

MTEC 88A: SONGWRITING I

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2021
Units:	4
Hours:	3 lecture, 3 laboratory per week (72 total per quarter)
Advisory:	Not open to students with credit in MUS 58A.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Non-GE
Transferable:	CSU
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Description

Workshop course for beginning songwriters that focuses on basic songwriting styles and techniques. Different songwriting basic methods are presented. Students are assigned weekly songwriting projects. This course is appropriate for basic levels of songwriting competency.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Compare modern basic songwriting styles
- Write at least partial original songs with lyrics and/or melody
- Evaluate songs in a collaborative writing atmosphere

Course Content

- Basics of songwriting
 - The importance of being prolific
 - How the creative process starts
 - The importance of experience
 - Versatility
- Practical matters
 - Finding the time
 - A place to create
 - Recording the sketch of a song
 - Recycling partial songs
 - The skill of observation
- Basic songwriting techniques
 - Creating titles
 - Opening lines and songwriting "hammers"
 - First verse technique
 - Second verse technique
 - Creating a song outline
 - Working backwards in songwriting
 - Taking a cinematic approach
 - Whether to write lyrics or melody first
 - The definition of "furniture" in songwriting
 - The importance of vocabulary
 - Basic rhyming schemes
 - Idea collection
 - The use of cliches

Lab Content

Laboratory activities are provided for students to practice and apply their knowledge of songwriting demonstrating their understanding of the subject. To accomplish this the student is required to compose at minimum partial song on a weekly basis. These partial songs are then evaluated, commented on and given credit for by the instructor.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

A. When taught on campus:

- Classroom with digital recording system for student feedback.
- Projection system for video and multimedia content.
- Basic Sound reinforcement system for in-class performances.
- Drums and amplifiers.
- Grand piano.

B. When taught via Foothill Global Access:

- On-going access to computer with email software and capabilities.
- Email address.
- JavaScript enabled internet browsing software.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

- Weekly songwriting assignments
- Quizzes
- In-class participation
- Online participation in forums

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

- Lecture
- Discussion
- Oral presentations
- Laboratory
- Demonstration
- Quizzes

When taught via Foothill Global Access: supplemental lectures, and assignments are delivered via email. Feedback is delivered via email. Class discussion takes place in online forums and chat rooms

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Pattison, Pat. [Writing Better Lyrics](#). 2010.

Zollo, Paul. [Songwriters On Songwriting](#). 2003.

Although these texts are older than the suggested "5 years or newer" standard, they remain seminal texts in this area of study.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

A. Reading assignments include lessons created by the instructor and available via Etudes

B. Writing assignments include but not limited to:

1. Writing a song or partial song from a second and third person perspective
2. Writing a song or partial song based on the observation of strangers
3. Writing a song or partial song using three chords or less

Discipline(s)

Commercial Music