

BROAD OVERVIEW

- **MUSI 2700 – Introduction to Music Theory**
- **This course satisfies 3 semester hours in Core Area C: Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics.**
- **There are no pre-requisites for this ten-week course. No previous experience in music, performing in ensembles, or using music technology is expected or required. It is not necessary to read music or play an instrument to do well in this course.**
- **General Description**
 - This course introduces the elements of music theory. It is designed for individuals with little or no music theory experience. Topics to be explored include rhythm, meter, notation, pitch, scales, keys, triads, seventh chords, cadences, phrase, form, acoustics, as well as analytical tools and techniques. If you listen to music or play music by ear, and you want to know more about how music is organized and notated, this course is for you. By the end of the class, you should know all major and minor keys, how to read and write in treble and bass clef using standard meters and rhythmic values, how to notate and harmonize a simple melody, have the ability to create a song form, use the 12-bar Blues structure, and utilize standard notation conventions for rock and pop music. This course can serve as a stand-alone basic music theory course, or it can be a springboard to more advanced theory and composition studies.

SYLLABUS

DATE: Full Summer Session 2026 – May 18 to July 28

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE: MUSI 2700 – Introduction to Music Theory

MEETING TIMES: The course will meet synchronously online M/W 9:30-11:40A. Classes will not be recorded and will not be made available if you do not attend class as scheduled

CREDITS & HOURS: 3 credit hours with humanities attribute

INSTRUCTOR: Benjamin Diden, Couch Building, Room 101 Office Hours: M/W 12:00 – 1:00 PM or by appointment. Telephone: 404.894.8951 E-mail: Benjamin.diden@music.gatech.edu

PROCEDURES: The class is structured around ten weekly modules addressing the basics of traditional Western music theory and the fundamental elements of rock, pop, and Jazz. Each module is comprised of several lessons and a homework assignment or short project. Given that music theory is a course that deals extensively with sound, students will be expected to engage in ear training every day. Students will never be expected to sing or play alone, but actively singing or playing as a class, in small groups, or during homework is essential in order to thoroughly internalize the material.

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Humanities area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic, and philosophical works?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance, and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Ethical Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Intercultural Competence

PREREQUISITE: There are no prerequisites for this ten-week course

GENERAL OVERVIEW: Designed for undergraduates at any level, MUSI 2010 explores the foundations of Common Practice music theory. The course develops the foundational skills needed to read and write Western music notation, as well as to understand, analyze, and listen to music in a variety of genres, styles, and historical periods. Specific elements addressed include pitch, clef, scale, key, interval, meter, rhythm, triads, seventh chords, cadence, phrase, form and basic acoustics. Additionally, key historical figures, landmark compositions, and important treatises and/or publications that have shaped the discipline will be explored.

Particular emphasis will be placed on developing written, analytical, and aural skills culminating in the creation of short projects and compositions. This will include writing melodies in specific keys and modes, harmonizing existing melodies, basic part-writing, and developing AABA and 12-Bar Blues forms.

EXPECTATIONS:

1. No previous experience in music is expected or required. It is not necessary to read music, play an instrument, or have experience with music technology of any kind to do well in this course.
2. The homework assignments will be primarily from Auralia and Musition programs, which are online aural skills and music theory tools. Purchase will be required, but the fee is nominal. DISCOUNT CODE: GATECH50
3. Quizzes will be a combination of written and online tools (Auralia and Musition)
4. Participation in class discussions is strongly recommended.

COURSE GOALS: At the end of this course you will learn to:

1. Define basic musical terminology and theoretical concepts
2. Understand the concepts of, and be proficient in writing and recognizing:
 - a. notes: treble and bass clefs; all accidentals, ledger lines
 - b. key signatures: all major and minor
 - c. scales: major and all forms of minor; parallel, relative, pentatonic, chromatic, and Blues
 - d. intervals: simple and compound; perfect, major, minor, diminished, augmented; inversion
 - e. triads and seventh chords: all roots, qualities, and inversions; treble, bass clefs and grand staff;
 - f. four-voice keyboard and chorale voicing and various real-music textures; inversion symbols and figured bass
 - g. durational symbols: all levels (sizes); various kinds of computations and relationships
 - h. meter: all simple and compound time signatures; measure/beat/division/subdivision hierarchy; all duration values for beat
 - i. diatonic chords: triads and seventh chords; major and minor keys; Roman numeral symbols
 - j. voice leading: voicing; line relations (parallel, similar, contrary, oblique); root position and first inversion
 - k. harmonic progression: functions and hierarchy of diatonic chords, harmonic sequences

1. cadence types; motives; phrases; phrase groups/periods; double periods, simple song forms and 12-Bar Blues
3. Read, analyze, and perform assigned melodies in treble clef, bass clef – non-modulating, modulating to the relative major or minor, shifting between parallel major and minor
4. Create and notate melodies in simple and compound meters
5. Sing assigned simple melodies from memory and at sight using a standard sight-singing system
6. Recognize basic intervals within an octave by ear
7. Sing and/or play specified major, minor, pentatonic, and Blues scales
8. Compose simple, but effective bass lines based on melodic line and implied harmony, figured bass or Roman Numerals
9. Compose and/or complete simple periods, small part forms, and a Riff Blues form
10. Recognize, define, and analyze standard lead sheet and chord chart symbols and conventions
11. Analyze and discuss simple contrapuntal structures and procedures
12. Identify and discuss key historical figures, landmark compositions, and important treatises and/or publications that have shaped the discipline of music theory

REQUIRED TEXT: None

RECOMMENDED TEXTS FOR DEPTH AND EXPLORATION:

- Taylor, Eric (1999 – reprinted 2017). *First Steps in Music Theory, Grades 1-5*, The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), ISBN 9781860960901.
- Boge, Claire, Clough, John, and Conley, Joyce (1999). *Scales, Intervals, Keys, Triads, Rhythm, and Meter*, 3rd Edition, W. W. Norton & Company, ISBN 9780393973693.

COMPUTER SKILLS USED: Word processing, e-mail, file management, Internet research and file uploading/downloading, graphic notation software, digital audio and MIDI software usage, audio file format conversion, and basic Python code within EarSketch.

TECHNOLOGY/SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS:

- Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable)
- Adobe Acrobat PDF reader (free download; see <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>)
- EarSketch which is free and available at <https://ears sketch.gatech.edu/landing/#/>
- NotePad which is available for free at <https://www.finalemusic.com/products/notepad/>
- Auralia/Musition- Purchase through canvas

TECHNOLOGY/SOFTWARE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Web Lessons and Exercises

- <https://www.musictheory.net/>
- <https://www.musictheory.net/lessons>
- <https://www.lightnote.co/>
- <http://www.teoria.com/>
- <https://tonesavvy.com/>

Ableton Live Lessons

- <https://learningmusic.ableton.com/>

Theory Lessons for iPad and iPhone

- <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/theory-lessons/id493157418?mt=8&ign-mpt=uo%3D4>
- Tenuto – <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/tenuto/id459313476?mt=8&ign-mpt=uo%3D4>
- <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.myrapps.eartraining>
- <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bigboxlabs.notetrainer>

Reading Music Apps

- <http://readsheetmusic.info/readingmusic.shtml>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_ejZubp6oU

Helpful Android Apps

- <https://en.softonic.com/solutions/apps/music-theory-helper>
- <https://en.softonic.com/solutions/apps/complete-ear-trainer>
- <https://en.softonic.com/solutions/apps/functional-ear-trainer>
- <https://en.softonic.com/solutions/apps/music-theory-chords-in-keys>

DAW (Digital Audio Workstation)

- Max which is available for a free 30-day trial at <https://cycling74.com/downloads>
- Ableton Live, version 10, which is available for a free 30-day trial at <https://www.ableton.com/en/trial/>
- Reaper which is available for a free 60-day trial period at <https://www.reaper.fm/>

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:

1. Lecture
2. Discussion of Questions for Consideration
3. Structured Listening
4. Selected Reference Readings
5. Original Creative Projects

METHOD OF EVALUATION:

The following evaluative tools will be utilized in measuring progress towards obtaining the class objectives:

Projects	20%
Homework	30%
Quizzes	30%
Final Exam	20%
TOTAL	100%

All assignments, quizzes, and tests will be graded by points. The final grade for the course will be determined by dividing the total points earned by the number of points possible for each of the categories listed in Method of Evaluation. These numbers will be converted into a grade according to the following scale: A=100-90%, B=89-80%, C=79-70%, D= 69-60%, F= 59% and below. [[[]]]
[[[]]]

LATE WORK: As concepts and projects in this class build on each other, it is imperative that all reading and listening assignments, and all projects, be completed on time. Assignments will lose one full letter grade for each day they are late. For example, if an assignment is due on Monday and it is not turned in until Wednesday, then a grade of B would be lowered to a D. The only way to avoid this penalty is to obtain an extension in writing (or by e-mail) from the instructor in advance of the project deadline. Please note that projects are due by the beginning of class on the date listed. Naturally, allowances can and will be made for documented illnesses and family emergencies. Quizzes and exams cannot be made up unless there is a valid, documented excuse.

ONLINE QUIZ DUE DATES:

Quizzes are due at the completion of each module.

TIMING POLICY:

- The Modules follow a logical sequence.
- Assignments should be completed by their due dates.
- Quizzes must be completed during the time allotted.
- You will have access to the course content for the scheduled duration of the course.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

- This is a fully online course.
- Log in on a regular basis to complete your work, so that you do not have to spend a lot of time reviewing and refreshing yourself regarding the content.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Students must do their own work on assignments, assessments, and projects, unless collaboration is previously specified. Students caught cheating will receive zero credit for that assignment/quiz/test and may be subject to further sanctions through the Office of Student Integrity. Students are expected to abide by the Georgia Tech Honor Code and avoid any instances of academic misconduct, including but not limited to:

1. Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or oral information in the preparation of a paper or for an exam.
2. Substitution of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another individual or individuals.
3. False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the student.

The Georgia Tech Honor Code and be reviewed at: <http://osi.gatech.edu/content/honor-code> and www.honor.gatech.edu provides information about the Honor Advisory Council.

PLAGIARISM POLICY:

Plagiarism is considered a serious offense. You are not allowed to copy and paste or submit materials created or published by others, as if you created the materials. All materials submitted and posted must be your own or be properly cited and/or referenced. For more on citation and plagiarism, please refer to <https://libguides.gatech.edu/research>.

STATEMENT REGARDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with bona fide disabilities will be afforded reasonable accommodation. The Office of Disability Services will certify a disability and advise faculty members of reasonable accommodations. The web site for a student seeking accommodation is: <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>. The specific page to submit an accommodation request is: https://gatech-accommodate.symplicity.com/public_accommodation/.

COMMUNICATION:

It is expected that we should ask questions, answer our fellow learners' questions when possible, and participate on the course discussions, opinion polls, and survey forums. Often, discussions with fellow students are the sources of key pieces of learning. It is also important to remember that communication with the instructor and/or teaching assistants is encouraged – this can be via e-mail, BlueJeans (<https://gatech.bluejeans.com>), Zoom (<https://gatech.zoom.us/>), in person during office hours, or by special arrangement. In short, there are a host of ways to communicate with other students and/or your instructor. Please take advantage of the opportunity to connect to others as it will dramatically enhance your experience and connection to the course material.

NETIQUETTE:

- Netiquette refers to etiquette that is used when communicating on the Internet. Review the [Core Rules of Netiquette](#). When you are communicating via email, discussion forums or synchronously (real-time), please use correct spelling, punctuation and grammar consistent with the academic environment and scholarship¹.
- Learners who do not adhere to this guideline may be removed from the course.

GRIEVANCES AND CONCERNS:

Students who have grievances or concerns may refer to the Georgia Tech Academic Policy (<https://provost.gatech.edu/reporting-units/conflict-resolution-ombuds/academic-grievance-policy>) for information and reporting details. Additionally, if you need formal assistance, please contact please contact [Dr. Kyla Ross, Assistant Vice Provost for Advocacy and Conflict Resolution](#). For informal assistance or to speak to someone who can be a sounding board for you, please contact Ombuds staff member [Russ Callen](#).

STUDENT-FACULTY EXPECTATIONS:

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. The Student-Faculty Expectations articulates some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. Additional information for research-related work is given in The Expectations of Advisors and Advisees. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

STATEMENT REGARDING CHANGES IN COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Since all classes do not progress at the same rate, it may be necessary to modify the above requirements or their timing as circumstances dictate. For example, the number and frequency of exams may be changed, or the number and sequence of assignments will be altered. In either of these cases, adequate notification will be given in writing and be discussed in class.

LAST, BUT NOT LEAST:

Try to approach the course with a sense of discovery and make a conscious decision to enjoy the material and have fun. The study of Music Theory provides terminologies, frameworks, and systems to clearly and correctly understand and create music – music that you already know or that is already inside you. If you positively engage the material on its own terms, you may well discover that this is just the beginning of a long and rewarding journey. You may well discover that the more you know, the more you want to know.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Week 1 (May 18, 2026)

- Module 1: Introductions and Course Overview
 - Structure and Organization of Course
 - Homework Assignments and Projects
 - Software
 - Web Resources
- Module 2: Pitch and Its Representation
 - Pitch
 - Musical Notes

¹ Conner, P. (2006-2014). Ground Rules for Online Discussions, Retrieved 4/21/2014 from <http://teaching.colostate.edu/tips/tip.cfm?tipid=128>

- Octaves
- Pitch Classes
- Module 3: Scales and Modes
 - Major Scale
 - Scale Degree Factors and Nomenclature
- Module 4: Harmony
 - Introduction to Chords
 - Root Position Triads
 - Primary Chords
- Homework Assignment 1
- Homework Assignment 2

Week 2 (May 25, 2026)

- Module 5: Notation
 - Sharps, Flats, and other Accidentals
 - Ledger Lines and Clefs
- Module 6: Keys and Key Signatures
 - Major Keys
 - Minor Keys
 - Key Signatures
 - Circle of Fifths
- Module 7: Minor Scales
 - Natural Minor
 - Harmonic Minor
 - Melodic Minor
- Module 8: Intervals
 - Generic Intervals
 - Interval Quality and Diatonic Intervals
- Homework Assignment 3
- Homework Assignment 4

Week 3 (June 1, 2026)

- Module 9: Acoustics
 - Basic Acoustics
 - Wave Forms
 - Harmonics
 - Harmonic Series
 - Relationships to Intervals and Scales
- Module 10: Rhythm
 - Rhythmic Durations and Symbols
 - Relationships to Poetic Meter
 - Triplets
 - Ties and Dots
 - Meter
 - Accents and Strong-Weak Beats
 - Subdivision of the Beat
 - Simple and Compound Meters
- Module 11: More on Notation, Meter, and Key Signatures
 - Rhythmic Durations and Symbols
 - Syncopation
- Module 12: More on Intervals
 - Chromatic Intervals

- Inversion
- Compound Intervals
- Homework Assignment 5/6
- Quiz 1

Week 4 (June 8, 2026)

- Module 13: Functional Harmony
 - Triads and Quality
 - Chord Function T-P-D-T
 - Chord Hierarchy
- Module 14: Harmonic Listening
 - Listening to Triad Quality
 - Hearing the Root Note
- Module 15: Harmonizing Melodies
 - Basic Melodic Structures
 - Harmonic Implications
 - Harmonic Progression
- Module 16: More on Harmonizing Melodies
 - Motives and Melodic Organization
 - Non-Harmonic Tones
 - Melodic Form
- Homework Assignment 7
- Homework Assignment 8

Week 5 (June 15, 2026)

- Module 17: Functional Harmony and Formal Implications
 - Chord Inversions
 - Cadence
 - Phrase
 - Period
- Module 18: Basic Forms
 - Binary Form
 - Ternary Form
 - AABA Song Form
- Homework Assignment 9
- Homework Assignment 10
- Project 1

Week 6 (June 22, 2026)

- Module 19: Chord Symbols and Progressions
 - Chord Names and Symbols
 - Common Practice
 - Roman Numerals
 - Lead Sheet and Jazz Conventions
 - Nashville Number System
 - Common Chord Progressions
- Module 20: Musical Texture
 - Monophonic
 - Homophonic
 - Heterophonic
 - Polyphonic

- Biphonic
- Module 21: Seventh Chords and Beyond
 - Structure of Seventh Chords
 - Qualities of Seventh Chords
 - Half Diminished and Fully Diminished Seventh Chords
 - Seventh Chords in Jazz
 - Secondary Dominants
 - Ninths, Elevenths, and Thirteenth
 - Other Additions and Alterations
- Homework Assignment 11/12
- Quiz 2

Week 7 (June 29, 2026)

- Module 22: More Scales
 - Modes
 - History of Modal Structure
 - Whole-Tone
- Module 23: 12-Bar Blues – Part 1
 - Structure
 - Riff Blues
 - Minor Pentatonic Scale
 - Blues Scale
- Module 24: Two-Part Writing
 - Structure
 - Basic Contrapuntal Concepts
 - Motions
 - Species Counterpoint
 - Figured Bass
 - Roman Numeral Expansion
- Module 25: Homophonic Writing
 - Melody
 - Accompaniment
 - Harmonic Implications
 - Contrapuntal Implications
- Homework Assignment 13/14

Week 8 (July 6, 2026)

- Module 26: Pentatonic and Modal Structures
 - Major Pentatonic
 - Minor Pentatonic
 - Pentatonic in Rock and Pop
 - Pentatonic in Non-Western Cultures
 - Modes in Jazz
 - Modes in Pop and Rock
- Module 27: 12-Bar Blues – Part 2
 - Major Blues Scale
 - Minor Blues Scale
 - More Advanced Blues Progressions
- Module 28: Chorale Structures
 - Historical Perspective
 - Modulation
 - Closely Related Keys

- Diatonic Palette
- Project 2

Week 9 (July 13, 2026)

- Module 29: More Four-Part Writing
 - More on Non-Harmonic Tones
 - Suspensions
 - Use of Chorales in Larger Works
- Module 30: Score Analysis
 - Instrumentation
 - Orchestration
 - Transposition
- Quiz 3

Week 10 (July 20, 2026)-LAST DAY OF CLASS

- Review
- Reading Period (July 31)
- Final Exam (TBA)