

**Bergen Community College**  
Division of Arts, Humanities and Wellness  
Department of Visual and Performing Arts

**Course Syllabus**

**MUS-119 Songwriting Workshop**

**Basic Information about Course and Instructor**

Semester and year:  
Course and Section Number:  
Meeting Times and Locations:

Instructor:  
Office Location:  
Phone:  
Departmental Secretary: [optional]  
Office Hours:  
Email Address:

**Course Description**

**MUS-119 Songwriting Workshop** provides students with a solid background in the art and craft of songwriting. Students will study the elements of songwriting: lyrics, rhythm, melody, harmony, and song structure. Students will work on their original compositions through a series of group and solo activities. 2 lecture, 2 laboratory, 3 credits  
No prerequisites

**Student Learning Objectives:** As a result of meeting the requirements in this course, students will be able to:

1. **Create** original songs with lyrics, melody, and chord progressions that demonstrate competence of song structure and a variety of lyrical techniques;
2. **Analyze** the manner in which rhythm, melody, harmony, and lyrics work together to create memorable songs;
3. **Collaborate** with other songwriters, producers, and arrangers to create song compositions, arrangements, and demo recordings;
4. **Articulate** the variety of musical and lyrical approaches and thematic material that the great songwriters have utilized in their songs.

**Learning Assessment**

The Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in this course are intended to be aligned with the overall Learning Goals of the Music Program. In addition, student progress in reaching the course's SLOs is to be assessed through various means of assessment, such as the "Suggested Means of Assessment" listed below.

Student Learning Objective	Suggested Means of Assessment
1. <b>Create</b> original songs with lyrics, melody, and chord progressions that demonstrate competence of song structure and a variety of lyrical techniques;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing assignments</li> <li>• Class discussion and presentations</li> </ul>
2. <b>Analyze</b> the manner in which rhythm, melody, harmony, and lyrics work together to create memorable songs;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing assignments</li> <li>• Class discussion and presentations</li> </ul>
3. <b>Collaborate</b> with other songwriters, producers, and arrangers to create song compositions, arrangements, and demo recordings;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing assignments</li> <li>• Class discussion and presentations</li> </ul>
4. <b>Articulate</b> the variety of musical and lyrical approaches and thematic material that the great songwriters have utilized in their songs,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing assignments</li> <li>• Class discussion and presentations</li> </ul>

### Course Content

The course is intended to introduce students to the art and craft of songwriting by studying and analyzing the works of the great songwriters and musical traditions and composing original songs.

### Special Features of the Course (if any) [to be designated by the instructor]

E.g., the use of learning technologies in the course (Internet, PowerPoint, web enhancement via a parallel course website, etc.); the inclusion of technological literacy learning in the course; etc.

### Course Texts and/or Other Study Materials

There is no required textbook for this course. The books and resources listed below contain useful ideas and information (depending on the student's particular interest) and should be consulted as necessary.

*2014 Songwriter's Market*. Cincinnati: Writers Digest Books, 2014.

American Songwriter Magazine: <http://www.americansongwriter.com/>

Blume, Jason. *6 Steps to Songwriting Success*, Revised and Expanded Edition. New York: Billboard Books, 2004.

--- *Inside Songwriting: Getting to the Heart of Creativity*. New York: Watson-Guption, 2003.

Braheny, John. *The Craft and Business of Songwriting: A Practical Guide to Creating and Marketing Artistically and Commercially Successful Songs*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Cincinnati: Writers Digest Books, 2006.

Citron, Stephen. *Songwriting: A Complete Guide to the Craft*, Revised and Updated Edition. New York: Hal Leonard, 2008.

Davis, Sheila. *The Craft of Lyric Writing*. Cincinnati: Writers Digest Books, 1985.

--- *Successful Lyric Writing: A Step-By-Step Course & Workbook*. Cincinnati: Writers Digest Books, 1988.

--- *The Songwriter's Idea Book*. Cincinnati: Writers Digest Books, 1992.

Frederick, Robin. *Shortcuts to Hit Songwriting*. Calabasas, CA: Taxi Music Books, 2008.

Hamm, Charles. *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979.

Kachulis, Jimmy. *The Songwriter's Workshop: Melody*. Boston: Berklee Press, 2003.

- Leiken, Molly-Ann. *How to Be a Hit Songwriter: Polishing and Marketing Your Music and Lyrics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Hal Leonard, 2003.  
--- *How to Write a Hit Song*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Hal Leonard, 2008.
- Lydon, Michael. *Songwriting Success: How to Write Songs for Fun and (Maybe) Profit*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Pattison, Pat. *Writing Better Lyrics*. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 1995.  
--- *Songwriting: Essential Guide to Lyric Form and Structure*. Boston: Berklee Press, 2000.  
--- *Songwriting: Essential Guide to Rhyming*. Boston: Berklee Press, 2000.
- Perricone, Jack. *Melody in Songwriting*. Boston: Berklee Press, 2000.
- SongwriterUniverse: <http://www.songwriteruniverse.com/index.html>.
- Stolpe, Andrea. *Popular Lyric Writing: 10 Steps to Effective Storytelling*. Boston: Berklee Press, 2007.
- Weissman, Dick. *Songwriting: The Words, the Music and the Money*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Hal Leonard, 2010.
- Zollo, Paul. *Songwriters On Songwriting*, Expanded 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Da Capo Press, 2003.

### **Grading Policy**

A student's final grade for the course is based primarily on his or her performance on the required work for the course (writing assignments, examinations, class presentations, etc.) and on his or her overall mastery of the material covered in the course. A student's class participation may also be evaluated, and the grade thereon may be used as a factor in determining the student's final grade for the course; but a class participation grade will count for no more than twenty percent (20%) of the final grade. A student's research and writing work will count at least forty percent (40%) of the final grade.

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **BCC Attendance Policy:**

All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.

#### **Attendance Policy in this Course:**

[To be designated by the instructor]

#### **Other College, Divisional, and/or Departmental Policy Statements** [optional but recommended]

<p><u>Examples:</u> Statement on plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty. ADA statement. Sexual Harassment statement. Statement on acceptable use of BCC technology. Statement on the purpose and value of faculty office hours.</p>
--

**Student and Faculty Support Services** [optional but recommended]

List support services, e.g., the Writing Center, the Math Lab, the Tutorial Center, Online Writing Lab (OWL), Office of Specialized Services, etc. Include information on the BCC Library.

Example:

**Student and Faculty Support Services**

The Distance Learning Office – for any problems you may have accessing your online courses	Room C-334	201-612-5581 <a href="mailto:psimms@bergen.edu">psimms@bergen.edu</a>
Smarthinking Tutorial Service	On Line at:	<a href="http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/4787.aspx">http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/4787.aspx</a>
The Tutoring Center	Room L-125	201-447-7908 <a href="http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/pages/2192.aspx">http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/pages/2192.aspx</a>
The Writing Center	Room L-125	201-447-7908 <a href="http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/1795.aspx">http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/1795.aspx</a>
The Office of Specialized Services (for Students with Disabilities)	Room S-131	201-612-5270 <a href="http://www.bergen.edu/oss">http://www.bergen.edu/oss</a>
BCC Library – Reference Desk	Room L-226	201-447-7436

**Special Note on the Tutoring Center**

**The Henry and Edith Cerullo Learning Assistance Center** encompasses the Tutoring Center, the English Language Resource Center, and the Writing Center. The website of the Learning Assistance Center is located at [www.bergen.edu/pages/2192.asp](http://www.bergen.edu/pages/2192.asp). Tutoring services are available for this course in the Tutoring Center. I strongly recommend that you make use of those services as we progress through the course. As listed above, the Tutoring Center is located in Room L-125, and its phone number is 201-447-7908.

**Include a Course Outline and Calendar** [can be combined in a single syllabus section]

The Course Outline and Calendar must include all of the following elements:

- A daily or (at least) weekly schedule of topics to be covered.
- Dates for exams, quizzes, or other means of assessment. (This does not mean that all evaluation of students must be in groups and at the same time. Exams and other means of assessment can be listed as "to be scheduled individually.")
- Due dates for major assignments – e.g., when is a paper due; if the topic has to be approved, when; if an outline or draft is an interim step, when it is due.
- Any required special events must be included in the outline/calendar, e.g., a lecture by a visiting speaker, a dramatic or musical performance, a field trip.
- Designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic (see sample below).
- A note to students stating that the course outline and calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

**Sample Format for Course Outline and Calendar**

**Note to Students:** The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

<b>Week(s)</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Topics &amp; Assignments</b>	<b>Learning Objectives</b>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

**See the Sample Course Outline and Calendar below.**

**SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR**

[with designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic]

**Note to Students:** The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Week(s)	Date(s)	Topic/Activity/Assignments	Student Learning Objectives
1	Sep 6, 8,	Introduction to the Art and Craft of Songwriting	1-4
2	Sep 13, 15	The Anatomy of a Song: Lyrics, Melody and Harmony	1-4
3	Sept 20, 22	The African-American Song Tradition: Blues	1-4
4	Sep 27, 29	Writing Original Blues Songs	1-4
5	Oct 4, 6	The Anglo-American Song Tradition: The Traditional Ballad	1-4
6	Oct 11, 13	Writing Original Ballads	1-4
7	Oct 18, 20,	Tin Pan Alley: The 32AABA Popular Standard	1-4
8	Oct 25, 27	Writing Pop Standards	1-4
9	Nov 1, 3,	<b>Midterm Evaluation</b>	1-4
10	Nov 8, 10	The Rock Tradition	1-4
11	Nov 15, 17	Writing Rock Songs	1-4
12	Nov 22, 24	Contemporary Songwriting	1-4
13	Nov 29, Dec 1,	Writing Contemporary Songs	1-4
14	Dec 6,8	Songwriting Beyond the Classroom	1-4
15	Dec 13, 15	<b>Final Presentations and Songwriter Showcase</b>	1-4

**Note to Students:** This Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.