

HUMA 2104: Music Theory I — Introduction to Tonal Music

School of Humanities, HKUST — Spring 2022

Instructor:	Ilari Kaila (kaila@ust.hk)
Office hours:	Mon 1:30–3:30 PM, and by appointment
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Office:	CYT G004
Lectures:	Mon/Wed 9:30–10:20 AM
Tutorials:	Wed 6:00–6:50 PM; Thu 1:30–2:20 PM; Thu 3:00–3:50 PM; Thu 4:30–5:20 PM.
Location:	Online via Zoom/Shaw Auditorium Rm. 103

Course description

HUMA 2104 is an introduction to the basics of western 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 has a rigorous ear-training component which will be mostly pursued in the tutorials. This will involve reading exercises (singing, clapping, talking), and writing down music by ear (rhythms, melodies, chords).

The course culminates in a final project in which students compose a simple piece of music 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).

Cosmopolis Festival at HKUST

This semester will be the second season of HKUST's new cross-cultural music and arts initiative, the Cosmopolis Festival. *Attending at least three events (two concerts, one educational event) is mandatory, and your term paper will be based on what you hear at the festival* (see below). For HUMA 2104, students need to choose two from the below list of concerts that are relevant to this class, and one workshop/talk (for a total of three events). Some dates and details may still change; updated information will be made available

regularly.

Concerts:

(1) An Evening with Violinist Patrick Yim and Friends. Friday, April 1, 7:30 PM.

(2) Hong Kong Philharmonic: A Chamber Orchestra Concert. Sunday, April 10, 3:00

PM.

(3) Aristo Sham in Concert: A Solo Piano Recital. Friday, April 29, 7:30 PM.

(4) Pomme d'Api: A French Comic Operetta. Tuesday, May 3, 7:30 PM.

Talks, masterclasses, workshops:

Dates still TBC. Violinist Patrick Yim's chamber music masterclass tentatively in the afternoon of Tuesday, March 29; additionally, we will present a VR-assisted performance workshop by Glen Lloyd, and a round table talk between composers featured on this year's festival.

The festival will also feature jazz, Chinese orchestral music, electroacoustic music and media, Gamelan, and more. The season's program will be published in early February on <https://cosmopolisfestival.hkust.edu.hk>.

Term paper

Your term paper will be an analytic, comparative writing assignment, based on two compositions of your choice from the Cosmopolis Festival (see above). The length is a minimum 700 words, which works out to ca. two pages in Times New Roman 12-point font, double spaced.

The festival may be postponed or restricted due to the current pandemic situation.

This might mean that all or part of the events will be presented online. In the event that the festival is cancelled for the semester, the assignment will be adapted accordingly and based on recordings.

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.* Also, if you are not able to attend *at least three Cosmopolis* events (two concerts, one educational event; see above), you cannot enroll in this class.

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, following the rules of traditional tonal music, as your final project. This is the most challenging component of HUMA 2104. 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 of 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%

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Class schedule — Spring 2022

LECTURE:

TOPIC:

Week 1

Mon, Feb 7 – Lec 1

Introduction to the course; musical perception: music and time, overtone series

Wed, Feb 9 – Lec 2

Topic 1. Rhythmic notation; note and rest durations; meter; bar lines; tempo; upbeats and downbeats; simple triple and duple meter

Week 2

Mon, Feb 14 – Lec 3

Topic 1. Dotted and tied rhythms; triplets; compound meters; pick-up bars

Wed, Feb 16 – Lec 4

Topic 2. Pitch notation: staves and the grand staff, clefs; accidentals, enharmonics; diatonic and chromatic half steps and whole steps

Week 2 tutorials: Reading rhythms; simple rhythm dictations; recognizing meter; listening to half and whole steps

Week 3

Mon, Feb 21 – Lec 5

Topics 3 & 4. Introducing rhythm composition assignment; introducing keys and scales

Wed, Feb 23 – Lec 6

Topic 4. Circle of fifths and keys, placement of accidentals

Week 3: tutorials: More rhythm work, including reading short parallel period phrases; simple singing exercises on half steps and whole steps, major scales

Week 4

Mon, Feb 28 – Lec 7

Topic 4. Devices for determining keys; circle of fifths in minor; minor scales forms (natural, harmonic, melodic); relative and parallel keys

Wed, Mar 2 – Lec 8

Topics 3 & 5. Discussion on students' rhythm composition assignments; introducing intervals

Week 4 tutorials: Ear training with major and minor scales

Week 5

Mon, Mar 7 – Lec 9

Topic 5. Intervals: numbers and qualities

Wed, Mar 9 – Lec 10

Topic 6. Introducing major-key melody composition assignment; motives and themes; phrase structure

Week 5 tutorials: Singing simple parallel period phrases in major.

Week 6

Mon, Mar 14 – Lec 11

Topic 6. More on melodic writing in major

Wed, Mar 16 – Lec 12

Topic 9. Introducing triads and harmony; review for midterm

Week 7

Mon, Mar 21 – Lec 13

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Wed, Mar 23 – Lec 14

Topics 7 & 8. Introducing minor-key melody composition assignment; application of minor scales; analytic listening: texture, meter, and tonality

Week 8

Mon, Mar 28 – Lec 15

Topics 6 & 11. Discussion on students' phrases in major key; guidelines for concert report/term paper; HKUST's Cosmopolis Festivals begins

Wed, Mar 30 – Lec 16

Topic 9. Seventh chords; inversions of chords and figured bass

Week 8 tutorials: Ear training with triads

Week 9

Mon, Apr 4 – Lec 17

Topic 10. Harmonic analysis in major; ear training with seventh chords

Wed, Apr 6 – Lec 18

Topic 10. Introducing cadences; harmony creating form

Week 10

Mon, Apr 11 – Lec 19

Topic 10. More on harmonic analysis; analyzing examples from repertoire

Midterm break: No class on Wednesday, April 13, and Monday, April 18.

Wed, Apr 20 – Lec 20

Topics 11 & 12. Introducing composition exercise (final project); more on term paper

Week 10 tutorials: Ear training with cadences

Week 11

Mon, Apr 25 – Lec 21

Topic 12. Working on sample final project together

Wed, Apr 27 – Lec 22

Topics 9 & 12. Discussion on students' phrases in minor key; more work on sample final project: voice leading

Week 12

Labor Day: No class on Monday, May 2

Wed, May 4 – Lec 23

Analyzing music examples from repertoire; more work on sample final project: voice leading and texture

Week 13

Buddha's Birthday: No class on Monday, May 9

Wed, May 11 – Lec 24

Wrapping up; review for final examination