

# Aural Skills IV

MUST 2112

Syllabus

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The University of Texas at El Paso – Spring 2017

## Course description

Aural Skills IV is a continuation of Aural Skills III. Aural Skills IV 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, scale degree recognition & reproduction, harmonic function, phrase structure & form, rhythm, meter, sight singing, solfege, error detection, and in rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic dictation.

## Useful information

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<b>Course website</b>	The course website (Blackboard) has course documents, homework, handouts, skills quizzes, and proficiency quizzes. It also contains useful links to helpful websites and printable staff paper.
<b>Office hours:</b>	Fox Fine Arts Center 431 11:30 – 12:30 PM on Monday and either Wednesday or Friday 10:00 – 11:00 AM on Tuesday and by appointment (just email me to set up a meeting).
<b>Free Tutor:</b>	Free tutoring is offered for this course. See the “Tutoring” link on the course’s Blackboard page for more information.

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## Required textbooks

- Rogers, Ottman, *Music for Sight Singing*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition
  - You must purchase the textbook (unless you already have it).
  - Only the 9<sup>th</sup> edition will work for this course, previous editions will not work.

*Music for Sight Singing* is a collection of sight-singing, rhythmic, and improvisation exercises. We will be using this text regularly and it needs to be brought to class each day. This text is available at the campus Bookstore or you can buy it online. You will be using it throughout Aural Skills I-IV. Additionally, contextual listening assignments will be posted on Blackboard and are a required part of this course.

## Required materials for every class

- Staff paper
- Pencil with eraser (no need for pens)
- Textbook (Rogers/Ottman, *Music for Sight Singing*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition)

## Grading

- Your overall grade for the semester will be calculated as outlined below:
  - Contextual listening assignments 15%
  - Online singing submissions 15%
  - Weekly skills quizzes 20%
  - Barrier Exam\* 15%
  - Singing Exams(2) (7.5% each) 15%
  - Unit Exams (2) (10% each) 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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- Grade updates will be provided almost every week throughout the semester. Please feel free to inquire about your current average at any time.
- **\*In order to pass this course, you need a grade of C or higher & you need to pass the barrier exam with a grade of C or higher (see section on the barrier exam for details).**

## Course Format

- **Hybrid Course**

This course is a hybrid of traditional face-to-face interaction and technology-based interaction. We will combine the strengths of meeting in a real classroom, with a piano, and amongst a group of people with the efficient power of computers into a course that will provide you with the opportunity to individualize your practice until you can reach the required level of skill.

- **Online Quiz Availability and Due Dates**

All online quizzes will be due before the scheduled start of class and will be available for 24 hours before that. For example, if you are in the 8:00 am section, your Tuesday quizzes will be due before 8:00 am on Tuesday and the quiz will become available the day before on Monday at 8:00 am.

- **Weekly Skills Quizzes**

We will typically only have one, face-to-face meeting per week. The day we don't meet will include an online, weekly skills quiz (in addition to the daily proficiency quizzes) over the topics introduced during the previous class period.

- **Daily Proficiency Quizzes**

There are two sets of proficiency quizzes due each week. These are different than the weekly quizzes mentioned above. The proficiency quizzes are meant to give you regular, ongoing practice with core concepts as well as review with more recent concepts. 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 during the period of availability will count towards your grade. These quizzes are graded pass/fail. In order to be considered "prepared for class," all the quizzes due on a given day must be completed with the minimum grade or higher and they must be on time. Not meeting these conditions means that you are unprepared for class that day. For example, if there are three proficiency quizzes due one day, passing two quizzes and failing the third would result in being marked unprepared for class. See the section called "Being prepared for class" to learn how this impacts your grade.

## Contextual Listening Homework Assignments

Contextual listening assignments are due every other week. They are to be completed by you alone and *without* reference to a musical score. Recordings will be provided on Blackboard. Collaborating with anyone else on these assignments is not acceptable and all suspected cases will be submitted to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for consideration.

## Barrier Exam

During Week 11 (March 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>), the Aural Skills Barrier Exam will be administered. This exam is dictation-based and covers all material from Aural Skills I through week 10 of this course, though its primary emphasis will be on fundamental materials from the first three semesters of the aural-skills sequence. The purpose of the barrier exam is to ensure that students have mastered and retained fundamental, foundational material throughout the four-semester, aural-skills sequence, and are ready for upper-level music courses.

The barrier exam needs to be passed with a grade of 70% or higher in order to pass the class. A score of less than 70% but greater than or equal to 60% on this exam will result in an overall course grade of D. A score of below 60% on this exam will result in an overall course grade of F.

## Unit Exams (2)

Aside from the barrier exam, there are two additional dictation exams in this course. The online, weekly quizzes & proficiency quizzes are what will prepare you for the unit exams. The level and content of the weekly quizzes will be exactly the level and content of the material on the unit quiz. The format, however, will be different because the unit exams will be done in class and on paper.

## Online Recorded Singing: Submission of each Week's Prepared Melodies

Every other week, selected melodies and rhythms from *Music for Sight Singing* are 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 Blackboard following the instructions below:

### Submission requirements

- Always sing with solfege syllables
  - Observe chromatic inflections (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 perceived as cheating.
- All recordings need to be submitted before class time on the due date.
- 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 phone/tablet, computer, or online storage (Dropbox, OneDrive, etc.)
    - You may want to save it on a flash drive as well so that you have a backup.
  - Submit them online via Blackboard
- 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 homework

Late homework is **NOT** accepted. Unless you have made prior arrangements with the instructor, any missed homework, quizzes, and exams will receive a grade of a zero. Exceptions can be made in the case of a genuine emergency or significant illness if written documentation (e.g., a note from a health care provider, an accident report, etc.) is shown to the instructor within one week of the due date. See the instructor if you are unsure about whether your absence will be counted as excused or unexcused.

### Dropped grades

Your lowest Weekly Quiz grade, lowest Contextual Listening grade, and lowest Online Recorded Singing grade will be dropped when calculating your final overall average. Exam grades, however, will **NOT** be dropped.

## Attendance policy

- Plan to attend every class and to show up on time.
- One unexcused absence is allowed.
  - Each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a **3% DEDUCTION FROM THE FINAL GRADE.**

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness. This does not mean that any note from a medical professional will excuse students from absences. Notes from medical providers should state that the student was unable, in their professional opinion, to be in class on the day or days in question. Voluntary appointments like teeth cleanings or physicals will not be excused. In accordance with the university policy the authority for deciding whether the student is excused for medical reasons rests with the instructor. Please feel free to check with the instructor if you are unsure whether or not an excuse counts as excused.

## Being prepared for class

In order to be prepared for class, you need to do following:

- Complete the Proficiency Quizzes before the due date and at the required level
- Complete the Online Weekly Quizzes before the due date
- Arrive before the scheduled start of class
- Stay for the duration of the class
- Not use cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices during class (see policy below)
- Not distract others or the classroom environment in the opinion of the instructor
- Bring the required materials to each class (see Required Materials section above)

If any of the above requirements are not met, the student will be marked as being unprepared for class. The first three instances of being unprepared for class will be recorded by the instructor but do not impact your grade. Starting with the fourth instance and all instances after that, **1% WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM THE STUDENT'S FINAL GRADE** for each instance.

If you are late (tardy) tell the instructor **AFTER** class so that you can be counted as present. The instructor takes attendance at the very beginning of class and will not be updating attendance with late arrivals. This is done to ensure that class time is maximized for course content.

## Cell phones or other electronic devices

There is no need for students to use electronic devices during class unless the instructor has explicitly asked you to use them. Audio recording, video recording, and photography are not allowed without prior authorization from the instructor. Before the scheduled start of class, students are expected to silence their electronic devices and put away all cell phones, laptops, tablets, or other electronic devices inside a closed bag or purse where they are not audible or visible to you or anyone else. Smartwatches (e.g., Apple Watch) can be worn but not used other than to look at the time. Any student whose technology item is visible or used during class will be marked as unprepared for class. See the section on being prepared for class to learn how this impacts your grade.

The instructor will not inform students if they violate the electronic device policy during class, and will instead discretely mark offending students as unprepared for class without disrupting class. This syllabus serves as the official warning for such violations. This is done to ensure that class time is maximized for course content.

## Exam Dates

Unit Exam 1	Week 6 – Tuesday, February 21 <sup>st</sup> (in class)
Barrier Exam	Week 11 – Tuesday & Thursday, March 28 <sup>th</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup> (in class)
Unit Exam 2	Week 16 – Tuesday, May 2 <sup>nd</sup> (in class)
Sight Singing Exam 1	Week 6 – Thursday or Friday, Feb. 23 <sup>rd</sup> or 24 <sup>th</sup> (outside of class)
Sight Singing Exam 2	Week 16 – Thursday or Friday May 4 <sup>th</sup> or 5 <sup>th</sup> (outside of class)

Be sure to mark these dates on your calendar and let the instructor know about conflicts within the first two weeks of class. The university policy regarding final exams will be strictly adhered to.

## 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 <http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/>. In this course, all homework, quizzes, exams, and projects are to be completed on your own. 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. For more information about services available to UTEP students with disabilities, see the following website <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/studentsresources/>.

## Syllabus Change Policy

The information on this syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and/or via email.