

Point Loma Nazarene University  
Dr. Bill Clemmons x2326  
MUT 100, Basic Music Theory  
Fall 2015  
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## Syllabus for Basic Music Theory

### Course Description

Basic Music Theory is the first in a set of five courses dealing with a broad set of topics that are usually subsumed under the general heading of “music theory.” We will cover two topics in particular: harmony and ear training.

No prior experience is assumed in this course. We will work from the most basic towards more complex ideas. Many of you will be taking this course as a prerequisite for Theory I. Others are simply taking the course as an elective because you want to increase your musical knowledge. Either way, I hope that you will find the course to be helpful and accessible.

### Texts and accompanying materials

We have several texts this semester. None of them are expensive.

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

There are many, many editions of this work, I believe that the one in the bookstore is actually published by Schirmer. This entire text is available for download from our Canvas site. You are welcome to download it to a tablet or laptop. You may not use a cellphone to read this copy. Music reading is not possible on the tiny screen of a phone. You are not required to purchase it from the bookstore but you may find it helpful. It is not expensive at about \$10.

Ottman, Robert. *Music for Sight Singing*. Upper Saddle Riv. NJ: Prentice Hall. 8th ed. 2010.

Please make sure that you are getting the 8<sup>th</sup> edition. I believe the current edition is the 9<sup>th</sup>. The 9<sup>th</sup> edition will set you back about \$100, you should be able to find a used copy of the 8<sup>th</sup> edition for about \$35.

There are also 12 copies of this text available for rent for \$10 in the music office. These are first-come first served. Drop by the front window and Betsy will help you to get a copy.

Blombach, Ann. *MacGamut 6*. Ear-training software. Columbus OH: MacGamut Software. 2008. This is available as a download at MacGamut.com

The Naz hymnal. *Sing to the Lord*. Kansas City: Lillenas Pub. Co. 1993.

### **Class Times**

Our class meets three days per week Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 7:30 - 8:20.  
Woot!

### **Final Exam**

The written final for this class is Wednesday, 16 December, 730–10:00 am. Since this is in the middle of the week there will be no reschedules for this exam. Please make your travel plans with these dates in mind as there will be no excused absences from the exam. There will also be a separate Bonathon exam scheduled for that afternoon.

### **Course Objectives – What I Want to Accomplish**

My goal for this semester is to introduce you to all of the basic elements of tonal music. These elements are:

- keys and key signatures
- scales
- intervals
- triads and seventh chords
- rhythm, meter and notation
- basic part writing
- beginning solfege and sight singing
- beginning ear training

### **Learning Outcomes – What I Expect You to Accomplish**

The material in this course forms part of the Program Outcomes for the PLNU Department of Music under the heading of “essential competencies in musicianship skills.” I am going to assess the growth of your musicianship skills through a number of activities in and out of class, but a few of these assignments will be “signature assignments,” which are items that will form a part of your portfolio.

- You will take an entrance exam at the beginning of the semester, and
- then retake the exam again at the end. I am looking for significant improvement on this test, specifically a grade no lower than 80%.
- Demonstrate the ability to hear intervals and chords by finishing the first three levels of MacGamut in intervals and chords.

- Demonstrate that you are reading both bass and treble clef by reading simple pieces of music with a few minutes preparation, conducting and saying the note names in rhythm.
- Demonstrate that you are engaging pitch by singing a simple piece in numbers.

### **Ear Training and the MacGamut Software**

In addition to learning about music we also want to put some of this information into practice by learning to hear it. We call this process ear training. In order to help us in this process, each student will be expected to spend regular time with a software package called *MacGamut*, available online at [macgamut.com](http://macgamut.com). MacGamut contains a full set of drills for learning intervals, chords and progressions. It goes substantially beyond what we will do in this class and will be a useful tool over the next few semesters as well.

### **Test Batteries**

Some of the things that we do in this class are so fundamental, that there is no way for you to progress without having mastered them. Therefore, many of the tests in this semester will be repeated until a minimal score of 80% is achieved.

### **What to Expect, How to Prepare**

There will be a reading assignment at the beginning of every new section. The reading assignments are not long, but they are usually accompanied by musical examples that should be played in order to fully understand what the author is trying to communicate. Don't deprive yourself of the inestimable value of linking the sound of these ideas to the ideas themselves. Theory isn't just a series of facts, but rather a process that should develop informed hearing.

The greatest piece of advice that I can give is to develop the ability to memorize quickly. After reading the assigned chapter once through, and carefully playing the accompanying examples at the keyboard, go back with a pencil or highlighter and mark all new vocabulary, and key points. If you are following along from a handout that I have given in class, the information will be presented in the form of an outline with key questions to guide your thinking. Memorize these key thoughts, outlined procedures, and new vocabulary. You will quickly find that rote memorization is often the quickest path to your goal. In a packed undergrad schedule this fact is not completely without merit.

Homework will not be counted as complete unless turned in at the appropriate time. Neither homework, nor quizzes can be made up.

Quizzes will generally be announced or strongly hinted (!). The next class following an assigned reading is often a good time for a pop quiz.....

## **Grading and Evaluation**

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

Homework	20%
Quizzes	15%
Chapter Tests	25%
Ear Training	15%
Final Exam	25%

## **Attendance Policy**

I do maintain a strict attendance policy for this class. I take roll and keep a cumulative list of attendance. If you arrive late you will be listed as tardy. More than fifteen minutes late for a class is counted as an absence. Two tardies count as an absence.

The College maintains a fairly tough stance concerning attendance. I quote: “any student whose number of absences in a class, for any reason, exceeds the equivalent of one and one half weeks of class” may be de-enrolled from the class with a failing grade.” This means three classes, or six tardies. Be forewarned.....

A rule of thumb for any class is that your total absences for the semester should never be greater than the total class meetings per week, and these absences should never be concurrent. No absences will be excused on the day of a major test, or project – unless it is a REALLY good excuse (e.g. plague, nuclear holocaust, the second coming, etc.).

I do not make up quizzes, nor will I accept late homework. Tests missed for a valid reason can be made up.

## **Academic Accommodations**

While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of this course, students with disabilities may require academic accommodations. To request academic accommodations, you’ll need to file documentation with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once documentation is filed, the DRC will contact your instructors and provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodation to meet your needs. If you have questions or would like to discuss those or any learning problems, please feel free to contact me.

## **FERPA Policy**

As a student at Point Loma, you have a legal right to privacy as outlined in the federal FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) legislation. If I post grades or return assignments, I’ll do so in a way that does not publically reveal your name, PLNU student ID, or social security number without your written permission.

### **Use of Technology**

Point Loma Nazarene University encourages the use of technology for learning, communication, and collaboration. In this course, we will rely on Canvas for accessing course materials, submitting assignments, and collaboration. You'll want to make sure you are comfortable with these tools, so take advantage of our computer LabTechs to answer questions and help you with any technology issues. You may also call the Help Desk at x2222.

Cell phones may not be used during class time due to their disruptive nature. Please put phones away and on silent as you enter the classroom.

# Bibliography

## Other popular undergraduate music theory textbooks

There are actually three major texts that account for the vast majority of undergraduate teaching in music theory in the US. One is the Aldwell and Schachter from which we are working, two others are:

Benward, Bruce and Marilyn Saker. *Music in Theory and Practice*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. New Yoirk: McxGraw Hill. 2008

Ottman, Robert. *Elementary Harmony*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall. 1998. 5<sup>th</sup> ed.

These three texts are really quite different in their approach, outlook, and quite often their terminology as well.

## Harmony

One of the main things that we are studying this semester is harmony. The word “harmony” is an ancient Greek word with a long history and a variety of meanings at different times in that history. For the past three-hundred years or so, it has come to mean that vertical aspect of music — what we often label as a “chord” — often implying the motion of a bass voice which gives meaning and structure to the collection of notes above it. This meaning of the word is largely due to the work of an Eighteenth-century French theorist:

Rameau, Jean-Philippe. *Traité de l'harmonie réduite à ses principes naturels*. Paris: Jean-Baptiste--Christophe Ballard, 1722.

This work is available in English translation in an inexpensive paperback as:

*Treatise on Harmony*. Trans. and ed. by Phillip Gossett. New York: Dover Pub, 1971.

From the mid 18th century on, numerous harmony treatises were published. One interesting treatise, published towards the end of the century comes via a student of J.S. Bach himself. This work is:

Kirnberger, Johann Philipp. *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes*. Berlin and Königsberg: G.J. Decker & G.L. Hartung, 1776-1779. Facs., Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1968.

This work is available in English translation as:

Beach, David and Jürgen Thym. *The Art of Strict Musical Composition*. Eng. New Haven: Yale UP, 1982.

Perhaps the greatest single impact on music theory in the twentieth century has come as a result of a German theorist who died just before the outbreak of WW II: Heinrich Schenker. Two of his texts that bear upon our studies are:

*Harmony*. Trans. by Elisabeth Mann Borgese. Chicago: Chicago UP., 1950.

*Free Composition*. Trans. by Ernst Oster. New York: Longman, 1979.

### **General bibliographic reference for Music Theory**

The easiest – and least expensive! – source book that we currently have for music theory is:

Damschroder, David and David Russell Williams. *Music Theory from Zarlino to Schenker*. Joel Lester, ed. Stuyvesant NY: Pendragon Press, 1990.

If you have any interest in music theory, I highly recommend it. For about fifty dollars you can have an extremely valuable sourcebook for about three centuries of music theory and its sources.

For a broad overview of counterpoint, Fux, and the whole world of eighteenth-century theory:

Lester, Joel. *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press. 1992.

### **Keyboard harmony and figured bass manuals**

There are two major currents that flow into what we think of as harmony: counterpoint and figured bass. There are literally dozens of books devoted to these issues. One compendium of figured bass practice that is readily available is:

Arnold, Franck Thomas. *The Art of Accompaniment from a Thorough-Bass*. London: Oxford UP, 1931. Repr., New York: Dover, 1965.

### **Counterpoint**

Most of what we think of as species counterpoint comes from a Viennese musician Johann Joseph Fux. His treatise is:

Fux, Johann Joseph. *Gradus ad parnassum*. Vienna: Van Ghelen, 1725. Facs., New York: Broude Bros., 1966.

An English translation of the counterpoint section is available in:

Mann, Alfred. *The Study of Counterpoint*. Trans. of J. J. Fux. *Gradus ad parnassum*. New York: Norton. 1965, 1971.

# 2015-16 Fall Calendar

<b>FALL SEMESTER 2015</b>	
New Faculty Orientation	Aug 20-21
Faculty Development Day	Aug 24
All-Faculty Convocation/Scholarship Day	Aug 25
Department/School Faculty Meetings	Aug 26
New Student Orientation	Aug 28-29
Residence Halls Open: New Students Returning Students (Noon)	Aug 28 Aug 30
<b>FALL 2015 Semester &amp; Quad I Classes Begin (Monday Schedule)</b>	<b>Sept 1</b>
Labor Day (No Classes)	Sept 7
Last Day to Add Quad I Classes	Sept 8
Last Day to Add Semester Classes	Sept 11
Last Day to Drop Quad I Classes	Sept 25
Spiritual Renewal Week	Sept 28-Oct 2
<b>Quad I Classes End</b>	<b>Oct 20</b>
<b>Quad II Classes Begin</b>	<b>Oct 21</b>
Fall Break Day (No Classes)	Oct 23
Last Day to Add Quad II Classes	Oct 27
Mid-Semester Grades Distributed	Oct 27-28
Quad I Grades Due	Oct 30
Priority Online Registration for Spring 2016	Nov 2-13
Last Day to Drop Semester Classes	Nov 6
Last Day to Drop Quad II Classes	Nov 13
Board of Trustees Fall Meeting	Nov 19-20
Alumni Homecoming	Nov 19-21
Thanksgiving Recess (No Classes)	Nov 25-27
<b>Classes End</b>	<b>Dec 11</b>
Final Examinations	Dec 14-18
Residence Halls Close (Noon)	Dec 19
Fall Semester & Quad II Grades Due	Dec 27

# FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE

FINAL EXAMINATION SCHEDULE / 2015-2016			
<i>Note: Final examinations for day classes not in the schedule below should be given during the time slot most comparable to the class meeting time. Final examinations for evening classes not in the schedule below are given at 7:30 p.m. on the day the class normally meets.</i>			
Regular Class Meeting		Exam Day	Exam Time
All SPA101 & SPA102		Friday	10:30-1:00 p.m.
All MTH203		Monday	7:30-10:00 a.m.
All MTH303		Wednesday	4:30-7:00 p.m.
7:25-8:20	MWF, MTWF, MWRF, MTWRF	Wednesday	7:30-10:00 a.m.
7:25-8:20	TR	Thursday	7:30-10:00 a.m.
7:25-9:10	TR	Thursday	7:30-10:00 a.m.
8:00-9:15	TR	Thursday	7:30-10:00 a.m.
8:30-9:25	MWF, MTWF, MWRF, MTWRF	Friday	7:30-10:00 a.m.
8:30-9:35	MWF, MTWF, MWRF, MTWRF	Friday	7:30-10:00 a.m.
8:30-9:25/9:40	TR	Tuesday	7:30-10:00 a.m.
9:30-10:45	TR	Tuesday	10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
10:00-10:50	TR	Tuesday	10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
10:00-11:45	TR	Tuesday	10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
10:55-12:05	MWF, MTWF, MWRF, MTWRF	Monday	10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
11:00-11:55	MWF, MTWF, MWRF, MTWRF	Monday	10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
11:00-11:55/12:10	TR	Thursday	10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
11:00-12:15	TR	Thursday	10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
12:15-1:10	MWF, MTWF, MWRF, MTWRF	Wednesday	10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
12:15-1:20	MWF, MTWF, MWRF, MTWRF	Wednesday	10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
12:30-1:20	TR	Thursday	1:30-4:00 p.m.
12:30-2:15/2:25	TR	Thursday	1:30-4:00 p.m.
1:30-2:25	MWF, MTWF, MWRF, MTWRF	Wednesday	1:30-4:00 p.m.
1:30-2:35	MWF, MTWF, MWRF, MTWRF	Wednesday	1:30-4:00 p.m.
1:30-2:25	TR	Tuesday	1:30-4:00 p.m.
1:30-2:45	TR	Tuesday	1:30-4:00 p.m.
2:55-3:50	MWF, MTWF, MWRF, MTWRF	Monday	1:30-4:00 p.m.
2:45-3:55	MWF, MTWF, MWRF, MTWRF	Monday	1:30-4:00 p.m.
2:55-3:50	TR	Thursday	4:30-7:00 p.m.
3:00-4:15	TR	Thursday	4:30-7:00 p.m.
3:00-4:45	TR	Tuesday	4:30-7:00 p.m.
4:00-4:55	MWF, MTWF, MWRF, MTWRF	Friday	4:30-7:00 p.m.
4:05-5:15	MWF, MTWF, MWRF, MTWRF	Friday	4:30-7:00 p.m.
4:00-4:55	TR	Tuesday	4:30-7:00 p.m.