

Bucknell University
Department of Music, Music Education
MUSC 120 Music-Making for Beginners
Spring 2023 | SWMU 115 & 117 | MWF 02:00 – 02:50 PM

Instructor Information

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office: SWMU 213
office hours: Mondays 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM or [by appointment](#)

Course Description

This course explores musical processes including performance, improvisation, and composition. Students will learn how to play an instrument (including guitar, ukulele, classroom instruments, drum set, and/or piano) and write original music (with instruments and/or relevant software, like GarageBand).

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify and (as appropriate) perform music's basic characteristics including pitch, rhythm, timbre, melody, harmony, etc.
- Demonstrate (at minimum) a basic level of proficiency on guitar and/or ukulele, including reading notation/tablatore, performing a simple chord progression, and using basic strumming patterns.
- Perform on a variety of classroom instruments including xylophone, bells, drums, and various hand percussion.
- Compose original compositions and percussion/harmonic loops on various technologies (phones, iPads, GarageBand, etc.) through the use of various free apps.
- Improvise simple melodies and percussion accompaniments on various instruments and technologies.
- Use newly developed instrument and technology proficiencies to write an original song in small groups or as an entire class.

Course Materials

- *Wired* headphones, ear buds, etc. (Bluetooth devices will work, but could be problematic)

Expectations

I expect that you will (1) attend and be on time for every class (as appropriate), (2) notify me if you are unable to attend class, (3) submit work before the assigned deadline, (4) complete all required readings, (5) take thorough notes on all readings, (6) engage in class discussions professionally, thoughtfully, and critically, and (7) advocate for your education, including communicating with me about any concerns or questions.

I am not anti-cellphone, but I do ask for a basic level of respect with phones. A cellphone in this course can be a helpful tool (e.g., tune instruments, look up chords or music, Google something relevant, etc.), so I encourage you to use your phone if it is helpful. Please do not let it become a distraction, and please do not use your phones when anyone is speaking.

Attendance

There is no official attendance policy for this course. Instruction will begin on time, so please arrive and be prepared to start at 2 PM. *Please note that virtually all work for the course (practice, assignments, etc.) are done in-class, thus, missing class will likely have a detrimental impact on your grade.*

Masking

You are expected to be "fully masked." This means having a mask fully covering both your mouth and the entirety of your nostrils; wearing a mask over your mouth but not covering your nose entirely is as good as not wearing a mask at all. There are no exceptions to this masking requirement.

Course Schedule & Assignment Overview

The course is divided into three units (guitar/uke, technology, and classroom instruments). Each unit will begin with the instructor heavily leading and dictating activities. As each unit progresses, students will become increasingly independent (either individually or in small groups) and will be encouraged to explore, while the instructor steps into the role of resource/facilitator. The course is extremely flexible and is intended to meet the needs and interest of every individual student. You are highly encouraged (and at times will be required) to share your ideas and suggestions, either individually or collectively as a class, to guide the direction of each unit.

Given the flexibility required to teach this course, specific assignments and due dates are not articulated in the syllabus. *Please refer to our course Moodle for assignment information and due dates.*

Please note that the assignments below do not include all possible assignments, but they do describe the primary projects/assignments of each unit. Specific assignment requirements (including detailed instructions, expectations, formatting rules, page number limits, etc.) for each assignment will be available in Moodle.

UNIT 1		Approximately 7 Weeks	
Guitar & Uke / Drumset			
Musical Process	Musical Elements	Literacy	Assignments
Performing	Rhythm	Traditional notation	"Festivals of Knowledge"
	Meter	TAB	Song-of-choice
	Pitch	Chord charts	performance
	Melody	Playing by ear	Musical encounters

UNIT 2		Approximately 6 Weeks	
Technology			
Musical Process	Musical Elements	Literacy	Assignments
Creating	Dynamics	GarageBand Mobile apps	Choice and completion of several technology projects
	Tempo		
	Harmony		
	Tonality	Musical encounters	
	+ above		

**UNIT 3
Final Project**

Approximately 2 Weeks

Musical Process	Musical Elements	Literacy	Assignments
Performing & Creating	Texture Form + above	Traditional notation Alternative notation Playing by ear	Songwriting activity Musical encounters

Grading

“Festivals of Knowledge” 5 Total	0	√-	√	√+
	The festival of knowledge is not performed.	The festival of knowledge is performed with many pitch/rhythm errors, OR, the performance demonstrates significant issues with technique.	The festival of knowledge is performed with few errors, demonstrates preparation, and is performed with good technique.	The festival of knowledge is performed with no errors, demonstrates preparation, and is performed with excellent technique.
Composition Projects 4 Total	0	√-	√	√+
	The project is not submitted.	The project does not follow some of the provided stipulations.	The project follows all of the required Level 1 stipulations.	The project follows all the required Level 2 stipulations.
Musical Encounters 5 Total	0	√-	√	√+
	The musical encounter is not submitted.	The musical encounter does not follow some of the provided instructions.	The musical encounter follows all of the provided stipulations.	The musical encounter follows all of the provided stipulations, is well-written (free from errors), and demonstrates thoughtfulness.
Songwriting Activity 1 Total	0	√-	√	√+
	The song is not performed.	The student participated in the construction of the song but did not perform.	The student participated in the construction of the song and performed.	N/A

Course Evaluation

- In general, late work will not be accepted. If issues or concerns arise, please proactively communicate them with Dr. R.
- All work, except for the final project, can be resubmitted for a better evaluation.
- Per Bucknell policy, any academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will be directed to the dean of students.
- There is no extra credit.

To Earn:	Do the following:	TLDR
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn at least <i>Satisfactory</i> on all 5 Festivals of Knowledge. • Earn at least <i>Satisfactory</i> on all 4 Composition Projects. • Earn at least <i>Satisfactory</i> on all 5 Musical Encounters assignments. • Earn <i>Satisfactory</i> on the Final Project. 	All work is submitted and <i>Satisfactory</i> .
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly all work is submitted (i.e., no more than 1 zero), plus: • Earn at least <i>Satisfactory</i> on at least 4 Festivals of Knowledge. • Earn at least <i>Satisfactory</i> on at least 3 Composition Projects. • Earn at least <i>Satisfactory</i> on at least 4 Musical Encounters assignments. • Earn <i>Satisfactory</i> on the Final Project. 	Most items are <i>Satisfactory</i> , a few items are <i>Unsatisfactory</i> , and no more than 1 zero.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly all work is submitted (i.e., no more than 2 zeros), plus: • Earn at least <i>Unsatisfactory</i> on all 5 Festivals of Knowledge. • Earn at least <i>Unsatisfactory</i> on all 4 Composition Projects. • Earn at least <i>Unsatisfactory</i> on all 5 Musical Encounters assignments. • Earn at least <i>Unsatisfactory</i> on the Final Project. 	Most items are <i>Satisfactory</i> , a few items are <i>Unsatisfactory</i> , and no more than 2 zeros.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn at least <i>Unsatisfactory</i> on at least 4 Festivals of Knowledge. • Earn at least <i>Unsatisfactory</i> on at least 3 Composition Projects. • Earn at least <i>Unsatisfactory</i> on at least 4 Musical Encounters assignments. • Earn at least <i>Unsatisfactory</i> on the Final Project. 	Some work is missing and some items are <i>Unsatisfactory</i> .
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given if not all the requirements for a "D" are met. 	Work is missing and many items are <i>Unsatisfactory</i> .

University Disability Policy

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please feel free to talk to me as well as submit the Disability Accommodation Request Form or contact the Office of Accessibility Resources at OAR@bucknell.edu, 570-577-1188 or in room 107 Carnegie Building so that such accommodations may be arranged.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Bucknell aspires to create a university committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Initiatives and programs surrounding accessibility, international students, multicultural student services, Title IX, first generation students, LGBTQ resources, religious and spiritual life, and the Women's Resource Center can be found at Bucknell. For more information about these programs and other programs, please visit: <https://www.bucknell.edu/life-bucknell/diversity-equity-inclusion>

Library and Information Technology

In addition to extensive library resources, Library and Information Technology (L&IT) offer numerous technology services including free equipment and software. For more information, please visit: <https://www.bucknell.edu/azdirectory/library-information-technology/resources-students>

Teaching & Learning Center

The Teaching & Learning Center (TLC) is committed to student learning and offers study groups, peer tutoring, individual consultations, workshops related to issues surrounding studying, time management, learning strategies, test prep and anxiety, and more. For more information, please visit: <https://www.bucknell.edu/academics/beyond-classroom/academic-centers-institutes/teaching-learning-center/students>

The Writing Center

Bucknell places a strong emphasis on writing, as demonstrated by the three writing requirements (i.e., the W1 and W2 course requirements). To help support this emphasis on writing at Bucknell, The Writing Center provides individualized support to help improve your writing. You can learn more here: <https://www.bucknell.edu/academics/beyond-classroom/academic-centers-institutes/writing-center>