to set appropriate, diatonic harmonies to a melody, as demonstrated by the harmonization of an original hymn tune
- The ability to play simple chord progressions at the keyboard in a variety of keys as demonstrated with simple worship songs
- The ability to read a simple piece of music in either bass or treble clefs, at sight with less than ten errors in pitch, rhythm or meter while conducting and singing the melody.
- The ability to identify all intervals by sound with 80% accuracy
- The ability to identify all triads and triad inversions by sound with 80% accuracy

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Course timeline and schedule of assignments are maintained on Canvas under the Syllabus heading.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES

Our texts for this semester are:

Aldwell, Edward and Carl Schachter. *Harmony and Voice Leading*. 4th ed. Boston: Schirmer Cengage. 2011.

Bona, Pasquale. *Rhythmical Articulation*. Boston: Carl Fischer. 1900.

Bible, Ken, editor. *Sing to the Lord*. Kansas City: Lillenas Publishing Co, 1993.

Ottman, Robert and Nancy Rogers. *Music for Sight Singing*. 8th ed. Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall. 2011.

REDUCING BOOK COSTS

There are pdf copies of all of our materials on the Canvas site that you are welcome to download. Truthfully, I prefer the electronic copies over the paper copies and they provide a level of convenience that the paper copy does not. However, I do have a few paper copies of our texts and you are welcome to buy copies off of Amazon or Half.com. Please do not retail new copies. They are outrageously expensive.

I will be giving out handouts on a regular basis which will be pre-punched to fit into a binder. These materials will usually clarify or amplify our text, but rarely duplicate it. I would encourage you to purchase a 1 1/2" three-ring binder in which to store your assignments, handouts, and compositions. You will find them to be excellent reference materials for future review and reference.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Grading Scale and Distribution is maintained on Canvas under the Syllabus menu item.

We will be involved in a series of projects and exercises that have the following weight in determining your grade.

Final Bonathon Exam	5%
Composition and Final Hymn	10%
Written Final Exam	10%
Daily Grades in Sight Singing	5%
Bonathon Tests	15%
Dictation Quizzes	5%
Homework	15%
Keyboard	5%
Ear Training Software	10%
Chapter Quizzes	5%
Chapter Tests	15%

Grades are accessible from the Canvas website at Canvas.pointloma.edu. Use the gradebook for our class to keep track of your assignments and grades.

MUSIC THEORY TUTORING

One of the privileges of studying at PLNU is that tutoring is available for free in the Tutorial Center, whose offices are located in the quad just to the left of the Bond Academic Center, right behind our building. We have two wonderful tutors that help us out and you are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity.

KEYBOARD HARMONY

There is a significant keyboard component to this class. If you are enrolled in this class it is expected that you are making some arrangements to advance your keyboard skills.

At the start of every new section I will assign keyboard harmony exercises that are to be worked out and performed during the oral exams. These are generally simple progressions which illustrate a particular technique in our harmony studies. I will hear keyboard harmony exams out of class approximately every other week. Sight singing tests are also handled out of class in order to preserve our class time as much as possible. I know that we are all at different places in terms of keyboard abilities. The keyboard progressions are not difficult, but will require some advance planning for the non-keyboard players in the class.

DORICO AND COMPUTER-BASED NOTATION

There is a strong technology component to this course. I want you to be fluent and comfortable working in the electronic environment. You do not need to purchase Dorico, our notation package, copies of it are available down in the lab. However, we will also use a free program called Flat that we will use in class.

THE HYMN PROJECT

Each year the students in the Theory I class write an original hymn. These hymns are worked on for most of the semester and go through various stages before the final copy is created. We will perform these in class for each other at the end of the semester. The final copies of the hymn along with the performances recorded in class will be posted on the class server.

In order to learn how to write a hymn we will regularly sing, study and analyze hymns. Our analyses will include traditional, roman numeral analysis but we will also study the traditional forms that are used by hymn writers.

INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class Schedules](#) site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.