

# STINT Teaching Sabbatical 2024

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Here follows my report for my STINT Teaching Sabbatical at Amherst College, Massachusetts, USA; a Liberal Arts Education college, founded in 1821.

## **Preparation and planning**

An early and very welcome Christmas gift was delivered right before Christmas 2022: The STINT (TS) Teaching Sabbatical had elected me as one of their fellows for fall 2023. I was offered to spend the TS at Amherst College (AC) in Massachusetts. Since I never had been to the US the first thing I did was to check a map where Amherst was situated. It turned out to be a small town in New England and AC itself a Liberal Arts Education college. I was very excited about this opportunity since I had expressed an interest in learning more about this form of education in my application. On top of that I realized that AC is one of the highest ranked colleges in the US. Their financial resources is something that any institution in Swedish higher education only can dream about. In other words, this place proved to be the ideal place to learn more about Liberal Arts Education.

Early February I went to Stockholm for a STINT seminar where last year's STINT Fellows shared their experience and first steps were taken. Next step was the planning trip to Amherst during one week in April. The aim of this visit was to meet the department of music and its faculty, meet with some key figures at the college and hopefully find housing for the fall. The trip had been preceded by close contact with Janet Tobin, Associate Provost and STINT coordinator at AC, and Prof. Darryl Harper, chair of department of music and the person I turned out to co-teach with. A program had been prepared for me that gave a good picture of the college in general and the department of music in particular. I met with most of the colleagues, either at communal lunches or during individual meetings. The atmosphere was very welcoming. After the planning trip a number of Zoom meetings took place in order to plan the fall. I also managed to find housing which to my surprise is exceptionally expensive in the US. Since I did not bring any family with me, I chose to rent a room in a house just outside Amherst. This student-like life turned out being a surprisingly good experience with a friendly and respectful host who also was very interested in music.

## **Tasks and responsibilities**

To my surprise, I did not end up teaching a course in either music history or ethnomusicology, which I had specified as my strengths in my application and is what I normally teach at my home institution. But it turned out being a relief and a welcome break in my otherwise clear-cut defined

teaching activities. After some discussion and thinking together with Prof. Harper, we agreed on that I should not teach an entirely new course on a new topic on my own, since that most likely would attract few students. We discussed teaching on existing courses, and finally the department suggested co-teaching with Prof. Harper in a course called *Exploring Music* which is essentially a course on tonal harmony on a basic level. This is a subject I had never taught as an independent topic but often is incorporated in my courses on music history, ensemble conducting and choir in the music teacher's programme. My background as a trained music teacher and experience from teaching high school students were of great help as well as my own activities as a musician. But still I had never taught an entire course on the subject, and on top of that music theory has a slightly different vocabulary in the US (more below). I was both thrilled and a little worried whether I would manage this task. But I was in safe hands of Prof. Harper who had taught this course earlier and is a very experienced teacher and excellent musician. Co-teaching does not mean to share a classes among two teacher, but to be two teachers in the classroom at every class. This is rewarding for both students and teachers and makes the workload lighter. The problem is that this a costly system. Co-teaching in this case meant that we followed Prof. Harper's outline of this course. I contributed giving classes on subjects relevant to the syllabus, assisted in reviewing the assignments and sometimes developed my own course content and assignments. Often and even so towards the end of the course, classes became more of a collaboration between the two of us. I was happy both with the choice of course and the co-teaching situation. In particular I enjoyed teaching a subject so close to the materiality of music. I also had a good role model to teach with since Prof. Harper was an example to follow in the classroom with his friendly attitude towards the students and patient way of explaining the corner stones in music theory. Prof. Harper was, as mentioned above, also the department chair having worked at AC for several years, also in administrative capacities. This meant that I had an excellent direct access to learning about Liberal Arts and the teaching associated with it. He also explained many things about how AC is organized which was very helpful for me.

We taught 3 classes a week where each class lasted for 50 minutes. The course had 12 students. In addition to this, the students met with a Teaching Assistant (TA) once a week in smaller groups. The TA helped the students to further develop what we had gone through in class. The students had been divided into three groups based on their previous skills. We had one weekly meeting with the TA to discuss what we had done in class to help the TA to find appropriate tasks for the students. The Teaching Assistant is a Graduate Associate position designed primarily as a teaching position. The TA support students with small group instruction in cases where they are in large courses (like sectionals for the choir Glee Club, Symphony Orchestra, or Jazz Ensemble) or they are getting lots of theoretical information from the faculty that they have to process experientially (e.g., aural skills). Anyone with a bachelor's degree in music is eligible, but AC give preference to recent graduates from the college and then to recent graduates from the Five Colleges.

Typically for AC, the course description is rather vague. The syllabus (appendix 1) is more detailed than the course description but still far from the rigid syllabi we use in Sweden where the content, goals, text books and literature of each course are thoroughly defined. I call this difference a difference between process orientated (AC) and goal oriented (Sweden) syllabi. This

has consequences for the teaching where the AC model more can adapt to the students' actual level, and do not necessarily need to meet all these goals. There is no absolute limit where the students have to be one the course is finished. From a Swedish perspective this might sound as a laissez-faire attitude and the someone called the syllabus a "wish list", but this is certainly not the case. The teachers a considerable amount of energy and time in finding assignments and preparing classes that meet the students' needs. This attitude is in turn a consequence, as I see it, of the vision of Liberal Arts in that they strive for educating whole people and how the curriculum is structured ( a so called open curriculum, something that space not permits me to go into further detail). Individual courses have in this perspective a smaller importance in this holistic thinking. In the long run it seems to end up in very good results as seen in the high ranking. We must not forget that AC has highly motivated students and a number of applicants that far supersede available places (see further under Admission).

Student evaluations were conducted both at midterm and at the end of the course. The evaluations were made during class which secured a 100% response rate. This strategy is something to consider doing at home since a recurrent problem is the low answering rate on course evaluations. I was a bit concerned that the students might find my way of teaching alien of that it was confusing with two teachers in the classroom. Luckily, the students in both evaluations expressed positive views in having two different perspectives. It seems as it helped them to realize that in music theory there can often be two or more answers to a problem, depending on how you justify your solution. Sometimes we even deliberately gave the students two different solutions to the assignments: Prof. Harper's solution and Prof. Lagergren's solution. This sometimes led to interesting discussions during class.

### **Content of course *Exploring music***

For those more specifically interested in music theory and especially tonal harmony: this section is for you. The course Exploring music is a course that is taught by many of the music faculty and together with two other courses in music theory regarded as the backbones in the educational programme at the music department. It is offered almost every semester. Music theory is taught partially different in the US and Sweden. The biggest difference which has consequences for the whole teaching situation is the use of solfege and Roman numerals. Roman numerals in short means to assigns every step in the scale a Roman numeral which indicate the chord in root position. Upper case for major chords and lower case for minor chords. In a C major scale, I indicates C major, while ii indicates d minor, iii e minor, IV F major etc. The use of Roman numerals allowed the students to quicker develop a bigger range of usable chords than in "the Swedish system" (*funktionsanalys*) which earlier in the process needs to explain chords as modulations, something that is almost entirely avoided with Roman numerals. The downside is that the students perhaps too early were exposed to a multitude of possibilities which made their harmonizations rather wild at the beginning of the course before they had learnt more about how progressions and the circle of fifths work. In my view, both systems have their advantages and disadvantages. The Roman numerals I learnt to master fairly well, and I realized how useful this system can be. Solfege on the other hand will never be part of my musical DNA more than in a theoretical sense, partly because my conception of intervals has been embodied in another way. To this can be added that there exist many different versions of solfege used for different

purposes and repertoires. The solfege I have mainly have worked with is a system that is used in music from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance based on hexachords – not on the octave. However, the students all knew solfege well from before and had little or no difficulty using it in for example sight singing. Some of them also used them together with hand signs (see appendix 2). Another important part of the course was to learn to use cadences properly; full, plagal half, and deceptive cadences. Voice leading initially had little place in this course but became a matter as we started giving the students assignments consisting of composing short pieces that should be singable. The concept *singable* led to many classroom discussions since it can be experienced in different ways. Typical assignments included to analyse a polyphonic piece with chords and Roman numerals (an example is found in appendix 3) or to compose an eight-bar song with a melody and chords, the chords written out in root position and cadences indicated. Among my contributions to the course was composing a melody to an existing progression using *La Folia* as an example, and to analyse a four-part version of the song *Sankta Lucia*. The earlier mentioned classes with the Teaching Assistant served as further deepening content we had gone through in class, as for example melodic and rhythmic dictation, recognizing intervals, applied chords, to name a few examples. This was very valuable and much appreciated by the students.

### **Activities during the Teaching Sabbatical**

Since my workload in the course Exploring Music was light (but extremely rewarding), I had time for exploring other parts of AC and the life at a Liberal Arts College. As a musicologist and musician, there were many possibilities to explore the concert life which I did as much as possible. I also expanded my networking to outside AC.

### **College Choirs**

For my own enjoyment, I joined the Amherst Choral Society, which is an old and well-established institution at AC. The Choral Society consists of two choirs: Glee Club and the Concert Choir. Glee Club is a larger choir from which a small number of singers are selected for the Concert choir, which sings a more demanding repertoire. They rehearse two times a week; Mondays and Wednesdays divided so that Glee Club rehearses for 80 minutes and after a short break, the Concert Choir rehearse for another 70 minutes. As with the short classes discussed above, these rehearsals are relatively short but since the rehearsals take place twice a week and share the same level of efficiency as the classes, we were able to cover a wide range of material. The Concert Society consists typically of college students but is also open to staff and faculty. During fall 2023, I was the only faculty member in the choir and the by far oldest choir singer that semester. Nevertheless, I much enjoyed being guided through for me new repertoire, the pure joy of being one in the crowd, and a splendid opportunity to through participation learn something about American choir culture. One of the topics for the fall repertoire were American composers, for example Eric W. Sawyer (composer and teacher at the AC music department), Adolphus Hailstork, Elaine Hagenberg, Rosephanye Powell; composers I probably not would meet in a European choir. The Concert Choir performs at AC ceremonies such as graduation, convocation, memorials but also together at concerts with AC's own (!) symphony orchestra also consisting of college students. I also had one opportunity to work with the choir during a choir

retreat. I taught them a Swedish folk song by ear and I also coached them on Swedish pronunciation on the song *Jag såg dig* by Swedish vocal ensemble Kraja.

### **Conscious choices**

I made a few deliberate choices at my arrival. One was to not have a car, which was a challenge in a country where public transportation is lacking compared to European standards. The flipside is that I got to know the New England public transportation system really well and also experience how factors such as socio-economy and race are determining factors concerning who travels by bus or train.

Another choice was to be as present at AC as possible. I spent my working hours in my office also those days when I did not teach or had other commitments which allowed me to much about the inner life of the music department in particular and AC in general. I attended several faculty lunches (called *luncheons*), where faculty were invited to a free lunch and a one-hour reflection on different matters. What was in particularly interesting for me was how the initiative at these luncheons often was placed at faculty, not in administration, students, leadership of college etc. One question on the theme to foster community could for example be “What did you do to create a good climate for work during this semester?”. This could be an attitude to bring home.

I also briefly got acquainted with the Five College Consortium. This is a cooperation between Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, and University of Massachusetts. These institutions have a collaboration on courses and collaboration between faculty. For example this consortium offers a selection of courses to all students on topics in which they are particularly strong or courses that not are likely to have enough students if offered at only one institution. For example, the Five Colleges collaborate on an early music program and ethnomusicologists gather for seminars and communal lunches to share research and experiences.

I also expanded my contacts and network outside AC. I had previous contacts at Holy Cross in Worcester, another Liberal Arts college not very far from Amherst. I spent one day there with their head of department and musicologist Daniel DiCenso learning a little about their college. I learnt above all that Liberal Arts can be taught in many ways, but what Liberals Arts colleges seem to have in common is the free flow between courses being part of a holistic thinking about teaching and learning.

I also contacted the department of musicology at University of Massachusetts; the state university that has several campuses, one of them in Amherst. I was invited to give a short presentation of my research in one of their music history classes under Prof. Emiliano Ricciardi. I also visited their Renaissance Centre and examined a (probably) Dominican antiphoner from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

These meetings outside AC had been more difficult to conduct if it not had been for the friendly and open American attitude that made it easy to contact people. If you found an interesting person you wanted to know more about it was never difficult to ask them out for lunch or coffee. This informal way of learning more about American life in general and AC in particular was very valuable for me.

A longer trip was made to Denver, Colorado, where I attended the annual conference of the American Musicological Society in November. This was also an opportunity to see a different part of the US; the Wild West and the Rocky Mountains which was a captivating experience! The conference was an excellent way of learning more about American musicology, and to my surprise many of my European colleagues had crossed the Atlantic to attend this conference (there was a lot of jetlag going on). There is no way of giving a short summary of the current state of American musicology since the research institutions are so many and diverse, more than to say that all kinds of research is taking place. This year, the conference was a joint conference with the Society for Music Theory meaning that many papers had an explicit music theoretical perspective.

For a scholar like me specializing in early music, archival visits are an important part of the work. The Dominican antiphoner was mentioned above, but there was more to see. From my previous research, I knew that there was a 15<sup>th</sup> century manuscript from the Dutch abbey Mariënwater, belonging to the order of the Birgittines at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. Since New York is not very far from Amherst by American standards, I visited it on several occasions and during one of these visits I went to see this manuscript and at the same time learn something about research libraries in the US. As I suspected, the manuscript was not very useful for my own research but nevertheless interesting to expand my knowledge about manuscript culture at this particular abbey and a good excuse to visit a library with an outstanding collection of medieval and renaissance manuscripts.

The mandatory midterm meeting for all STINT Fellows in the US took place October 26-27. We gathered at Ohio State University where we shared our experiences halfway through the STINT TS. We gave short presentations of the universities/colleges and presented our teaching tasks. It turned out that there were as many solutions as STINT Fellows on how the TS was conducted depending among other things on the size of the institution and different academic traditions. Many taught their own courses, with all challenges that means in terms of teaching and grading in a different system. Fewer of us were co-teaching. Some had brought their families and had to manage a family life in a different country, others like myself conducted the STINT TS mainly on our own, accompanied by our spouses or partners only for shorter periods. Even if our situations differed in many aspects, we all highly enjoyed our stays and were grateful for this chance to get a totally new experience as university teachers.

### **Important lessons**

The most important lesson and what made the deepest impression on me both as a person and as a teacher is the great love for the students and the teaching. There is an absolute love for the

students and a passion about the teaching. One of the first things I learnt at AC during the introduction days for new faculty is that this is a teacher driven institution. Students are seen as a resource and not as a burden. The mutual appreciation between colleagues was another palpable feature of the AC atmosphere. We have a lot to learn from this at my home institution. However, the emphasis on teaching does not mean that faculty are not active as performers and/or researchers. Shorter semesters and the sabbatical system allows for their own research that is clearly separated from the teaching period. AC holds many successful researchers and highly accomplished artists.

On a personal note, an important lesson is that I actually can teach in English. Speaking at conferences for a mixed international audience where many like myself are not native speakers is something else than teaching (mostly) native English speakers on a topic they do not know as well as I do. I had to learn to be very precise with my language which has a huge challenge.

### **Comparison between the host and the home institutions (in Sweden)**

Many of the similarities and differences between AC and the Linnaeus university have been touched on above. Here follows a few more remarks that not yet have been covered, not in any particular order.

Since AC has a structure that is so different from the Linnaeus University there are more differences than similarities between these two institutions. One example is the fact that the students are so young! AC strives for a heterogenous mix of students and are very active in the recruitment process, not only in getting the best students but also in recruiting students from a diversity perspective and different countries. In this they are successful, but when it comes to age the students are extremely homogenous being roughly between 18 and 24 years. I find this a strength with the Swedish system where we have students of varying ages leading to different life experiences in the same classroom. Here also deserves to mention the formal way faculty in which were addressed. Students always address faculty as professor (in the widest sense) and it took a while to get used to being addressed as “Professor Lagergren”.

Another difference is that introducing new courses at AC and deciding on forms for examination is a less complicated process and primarily made on department level. Introduction on new courses is a less complicated matter than in the Swedish system, partly because of the open curriculum system. The lower threshold also allows faculty to suggest courses that are close to their research interest and the importance of progression between courses is less important in a Liberal Arts education than in the Swedish higher educational system.

I listened to several classes in other courses to learn about different course content and different styles of teaching in Liberal Arts. My colleagues were welcoming and I never experienced any problem in having access to other classes and auditing classes seemed to be a fairly common system. One reason could for example be that a new course was planned and the teacher wanted to know how it would relate to the planned course. This is something that could be a useful tool at my home institution in order to spur discussions on pedagogy and content.

The planning of courses has two options. Either three classes a week of 50 minutes each (the plan we followed) or two classes a week of 1 hour 20 min. each. This means that each course in total consist of 2 hours 40 mins of teaching each week. All courses last for one semester (that is 13 weeks) and the students take four classes every semester. This means that in total, the students have classes for 10 hours a week. The short classes meant a new way of thinking about teaching for me, in relation to the Swedish system which tends to have longer classes of two to three hours. I was already at my spring visit stunned by the efficiency in the 50 minutes classes and how much that actually can be covered in such relatively short time. The schedule is laid out at the beginning of the semester and it does not seem as the teachers have any real influence over this schedule, in contrary to the flexibility at my home institution where own commitments such as conference participation etc. allow classes to be moved when necessary. This makes the teaching at AC very regular and easy to predict, but on the contrary difficult when you have to be somewhere else. In our case, we could cover for each other which was needed at occasions.

Comparing the workload was interesting and a question I often was asked. At AC, faculty teaches two courses every semester, never more and sometime only one course if they also have administrative tasks (for example as chair of department). Counting hours as in our Swedish system with *årsarbetstid* (working hours per year) is something totally unknown. In addition to these courses, faculty are expected to supervise theses in addition to teaching two courses per semester. The thesis load for each faculty member varies from department to department depending in part on the number of major students enrolled. In general, it is considered a crucial teaching responsibility for tenure-line faculty.

Since the semester at AC lasts only 13 weeks, teaching is offered 26 weeks a year in comparison to 40 weeks in Sweden. Fall and spring semesters are separated by a gap of approx. 5 weeks for exams, break, wrapping up and preparing for the next semester. This gives a welcome relief while we in the Swedish system immediately rush from fall to spring semester, reviewing exams at the same time as we start new courses. There is also a sabbatical program at AC. Faculty members become eligible for sabbatical leave every six semesters of teaching. The sabbatical program is designed to support a faculty member's research program (or creative work for artists). One is expected to submit a project proposal in advance and to submit a report at the conclusion of the leave. A short calculation of the teaching time shows that no matter how I calculate: faculty at AC has much more time for research than we have in the Swedish higher educational system if you not have (external) funding for your own research. This is in particularly interesting since AC prides themselves of being a teaching driven college and not a research institution.

## **Admission**

One of the biggest differences concerns the financial situations and the admission policy. AC is a wealthy, private institution, while the Linnaeus University struggles with the shortcomings of the Swedish governmental underfinanced higher educational system. Admission and economy are closely related in the US since a rich institution can support students they want to enroll in a way that is more difficult for poorer institutions. The American admission system is highly complicated and no institution is like the other in contrast to our streamlined admission system



through antagning.nu. It has been a challenge to understand the AC admission system not only because of the limited time I spent there but also because of its complexity. Here are a few remarks I think are interesting to compare to Swedish system:

As for higher educational in general in the US, AC strives for DEI; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion in their student body. AC aims at enrolling students from different backgrounds, a strategy that seems to be successful in though there was an ongoing discussion on this in relation to athletic admissions during my time at AC. Moreover, AC actively recruit students from abroad and has an explicit aim of enrolling “the best students” which also means that they have generous support for students with talent but no financial means. To give an idea of how popular AC is, they every year receive closer to 15,000 applications. They admit a little over 1,000 (7%), and just under 500 ultimately enroll in the first-year class. This also gives an indication of that AC is a popular employer and explains the pride of teaching at AC that I experienced.

Finally, one huge difference between the Swedish and American academic cultures is the American lack of coffee machines that can function as a department’s campfire where faculty and staff meet in an informal way. If I had to point out one thing I missed, I can only think of the department coffee machine.

## **Recommendations**

A recurrent problem among the STINT Fellows seemed to be that the home institution did not have a clear plan for what to do with the experiences gained during the STINT TS. This became apparent when we shared experiences among us during the mid-term seminar. I can only think of this as a waste of both highly experienced teachers with a passion for teaching and with Swedish tax money. I highly encourage the STINT Fellows to make a plan of how to communicate and make use of the insights with head of department and/or dean of faculty before going out. STINT could also during the interview with *prefekt* and *dekan* stress this aspect more. After all, it is the university that nominates the STINT Fellows and there is a competition in the selection process. STINT can also press on this issue in the nomination process, perhaps a plan for how to use the experiences can be included in the nomination letter in line with STINT’s wish to contribute to the renewal of higher education and the creation of new networks. Likewise, STINT could stress the expectations of co-teaching more in their contact with the host institutions.

A recommendation to the STINT Fellow is: use your time wisely, try to meet as many people you can, audit other classes than your own course. It is easy to expand the network in the US!

## **Action plan: Topics to address and, if possible, introduce in Sweden**

At the moment, there is no action plan from the Linnaeus University on how to implement or make use of my STINT TS. On a personal level, I will be able to make use of the contacts I made and through individuals stay in contact with the host institution. Individual colleagues at LNU have also expressed interest in learning more about my experiences and I have been invited to share my experiences about teaching culture at AC on one occasion this spring. Spring 2024,

LNU organizes a half day for returning STINT Fellows centred around pedagogical development. I will there share my experiences on oral exams, which however as note above not is a big issue at AC. If any of my experiences actually will be used in reality (meaning the class room) is an open question.

### **Final words**

From a political viewpoint, this fall has been most interesting when it comes to American politics. It has become clearer to me why US is such a divided country, how BIG it is, and which factors that contributes to this divided society. My view on American politics has been more nuanced.

The most important lesson has been that things can be different. Having worked for about 10 years at the Linnaeus University, you easily get used to certain ways of doing things and into the idea that there is no other way of doing them. It is a good lesson every now and then to get out of the rabbit hole.

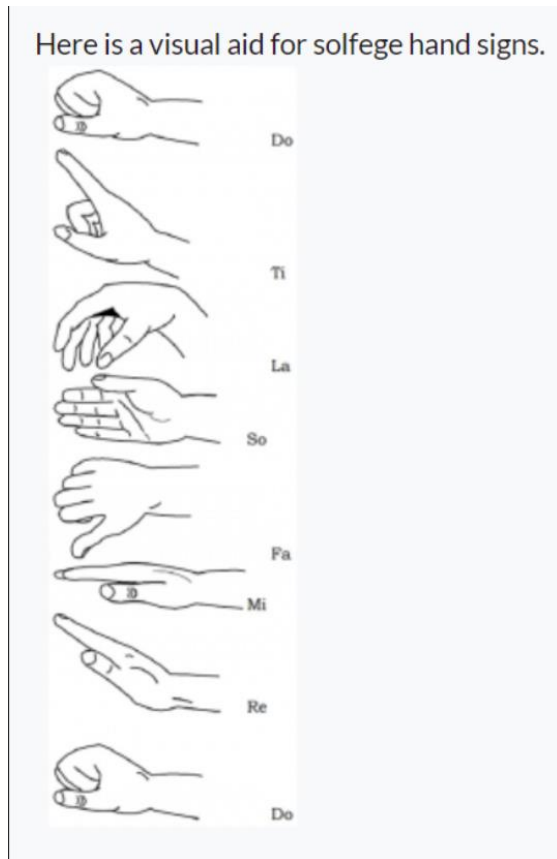
In a little talk I gave at a department lunch at AC just before my return to Sweden, I likened myself to an alien who had landed in Amherst for a short period. In a way it is true and not only a funny rhetoric trick in order to amuse my Amherst colleagues – mentally I often was an alien. Things were different, but different in an interesting way and it is healthy to be exposed to different ways of doing things.

I am grateful to Amherst College and STINT for enabling me to discover the rich world of doing things in higher education in a different way, I would not mind coming back!

## Appendices:

Appendix 1: Syllabus MUSI 211 Exploring Music (see separate file)

Appendix 2: Solfege hand signs:



## Appendix 3: Example assignment

Harmonize Amazing Grace with mostly primary chords (I, IV, V) and a judicious use of secondary chords (ii, iii, vi, vii°). Remember that secondary chords are used for "shading" but that you want to keep a clear sense of harmonic motion (movement away from or toward the tonic).

1. This time, give your chords rhythmic value, but they must correspond to the melodic rhythm (corresponding half notes and quarter notes).
2. Write your triads in bass clef below the melody. Write your Roman numerals below your triads.
3. Submit a PDF of your work.
4. Using [the instructions for uploading video](#) (provided under Resources for Getting Started), upload a video of yourself playing the melody on keyboard with your right hand and singing, while also playing the chords with your left hand. If this is too difficult, do the chords and the melody separately.

A - ma - zing - Grace how sweet the sound, that saved a

wretch like me. I once was lost but now am

found, T'was blind but now I see

# Course Syllabus

## Exploring Music (MUSI 211) – Fall 2023

MWF 10:00-10:50 a.m.  
Arms Music Center 102

Office Hours: Mondays 9:00-9:50 a.m.

Professors: Darryl Harper and Karin Lagergren  
Graduate Associate: Kai Glashausser

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### **Course description**

Through analysis, performance, and composition, we will build a solid working understanding of basic principles of melody and harmony common in Western musical traditions. Assignments will include writing and performing short melodies and accompaniments as well as more detailed compositional projects.

### **Who should take this course**

This course is designed for students already familiar with Western musical notation; who may already have several years of formal training in performance on an instrument or voice; or who may have experience performing by ear; but who have not had extensive training in music theory. If you have questions about your placement this course, please contact the professors.

### **What we will learn**

We will reinforce skills and concepts covered in MUSI 111 ("Introduction to Music"), such as:

- Fluid reading and writing of music notation in treble and bass clefs
- Sight-singing
- Performing simple melodies at the keyboard
- An understanding of major and minor keys
- Harmonization using primary chords

We will add to this vocabulary:

- Melodic and harmonic dictation
- Use of more sophisticated harmonic devices such as secondary and applied chords
- Performing simple chord progressions on keyboard

We will apply all these to the composing and harmonization of melodies in a variety of idioms: traditional songs, hymns, pop songs, piano sonatas, chorales, etc.

### **Tools we will use**

You'll need staff paper to take notes in class and for submitting certain assignments.

You'll need a laptop, tablet, or smartphone capable of recording audio and video in the practice room and uploading the files to the course website.

You'll also need a PDF converter to create PDF files for your assignments. Scanners are available in the library for this purpose. You can also download an app to your smartphone/tablet.

There is no textbook for this course.

### **A place to practice**

To prepare assignments, you will need to be able to sing freely and to practice at the piano or a full 88-key keyboard. As a student enrolled in this course, you are entitled to access the practice rooms in Arms Music Center. Obtain a practice room key from Cindy Dumais-Holubowich, Academic Department Coordinator, Monday through Friday between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. during the first two weeks of classes.

### **Intellectual community**

We strive to foster and sustain an intellectual community in the classroom, one committed to transformative learning. For the instructors, this means:

- Giving you enough time to read, listen, watch, and otherwise engage the materials we assign
- Giving you timely, substantive feedback on your work
- Embracing your different styles of learning and approaches to participation
- Challenging you and supporting your progress in the course
- Learning from you

For you, this means:

- Giving yourself enough time to read and fully prepare for each class meeting
- Coming to class with questions; sharing what you are curious about or don't understand; listening attentively; sharing observations and comments to foster understanding
- Attending classes regularly and being on time
- Taking notes on lectures, performances, presentations, and discussions
- Making meta-connections between smaller bits of work and broader themes and issues

### **Assignments**

Learning music is, in some ways, like learning a new language. To build our skills, we will read, write, and perform music daily. Assignments will include writing music notation and singing and playing. It is best to break your assignment preparation into small chunks so that you have frequent engagements with the material. An hour each of several days a week is better than several hours in one sitting. We expect you to spend roughly five hours per week on assignment preparation. In other words, the entire footprint of the course is about nine hours per week: three in class, one in section, and five in independent work.

### **Class attendance and participation**

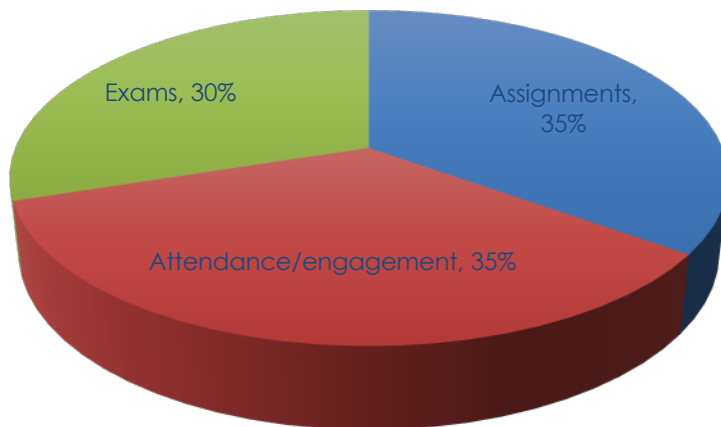
Class meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10:00 to 10:50 a.m.

The class is also divided into sections to support your practice of aural skills in small groups. Sections are led by graduate associate Kai Glashausser and meet an additional 50 minutes once a week at times and locations to be arranged.

Your learning in this course depends largely on your attendance and active participation in classes and section meetings. We therefore place a high value on your

attending classes and section meetings in their entirety and engaging in course activities. You earn a significant portion of the course credit for each time you attend class/section as an engaged participant. You earn partial credit when you are late, leave early, etc. You earn no credit for absences. It is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate for any time you miss.

### Grading weights



### Grading rubric

Grading rubrics can vary for individual assignments, but in general, we will observe the following standards:

- A Work that demonstrates thorough and thoughtful engagement with the assignment instructions; work that demonstrates some creative or original insight or is extraordinary in its expressiveness

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- B Work that demonstrates thorough and thoughtful engagement with the assignment instructions but that lacks development or support in one or two places

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- C Work that lacks development or support in several places or that is incomplete and does not fully engage with the assignment instructions

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- D Work that neglects to address the assignment instructions, that is poorly put together or difficult to understand

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- F Work that is late or not submitted

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*Daniel Ang '15***Communication**

We use email and the course website as the primary means of communication about the course. You are responsible for all emailed and/or posted course-related information. We recommend checking your email account and the course website at least daily. Email is also the best way to reach us. We will normally respond to emails within one school day.

The course website will allow you to monitor your real-time progress in the course. Be sure to check your comments, grades and attendance record periodically, and please contact us with any questions or concerns.

**Office Hours**

We encourage you to attend our weekly office hours to review materials, ask questions, or to get advice about the course. In addition, we will schedule individual meetings with each of you during the semester to support your progress.

**Course Evaluations**

We will make a set of course evaluations available to you around the middle of the semester, and another set of evaluations toward the end of the course. Your identities are protected in both of these rounds of evaluation. The evaluations are essential for



us to assess the effectiveness of the course and areas for improvement. They are also a valuable avenue for you to express your comments and concerns regarding the course.

### **Accommodation**

We strive to make this course welcoming to all students. If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Accessibility Services for coordination of your academic accommodations. You can reach them via email at [accessibility@amherst.edu](mailto:accessibility@amherst.edu), or via phone at 413-542-2337. Once you have your accommodations in place, we will be glad to meet with you privately to discuss the best implementation of your accommodations.

### **Honor Code**

By enrolling in the course, you agree to uphold the principles set forth in the College's [Honor Code](#), including the Statement of Intellectual Responsibility, the Statement of Respect for Persons, and the Statement of Freedom of Expression and Dissent.

### **Course Topics**

Intervals, triads, major keys, harmonization and phrases using primary chords

Harmonic analysis of simple songs using primary chords

Composing simple songs using primary chords

Minor keys, composing songs using minor

Major and minor scales at the keyboard

Seventh chords, secondary chords, and inversions

Applied dominants

Analysis, aural skills and keyboarding with applied dominants, seventh chords, and inversions

Composing with applied dominants and inversions