

MUSI1901: Songwriting

Newcastle City Precinct

Semester 1 - 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

The School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which all cultures are accorded respect and all students and staff are expected to act with honesty, fairness, trustworthiness and accountability in dealings with others. The School recognises and respects the unique histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their unbroken relationship with the lands and the waters of Australia over millennia, and the validity of Aboriginal ways of knowing. We are dedicated to reconciliation and to offering opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access and succeed in higher education.

OVERVIEW

Course Description This course introduces students to the foundational technical skills required to write a song in a contemporary popular style. Students will develop their skills in lyric writing, melodic writing, form, and chord sequences. This course will provide an overview of the use of computer software for recording and presenting works to a professional standard.

Requisites This course replaces MUSI2004. If you have successfully completed MUSI2004 you cannot enrol in this course.

Contact Hours

Lecture

Face to Face On Campus

1 hour(s) per Week for 8 Weeks starting Week 1

Tutorial

Face to Face On Campus

1 hour(s) per Week for 8 Weeks starting Week 1

Workshop

Face to Face On Campus

2 hour(s) per Week for 5 Weeks starting Week 9

Unit Weighting Workload

10

Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.

COURSE OUTLINE

CONTACTS

Course Coordinator	Newcastle City Precinct adam.manning@newcastle.edu.au Consultation: by appointment
Teaching Staff	Other teaching staff will be advised on the course Canvas site.
School Office	School of Humanities Creative Industries and Social Sciences NU Space, Level 4 409 Hunter Street Newcastle HCISS@newcastle.edu.au +61 4985 4500

SYLLABUS

Course Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• foundational song writing techniques and how to critique works• melody writing, chord progressions, hooks and the writing of lyrics, rhythmic patterns and form• stylistic markers for popular music genres such as rock, reggae, R&B, folk/country and hip hop
Course Learning Outcomes	<p>On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Create and present a new original work demonstrating foundational songwriting techniques.2. Identify foundational songwriting techniques in selected musical works3. Describe the various stylistic characteristics of popular music and music genres4. Analyse and critique their own works
Course Materials	See Canvas for Course resources

SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Topic	Learning Activity	Assessment Due
1	26 Feb	Introduction: What is a song? What makes a good song?	Listening pieces, song deconstruction	
2	4 Mar	"The Singer-Songwriter"	Listening pieces, comparative analysis	
3	11 Mar	Expression of Self	Listening pieces, journal activity with prompts	
4	18 Mar	Genre and Niches	Listening pieces, comparative analysis	
5	25 Mar	Earworms, Repetition & Chords	Listening pieces, work on proposal, Improv activity in small groups	
6	1 Apr		Concession Day – No Class	
7	8 Apr	The Anti-song: Different Approaches to structure and Form	Listening pieces, presentation of proposal, Song structure activity in small groups Semester Break	1. Proposal
8	29 Apr	Music That You Can Dance To: Tempo, Pace and Feel	Listening pieces, tempo and genre activity in groups, analysis scaffold	
9	6 May	Communicating Place	Listening pieces, research activity on sounds of places	
10	13 May	Songs of Social Change	Listening pieces, song deconstruction, working on original songs	2. Analysis
11	20 May	Persuasive Communication	Listening pieces, writing drills and prompts, working on original songs	
12	27 May	Pulling it all together	Listening pieces, peer feedback on original works	
13	3 June	Sharing Songs	Presentation of original works	3. Original song
Examination Period				
Examination Period				

ASSESSMENTS

This course has 3 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Songwriting Project Proposal	Week 7 - Tuesday 9 th April	Individual	25%	1, 2
2	Analysis of set works	Week 10 - Tuesday 11.59pm 14 th May	Individual	35%	2, 3
3	Create an original song composition	Week 13 – Tuesday 4 th June	Individual	40%	1, 2, 4

Late Submissions

The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without

an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days.

Assessment 1 - Songwriting Project Proposal 25%

Assessment Type	Proposal / Plan
Purpose	To plan and document the process of the creating an original musical work.
Description	Students will submit a proposal for an original song that they will create throughout the semester. The proposal should capture ideas, themes, inspiration and resources and may include (but is not limited to) materials such as moodboards, demos, song structures, musical notation, lyrics etc. The proposed song will be further developed completed over the semester.
	The proposal may be presented in written and/or recorded forms (vlog, podcast) and should be the equivalent of two written pages plus references. Students will present their ideas in class on Tuesday April 9th.
Weighting	25%
Length	1000 words + references
Due Date	Week 7 - Tuesday April 9th
Submission Method	In Class Online
Assessment Criteria	Depth of background research and consistency in academic referencing Quality of written material Creativity and scope Communication of ideas Songwriting style and technique
Return Method	In Class
Feedback Provided	In Class

Assessment 2 - Analysis of set works 35%

Assessment Type	Case Study / Problem Based Learning
Purpose	To identify and describe techniques and stylistic elements of musical works.
Description	Students will select and analyse three contrasting works of their own choosing. The works show be shown as connected through themes covered in this course. The pieces should come from three different artists or groups and may be from any era. Each analysis should be supported with academic references and may include tables or diagrams where helpful.
	Students will present a short overview of their analysis in class.
Weighting	35%
Length	1500 words + references
Due Date	Week 10 11.59pm Tuesday 14 th May
Submission Method	Online
Assessment Criteria	The analyses should be submitted as a single PDF or word document through Canvas. Clarity and effectiveness of communication Research and academic referencing Quality of written material Analysis and critical thinking Relevance to lecture topics Scope and selection of works
Return Method	Online
Feedback Provided	In Class

Assessment 3 - Create an original song composition 40%

Assessment Type	Project
Purpose	To create and reflect on an original musical work. Students will present their original works to their peers in class.
Description	Students will create and original song, using themes and techniques discussed in class. The work should be documented through a recording or score, as well as materials such as a lyrics sheet and/or chord charts. The piece may be performed live or a recording played in

the class presentation.

The work should be accompanied by a 200-300 word artist statement, defining the key elements and themes in the song and notable aspects of the creative process.

Weighting

40%

Length

3-4mins + lyrics and short statement

Due Date

Week 13 4th June Tuesday

Submission Method

In Class

Online

Assessment Criteria

Creativity and clarity of vision for the song
Originality and consistency in stylistic elements
Cohesive and developed musical ideas and techniques
Execution of the original work
Communication and presentation of ideas

Return Method

In Class

Feedback Provided

In Class

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Grading Scheme

This course is graded as follows:

Range of Marks	Grade	Description
85-100	High Distinction (HD)	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic achievement; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
75-84	Distinction (D)	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
65-74	Credit (C)	Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic achievement; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
50-64	Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic achievement; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
0-49	Fail (FF)	Failure to satisfactorily achieve learning outcomes. If all compulsory course components are not completed the mark will be zero. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.

*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

Communication Methods

Communication methods used in this course include:

- Canvas Course Site: Students will receive communications via the posting of content or announcements on the Canvas course site.
- Email: Students will receive communications via their student email account.
- Face to Face: Communication will be provided via face to face meetings or supervision

Course Evaluation

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement.

Oral Interviews (Vivas)

As part of the evaluation process of any assessment item in this course an oral examination (viva) may be conducted. The purpose of the oral examination is to verify the authorship of the material submitted in response to the assessment task. The oral examination will be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in the [Oral Examination \(viva\) Procedure](#).

In cases where the oral examination reveals the assessment item may not be the student's own work the case will be dealt with under the [Student Conduct Rule](#).

Academic Misconduct All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity Policy, refer to <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35>.

Adverse Circumstances The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s). Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where:

1. the assessment item is a major assessment item; or
2. the assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the Course Outline that students may apply the online Adverse Circumstances system;
3. you are requesting a change of placement; or
4. the course has a compulsory attendance requirement.

Before applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstance Affecting Assessment Items Procedure available at:
<https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236>

Important Policy Information The Help button in the Canvas Navigation menu contains helpful information for using the Learning Management System. Students should familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures at <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/no-room-for/policies-and-procedures> that support a safe and respectful environment at the University.

This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original.

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