

## MUS 205: Aural Skills III

Fall 2013, 9:00–9:50 in room 226; 12:00–12:50 in room 223

### **Instructor:**

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Music Building 279

Office hours by appointment, coincidence, and MW 11:10–1:00

### **Prerequisites/Corequisites:**

To take this course students must either have successfully completed Theory/Skills I–II or placed into the course via examination. The course is to be taken alongside Theory III.

### **Course Goals:**

- Recognize the scale-degree function of any diatonic or chromatic pitch class in a tonal context.
- Dictate and sing melodies that incorporate embellishing chromaticism and applied chords.
- Perform complex polyrhythmic patterns.
- Dictate and perform rhythmic patterns involving changing between subdivisions and time signatures.
- Dictate harmonic progressions that incorporate increasingly heavy chromaticism.
- Dictate harmonic progressions that modulate to increasingly distant keys.
- Employ solfège syllables for pitch materials and rhythm syllables for rhythm materials.
- Demonstrate knowledge of chromatic harmony at the keyboard.
- Read fluently in treble, bass, tenor, and alto clefs.

**Required Texts:** (buy them online or the bookstore if you haven't already gotten them):

- Berkowitz, Fontrier and Kraft. *A New Approach to Sight Singing*, 5th ed. New York: Norton, 2010.
- Hall, Anne Carothers Hall. *Studying Rhythm*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 3rd edition, 2005.

### **Supplementary materials:**

Several examples, pdfs, recordings, etc. will be posted on blackboard.

### **Teaching Strategies:**

In class we will practice activities that will help you develop the ability to produce (improvisation) and reproduce (through singing or dictation) melodies, progressions, and rhythms. In order to reinforce scale-degree function, we will use moveable-‘Do’ solfège for singing and pitch dictation exercises. To reinforce rhythmic hierarchy, we will use rhythm syllables for rhythmic materials. Also, since music is a bodily activity, we will move around a lot.

**Learning Strategies:**

Check your embarrassment at the door: aural skills class is just about the weirdest thing a human can do with other humans. Accept it and move on. Don't talk, don't play around on your computers and phones, don't loudly eat hard candy. I'll be as engaging as I can be, but you must meet me halfway. As they say in the business: we're not here to watch TV, we're here to make TV. Similarly, I have no exact attendance policy; however, class participation is a third of your grade and if you are not here you cannot participate.

**Grading:**

33% homework and handed in assignments

33% tests and quizzes

33% attendance & class participation

1% Handwriting

**Coursework:***Integrity:*

Don't cheat, we're here to learn. (Who are you trying to impress?) However, all work must include the following signed and dated statement:

"I have abided by the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy."

*Homework:*

For the majority of meetings, there will be some short exercise that reinforces the day's class topic. These can be melodies, group singing, rhythms, keyboard work, etc. I will also often provide dictations for you to do on your own, either posted on blackboard or from some other internet source.

*Tests and Quizzes:*

Periodically, I will give short in-class quizzes to make sure everyone is as comfortable with the material as need be. At the end of each unit, I will give individual tests one-on-one.

*Final Exam:*

This class will have a final exam, and it will involve not only practiced melodies and rhythms, but musical production by sight. It will be weighted similarly to other one-on-one tests.

*Late work, Low Grades, Freebees:*

You get two late-work and low-grade freebees. That is, you can hand in two assignments however late or terrible as you need them to be. But with the exception of these two freebees, your work will be on time and count toward your final grade.

*Academic Workload Guidelines:*

According to the Undergraduate Bulletin, students should plan to devote between 2 and 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class. For this class, that works out to 4 to 6 hours per week reviewing your notes, practicing skills, and completing assignments. This amount of time will vary according to your skill level.

*Some Opportunities and Ideas for Practicing Skills* (courtesy of Dr. Ricci):

1. Find a practice buddy or buddies and establish regular practice times.
2. In band/orchestra rehearsal: Dictate the melody, rhythm, and/or harmonic progression of another instrumental group while yours is tacit. Check with your friend in that group or a score in the library to check yourself.
3. In the practice room: Sing (the melody of) the piece you're practicing on solfège syllables. Practice the rhythm with rhythm syllables. Did it change the way you perform the piece? If so, how?
4. Take a warm-up used in class and compose some variations on it. Locate the warm-up pattern in a melody or melodies in BFK or in music you are performing.

### **Schedule**

Our schedule will essentially parallel the theory sequence, beginning with basic chromatic techniques and progressing through more complex techniques such as common-tone modulation and dominant-seventh reinterpretation. Rhythmically, we will begin with increasingly complex single-meter exercises, and move into metric modulations and polymeters.

### **Evaluations:**

In order to comply with the University-Wide Evaluation Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure, section IIA.3.(b), all students are required to complete a faculty evaluation for this course. I will also periodically provide informal evaluations throughout the semester.

### **Sample Class:**

5 minute vocal warm up (e.g. sing Do-to-Do scales)

5 minute ear warm up (e.g. I play a V7 followed by a pitch, you identify its scale degree)

10 minute focus on new concept as a class (e.g., I build us up to doing two-against three as a class, or I play three-chord progression in which one is an applied dominant for the class to identify)

10 partner work on new concept (e.g., workshop an two-against-three exercise or improvise applied dominant bass patterns to one another)

10 minute bookwork (e.g., sing prepared melody or rhythm or sight sing)

10 minute dictation of some kind