

HUMA 2104: Music Theory I

School of Humanities, HKUST — Fall 2020

Instructor:	Ilari Kaila — kaila@ust.hk
Office hours:	TBA and by appointment; via Zoom and in person
Office:	Music Room B, University Center (ground floor)
Instructional Assistant:	Kai Chi Roderick YU — roderickyu@ust.hk
Lectures:	Wednesday/Friday 1:30–2:20 PM
Room:	Online via Zoom
Tutorials:	Monday 9:30–10:20 AM; Thursday 9:30–10:20 AM; Friday 11:00–11:50 AM; Friday 12:00–12:50 PM
Room:	Online via Zoom

Course description

HUMA 2104 is an introduction to the basics of music theory with an emphasis on analytical listening and rudimentary composing. Writing skills taught in the course include notation; operating with keys and scales; recognizing and constructing intervals; chords and harmonic progressions; and rudimentary harmonic analysis. Aural skills taught in the class and practiced in tutorials include recognizing chords and intervals, notating simple melodies and rhythms by ear, and distinguishing between tonalities (major and minor), meters (duple and triple), and textures (homophonic and polyphonic).

The course culminates in a final project in which students compose a simple piece for piano. This project will happen in clearly guided phases throughout the semester.

A broader objective of the course is to acquire listening skills that may be applied to various types of music. Students will develop an understanding of how different parameters (melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, and so on) interact to create music. Examples used in class will be drawn mostly, but not exclusively, from the Western classical repertoire. Although prior musical training will be helpful, there are no prerequisites for the course.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

On successful completion of the course, you will have

- the ability to listen to music analytically, with an awareness of parameters such as meter, texture, modulation, instrumentation, and form;
- learned the rudiments of reading and writing music, as well as basic musicianship skills;
- developed a deeper appreciation and understanding of music, regardless of style, and of Western classical music in particular; and
- prepared yourself to pursue more advanced studies in music (including HUMA3104: Music Theory II).

Concert report/listening assignment

If possible under the current circumstances, you will go to one professional Western classical music concert and write a ca. 750-word concert report. I will give you options and suggestions, including multiple free concerts happening on campus, or, if you have a particular event in mind, let me know beforehand. Due to the pandemic, this assignment may be replaced with an individualized listening assignment.

Attendance and participation are crucial for assimilating the skills needed for reading music and developing your ear. *If you cannot commit to attending every session, you should not take this course.* We will be taking attendance at the beginning of the class; arriving late twice will be considered equivalent of being absent once.

Study materials

No textbook is required for this class. You will be given digital handouts and assignments, and directed to various online resources for reference, review, and practice. For taking notes, you will need music staff paper, which you can print out from a file available on Canvas.

Homework

Each homework assignment will be given as a PDF file. It should be printed out by the student, completed in pencil, scanned (or photographed), and uploaded on Canvas before the start time of the class it is due. Alternatively, the homework can be done on a tablet computer or other device that allows marking up a PDF file. We do not accept late homework unless there are extenuating circumstances; even so, missing the deadline will lower your homework grade. If we have already gone through assigned material in detail in the class after the deadline, it cannot be turned in late regardless of the reasons. Under extenuating circumstances, you may be assigned a make-up homework exercise.

Composition exercise

The course will provide you an opportunity to try your hands on writing a short, simple composition exercise as your final project, which will follow the rules of traditional tonal music. This is the most challenging component of HUMA2104. You don't need to worry about your project being a flawless work of art—the purpose of this project is to give you insights into the craft composition by trying it out yourself, and learning music theory through “reverse engineering”. This will be done gradually over the course of the semester, with ample opportunity for revisions at every stage of the process.

Examinations

The midterm will cover the material of the first half of the course and the final exam will cover mostly the material of the second half, with some material from the first. Exams may not be made up unless you have a verifiable illness or emergency. You must notify us in advance if you must miss an exam.

Grading

Final Exam	25%
Midterm	20%
Homework	15%
Concert report	15%
Final Project	10%
Attendance/participation	15%

LECTURE:	TOPIC:
Week 1	
Wed, Sept 9	Introduction to the course; musical perception: music and time, overtone series
Fri, Sept 11	Pitch notation: staves and the grand staff, clefs; accidentals, enharmonics; diatonic and chromatic half steps and whole steps
Week 2	
Wed, Sept 16	Ear training on half and whole steps; rhythmic notation; note values; meter; bar lines; tempo; upbeats and downbeats; rests
Fri, Sept 18	Dotted and tied rhythms; triplets; pick-up measures; rests; triple and duple meter
Week 3	
Wed, Sept 23	Rhythm composition; musicianship exercises with rhythms; introducing keys and scales
Fri, Sept 25	Circle of fifths and keys, placement of accidentals
Week 4	
Wed, Sept 30	Devices for determining keys; circle of fifths in minor; minor scales forms (natural, harmonic, melodic); discussing rhythm composition exercise
Fri, Oct 1	<u>National Day — no class</u>
Week 5	
Wed, Oct 7	Ear training with major and minor keys and scales; relative and parallel keys
Fri, Oct 9	Intervals: numbers and qualities; textures in music:
homophonic,	polyphonic, monophonic
Week 6	
Wed, Oct 14	Motives and themes; writing melodies in major
Fri, Oct 16	Discussion on melodies in major; ear training with intervals
Week 7	
Wed, Oct 21	Introducing exercise for writing melodies in minor; more on intervals; consonance and dissonance; review for midterm
Fri, Oct 23	MIDTERM EXAMINATION
Week 8	
Tue, Oct 22	Introduction of triads in major keys

Thu, Oct 24	Discussion on melodies in minor key; more on guidelines for concert report
Week 9	
Wed, Nov 4	Seventh chords; inversions of chords and figured bass; ear training with triads
Fri, Nov 6	Harmonic analysis in major; ear training with seventh chords
Week 10	
Wed, Nov 11	Chords in minor keys
Fri, Nov 13	More on harmonic analysis and modulation
Week 11	
Wed, Nov 18	Chord inversions and cadences
Fri, Nov 20	More on cadences; ear training with cadences
Week 12	
Wed, Nov 25	Introducing composition exercise (final project)
Fri, Nov 27	Analyzing music examples from repertoire
Week 13	
Wed, Dec 2	Discussion on composition exercise
Fri, Nov 4	Review for final examination.