

# Aural Skills III (hybrid)

MUST 2111

Syllabus

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The University of Texas at El Paso – Fall 2024

## Course description

This is a hybrid course that is mostly online. Aural Skills III is a continuation of Aural Skills II. Aural Skills III focuses on developing and improving a number of skills related to hearing, singing, and understanding tonal music. In this course, students will improve their aural skills in the following areas: intervals, chord quality, harmonic progressions, rhythm, singing, and scale-degrees. Concerning pitch, this course works to build your sense of relative pitch and is unrelated to absolute pitch (i. e., were *not* learning “perfect” pitch in this course) and we’ll use moveable *do* solfege (scale-degree numbers) to support that emphasis.

Unfortunately, no aural-skills course will completely prepare you for the future because there are simply too many types of music and musical phenomena and only so much time, making that an impossible goal. Your future is unique and unknown and everyone will take a different path to get there. This course is designed to build a solid foundation of generally applicable skills that you will use, hone, and build upon in your unique future as a musician.

Aural skills tend to develop slowly but with consistent practice and dedication, the results will become apparent over time. Much like learning a difficult piece of music, it’s difficult to measure progress on a daily basis, but easy to see the progress after a month or year. Another particularly important aspect of improving is the *desire* to improve. Without this, your brain is likely to focus on improving other things instead (the things you actually have the desire to improve). So, if you find that you are working on the exercises and not improving over time, you might reexamine your goals with this course and explore new ways to create the desire to dedicate yourself to improving (your brain will follow). The desire to simply finish an exercise and move on, is not the same as the desire to successfully complete an exercise in order to improve your musicianship skills.

## Learning and Practice

This course is primarily a skill-building course and because of that, it requires very little lecture. Instead, it requires exploring strategies and approaches for improving. I have created videos covering each new topic in this course. In these videos, I advocate for approaches that I think will serve you well in the long run. There are multiple ways to think about these topics and some will help you build long-lasting skills, and honestly other approaches will keep you at the same level. Melodic dictation, for example could easily be accomplished by sitting at a piano and plunking out every single note until you get the entire melody. However, if that’s the only way you can hear and identify notes, how’s that supposed to help you when you’re leading an ensemble? Each time a wrong note is played, you walk to a keyboard, plunk a bunch of notes until you figure out what the wrong note was, and then walk back to the podium to continue rehearsal now that you know problem note? Or, do you hope to reach that point in your life and think, there’s a wrong note on the last beat of measure 3. I know it’s supposed to be an authentic cadence, but where I expected a dominant seventh chord, I hear a major seventh chord. Oh, that’s because the flute didn’t read the key signature, and they are

playing B natural when they should be playing B flat. All of that can take place in your head, but it requires a lot of knowledge about the piece and the ability to identify detailed music phenomena in real time. The point being, there are approaches that will help you complete the assignment as fast as possible and there are approaches that will elevate your musical ability. Think about where you want to be in the future and work hard toward those goals.

## Useful information

<b>Course website</b>	The course website is accessed through Blackboard. It contains course documents, video tips and strategies, handouts, advanced quizzes, basic quizzes, and tests. It also contains useful links to helpful websites and printable staff paper.
<b>Office hours:</b>	The in-person lab days double as office hours. Feel free to drop by between 9:30-11:30am in the music library's computer lab for any office hour needs.
	<p><b>By Appointment</b></p> <p>Meetings can also be scheduled by appointment (just email me to set up a meeting).</p>
<b>Email</b>	UTEP email is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your email within 24-48 hours of receipt. Please feel free to email at any time. If it's late, I turn my notifications off, so it won't bother me. If I ask you a question in my response, please write me back. When I say "please let me know either way," I'm serious and I am awaiting your response 😊.

## Checking your email

Our primary communication will be done by email so it's critical that you get in the habit of checking your UTEP email every day. I recommend that you check it at least twice each day.

## Required textbook

- We're using a free, online textbook called *Eyes and Ears: An Anthology of Melodies for Sight-Singing* by Benjamin Crowell. You can access or download it here:
  - <https://www.lightandmatter.com/sight/sight.pdf>
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## Required technology items

- Internet-connected, Windows or Mac laptop or desktop computer (**available for free to UTEP students in the main library**)
  - All coursework will be completed online
- Regular access to a Windows or Mac (MacOS, **not** iOS **nor** iPadOS), laptop or desktop computer
  - If you don't have one, [apply for a long-term laptop from UTEP](#)
  - Needs a current version of Google's Chrome browser
  - NOTE: The Blackboard "app" is not supported in this course
  - NOTE: Phones and tablets are not supported. They may often work, but expect occasional issues that are only solvable by using a Windows or Mac laptop or desktop computer.
- Audio recording device (typically your laptop or phone)

- Headphones
  - You'll be doing dictation homework on the computer, so you need headphones that are good enough to allow *you* to hear clearly.

## Grading

- Your overall grade for the semester will be calculated as outlined below:
  - Basic Quizzes 40%
  - Advanced quizzes 40%
  - Online singing submissions 20%
- Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A	90-100	B	80-89	C	70-79	D	60-69	F	Below 60
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- Your current average will be shown on the course website.
- **In order to pass this course, you need to have an overall course grade of C or higher (70%).**

## Course Format

- **Hybrid Course**
  - This course is a hybrid of traditional face-to-face interaction and online, technology-based interaction.
- **Due Dates**
  - All online quizzes will be due *before* noon on the scheduled due date. Just so you know, if something is due before noon, the course website will count it late if you submit it *at* noon instead of before it.
- **Availability of Materials**
  - The entire week's worth of materials will typically become available some time on Friday or Saturday the previous week at the latest.
- **Online Quizzes**
  - Most of the work in this course will be in the form of repeatable quizzes that have a required minimum grade. There are two types, basic quizzes and advanced quizzes (both described below). While available, they can be taken as many times as necessary and you will be able to review the results immediately upon completing each quiz. Only the highest score ever recorded before the due date will count toward your grade.
- **Basic Quizzes**
  - There are two sets of basic quizzes due each week. These are different than the advanced quizzes mentioned above. The basic quizzes are meant to give you regular, ongoing practice with core concepts as well as review with more recent concepts.

- **Advanced Quizzes**
  - Advanced quizzes cover the topic of the week. You can expect that an advanced quiz will take more time to complete than basic quizzes (discussed below) because you've had less practice with the topic.

### Issues Uploading to the Course Website

If an assignment needs to be uploaded to the course website but, for whatever reason, it's not working, you can email me the assignment BEFORE the due date AS A PLACEHOLDER. You still need to upload it to the course website by the end of the day it was due to receive credit. Please write text in the body of the email so that I know why you're emailing me a file. It can be something simple like, "Dr. Jarvis, I can't get the file to upload to the course website so I'm emailing you before the due date with my assignment as a placeholder. I'll try again later today."

### Online Recorded Singing: Submission of Prepared Singing Assignments

Selected melodies and rhythms from *Eyes and Ears* will be assigned. These items need to be prepared outside of class. Students will record themselves singing all assigned melodies & rhythms and submit their recordings online via the course website following the instructions below:

#### Submission requirements

- Always sing with scale-degree numbers or moveable Do solfege syllables (Tonic is always Do)
  - Observe chromatic inflections
    - For scale-degree numbers, just sing the words "raise" or "low"
    - For solfege, use proper chromatic versions (e.g., fi, ri, etc.)
  - Observe modulations (if the tonic changes, you should change your tonic to reflect the modulation)
- If the excerpt is rhythm only, use rhythm syllables as follows:
  - Simple meters (2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 2/2, etc.): 1-e-&a, 2-e-&a
  - Compound meters (6/8, 9/8, 12/8, 6/4, etc.): 1-guh-da-guh-di-guh, 2-guh-da-guh-di-guh
- Don't play along while you sing
  - You can establish the key **before** you start and/or provide yourself with the starting note **before** you sing but the recording needs to be your voice only
  - You can use a metronome in your recording as long as it does not provide you with pitches
  - Using a fixed-pitch instrument or computer aid more than once in the singing of exercises will receive no credit.
  - No other aids should be used while making the recording you are submitting.
- At any time, I may request that a student re-sing a melody outside of class and any significant disparity in performance will be perused as cheating.
- Audio recordings can be in any standard format (M4A and MP3 are preferred but not required)
  - If I can't open your file, you'll have to resubmit it until I can before it can count for credit
- Record all prepared items for the week in individual files
- File names should include your name and the example number
  - LastName\_Firstname-ExampleNumber
    - For example: Jarvis\_Brian-16.1
- Submission process

- Record your examples
- Save them on your computer, phone/tablet, or online storage (Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive, iCloud, etc.)
  - You may want to save it on a flash drive as well so that you have a backup.
- Submit them online via the course website (see the video instructions online if you need help)
- Grading guidelines for recorded homework singing:

Excellent (95% correct pitches, rhythms, and solfege)	100%
Good with a few glitches that don't impair "flow" (90% correct pitches, rhythms, and solfege)	90%
Errors impair flow but student fixes (85% correct pitches, rhythms, and solfege)	80%
Many errors to flow/solfege (75% correct pitches, rhythms, and solfege) <b>NOTE:</b> This is the highest score possible for a student who doesn't use solfege or sings solfege in the wrong key (i.e., the piece was in A minor but you sang C major)	70%
Generally poor, but tune still recognizable (65% correct pitches, rhythms, and solfege)	50%
Tune no longer recognizable, but some pitches, rhythms, and solfege are still correct	30%
Submitted, but most pitches, rhythms, and solfege are incorrect	10%

## No late work

Late work is **NOT** accepted. Unless you have made prior arrangements with the instructor, any missed homework and quizzes will receive a grade of a zero. Exceptions can be made in the case of a genuine emergency or significant illness if written documentation is shown to the instructor within one week after the due date (e.g., a note excusing you from class from a health care provider, an accident report, etc.). Conflicts between work and school will NOT count as reasons for late work. Email the instructor (Dr. Jarvis) if you are unsure about whether a situation qualifies as a genuine emergency that would qualify for an exception.

## Attendance policy

This course has in-person meetings every Tuesday. Thursdays are fully online, and asynchronous. Both days have assigned online work. New content is introduced on Tuesdays and there are videos for each new topic on the course website.

The in-person meetings will be held on Tuesdays in the computer-lab portion of the music library from 9:30 am-11:30 am. These are not lectures. This is an open-format, lab-style meeting. You can simply spend your time completing your work with your computer or one of the computers in the lab. I'll be there to help, answer your questions, and give advice as needed. You can also ask questions about Music Theory III.

This course requires regular attention. There are two deadlines each week: Tuesday at noon and Thursday at noon. The amount of time it takes you to complete each exercise is difficult to specify. Everyone has such different strengths in aural-skills courses. So, while you might blow right past the rhythmic dictation, others will be spending a lot of time on that topic and every beat will be hard won. You'll need to figure out where your strengths and weaknesses are and then schedule your time appropriately.

## Academic Integrity and Scholastic Dishonesty

Information about The University of Texas at El Paso's definitions and expectations regarding academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty can be found at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>. In this course, all homework and quizzes are to be completed on your own. That means you should not discuss answers with anyone besides me, Dr. Jarvis. Do not listen to the examples together. When working with tutors, you cannot work on answers to assignments or quizzes that count towards your grade. You are allowed and encouraged to work on anything from the "Practice Area" on the course website with other people. You can practice concepts together when using non-assignment and non-quiz material. For example, you can practice harmonic analysis together by analyzing Clementi's piano sonatas as long the excerpts you practice with are not on the assignments or quizzes. Actual or attempted cheating, plagiarism, and collusion will not be tolerated. Suspected violations will go directly to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for consideration.

## Accommodations and Support Services:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Center for Accommodations and Support Services and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at [www.sa.utep.edu/cass](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass).

## Syllabus Change Policy

The information on this syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced via email and the new syllabus will be posted on the course website.