

# Music Fundamentals I

Syllabus - MUST 1311

Online-Only Course

Instructor: Dr. Brian Jarvis (bejarvis@utep.edu)

The University of Texas at El Paso –Summer I 2023

## Course description

Music Fundamentals I serves to establish a foundation with essential topics in music theory and has a special emphasis on major keys/scales, simple meters, and triads. This is a skills-based course that is geared toward musicians. If you happen to not play an instrument, now is the time to start! This class is meant to coincide with learning to play a musical instrument, but it is not a course about playing instruments (you'll need to take private lessons for that). You will learn to read and write musical notation and you will learn to work with core musical materials like scales, intervals, chords, and rhythm & meter. You will also have an introduction to singing with solfege and the dictation of musical materials like simple rhythms, intervals, chord qualities, and scale degrees. When you complete this course, you will have a solid foundation with the basics of music fundamentals. To continue with college-level studies of music, it is not sufficient to simply know the basics with this material. In order to be successful in pursuing a music degree here at UTEP, you need to be able to use the basic elements of music theory in a practical way. So, it is the focus of this course (and the next course, Music Fundamentals II) to make sure that you are fast, accurate, and consistent with the materials of music fundamentals, and this course is designed to get you there!

We will cover the following topics:

- Pitch (note reading, key signatures, intervals, chords, and scales)
- Rhythm & Meter (simple & compound meters, rhythmic patterns, dots & ties, etc.)
- Notation (clefs, beaming, accidentals, key signatures, time signatures, stems, etc.)
- Musicianship (rhythmic dictation, rhythmic performance, aural identification of scale degrees, singing, chord quality, and intervals)

Unlike most of your music courses here at UTEP, this course will be entirely online and asynchronous. There will be no in-person lectures nor required Zoom meetings. Many students enter music fundamentals with a wide variety of skills. Some are just starting, while others might have been playing an instrument for many years. So, this course takes an independent approach to learning about new material. If you feel you already know how to read treble and bass clef, then there's no need for you to learn about it again, but if you don't know then you can pursue the topic in the following three ways: (1) watching video lectures online with links that will be provided for you, (2) reading about them online with links that will be provided for you, and/or (3) through reading from the recommend (but NOT required) textbook. I have compiled a list of at least 200 links to videos and readings on all of the topics in this course. Some are my own writings and videos, but most are not. Just because these are internet links, please don't assume that this list is the same thing as "googling" the topic. Music fundamentals topics are not always explained accurately, completely, or correctly, so I have already done extensive searching to compile resources that will present the information correctly. Please use this resource first before running to YouTube or Google. If you still struggle to understand a topic, just let me know by email and I'll be happy to help!

## Useful information

<b>Course website</b>	The course website (Blackboard) has course documents, the daily schedule, quizzes, printable staff paper, and helpful links.
<b>Office hours:</b>	Contact by email. We can then schedule a virtual meeting via Zoom, please provide some availability options for me to facilitate finding a meeting time that works for both of us.

## Required materials for the course

- Internet-connected, Windows or Mac laptop or desktop computer
- Google's Chrome browser (free)
- Audio recording device (typically your laptop but phones work well too)
- Headphones or earbuds

## Optional textbook recommendation (not required)

- Straus, *Elements of Music*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

## Grading

- Your overall grade for the semester will be calculated as outlined below:
  - Daily, proficiency quizzes 30%
  - Weekly Skills Quizzes 30%
  - Exams (3) (10%, 10%, 20%) 40%  
(Exam 1 is worth 10%, Exam 2 is worth 10%, and Exam 3 (final exam) is worth 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 weekly throughout the semester. Please feel free to inquire about your current average at any time.
- **In order to take Music Fundamentals II, you need to get at least a C in this course.**

## Daily, Proficiency Quizzes

Most of the work in this course will be done at an internet-connected computer. Each “class day,” you will complete an assortment of “quizzes.” There will be approximately 8-10 quizzes each day and occasionally there are exercises that need to be completed using Teoria.com. Quizzes labeled “Weekly Quiz” represent quizzes on topics that are relatively recent or new, and quizzes labeled “Proficiency Quiz” cover older topics and are geared toward maintaining or improving those skills. These quizzes are pass/fail. To pass the quiz, your grade needs to be at or above the required minimum grade. All quizzes are to be completed before midnight on the scheduled due date (mountain time, MST). As the semester goes by, you will take many of the same quizzes but the required minimum may be higher. Before the due date, **all quizzes can be taken as many times as necessary for you to pass them.** For the quizzes within Blackboard, the computer will simply take the highest grade of all the attempts you made. These quizzes will prepare you for the exams. Always work to reduce your dependency on notes or other aids. **Memorization is the goal.**

## Exam 1 & Exam 2

There two exams before the final exam. These involve a comprehensive selection of quizzes that cover all the concepts you worked on throughout the week and are to be taken **without using notes and without other aids.** These exams are the same format as the daily proficiency & weekly quizzes but they are **much shorter** and there are many more of them (around 20). The theory and musicianship portions will be completed online through Blackboard though some of the quizzes involve Teoria.com. There are minimum grades that must be met before each portion counts for credit. Again, **all quizzes can be taken as many times as necessary for you to pass them.**

## Singing Assignments

UTEP has four semesters of Aural Skills courses and each one of them involves a large amount of singing which is done with solfege. There is only a small amount of singing in this course but it functions as an introduction to your later course work. Every so often, there is one, very short, recorded singing assignment. You will need to record yourself singing the exercise and upload it to Blackboard. Most students prefer to just record themselves using their phone or laptop. Suggestions for recording and uploading can be found on Blackboard with each assignment.

**DO NOT RECORD WHILE PLAYING AN INSTRUMENT.** The recordings need to be *a capella* to receive credit. If you are new to singing with solfege, there are links to videos on Blackboard that will help you learn.

## Final Exam (Exam 3)

The final exam is comprehensive. The final exam is to be taken **without using notes and without other aids.** The two portions are: (1) pitch and (2) rhythm & meter. If you complete all of the daily quizzes with the required minimum grades, you will do really well in this course. Additionally, each portion can be taken as many times as necessary for you to pass them.

## Due dates

There is course work due every day (Monday-Friday). All course work and exams are due before midnight on the scheduled due date. You can however, work ahead as much as you want. As mentioned below in the “Attendance” section, you will need approximately 2 hours and 10 minutes of concentrated effort every day to be successful so give yourself plenty of time during the day to work. My personal recommendation is that you strive to complete your work before noon on the day it’s due. It is likely that you will be more awake and alert during this part of the day (assuming you’re on a regular sleep schedule, of course). It will also save you from the stress that an impending deadline will add to your day.

## 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. Conflicts between work and school will **NOT** count as reasons for late homework. Email the instructor if you are unsure about whether a situation qualifies as a genuine emergency that would qualify for an exception.

## “Attendance” policy

Though this is an online course, regular “attendance” is required to be successful. This course is the online equivalent of an in-person course that met for 2 hours and 10 minutes, 5 days a week, for 4 weeks. Expect that you will need to dedicate approximately that much time every class day (Monday-Friday). Your actual time commitment will depend on your current, personal skill level with this material. If you have a strong background in music fundamentals and you’re a fast learner, then you will probably need less time, however, if you’re brand new to music fundamentals and the topics are not clicking quickly, you will very likely need more time because you have essentially fallen behind. Keep in mind, the 2 hour and 10 minute class period was focused work time. It didn’t involve working while eating lunch, texting/phone calls/Facebook/Twitter, or unexpected disruptions by friends, family, or children. On the other hand, the online format has great advantages because it allows you to work at your own pace throughout the day and you can work in a location that you prefer. However, it also requires that you develop self-discipline to complete the substantial, daily workload.

## Exam Dates

Exam 1 (online)	Week 2, Wednesday
Exam 2 (online)	Week 3, Wednesday
Final Exam (online)	Week 5 (final exam day), Monday (July 10 <sup>th</sup> ) (due before midnight) (You can complete the exams as soon as they are available)

## **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, quizzes, and exams are to be completed on your own. That means you should not discuss answers with anyone besides me, Dr. Jarvis. 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 blackboard with other people. You can practice concepts together when using non-assignment and non-quiz material. 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 in class and/or via email.