

Commercial/Popular Music Theory I

MUSI S-207

Summer 2025 (Session B)

Meeting Information

TTh 1:00–4:15

Instructor

Dr Nathaniel Adam (he/him)

Senior Lecturer, Department of Music

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Office Hours

Email to schedule office hours by appointment (Wednesdays preferable).

Course Description

An introduction to music-theory analysis of commercial and popular song (with a focus on American and British music of the past 50 years, across multiple genres). Coursework involves study of form, meter and hypermeter, rhythm, text setting, melody, and harmony, with assigned, listening, musical transcription, and weekly written/oral presentation of analysis. **Knowledge of basic musical notation (treble/bass staff), key signatures, and Roman numeral analysis is required.**

Format

Synchronous, in-person lecture format. Additional asynchronous participation in Canvas discussion boards may be required.

Required Materials

Students must be able to utilize a music streaming service (eg Spotify, Apple Music, etc) and notation software (eg Dorico, Sibelius, MuseScore, etc).

Assignments, Assessments & Grading

There will be six homework assignments of song analysis, worth 6.66% of the final grade each (40% total). There will be four quizzes, worth 5% each (20% total). The final oral presentation and written paper are worth 10% each (20% total), and contribution to in-class discussion is worth 20% (approximately 1.3% per class).

Course Policies

Attendance is mandatory. Multiple absences may result in full-letter-grade deduction.

Academic Integrity

All submitted assignments must be the original work of the student alone. Copying of or reference to other work without citation is not allowed. Absolutely no use of artificial intelligence or related software is allowed in any of the class assignments or activities.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging

I am committed to providing a safe and inclusive classroom community. I ask all students to join me in maintaining a respectful and considerate environment for discussing music together. Please let me know if you or anyone else in the class feels threatened, diminished, or unheard.

Accessibility

Please contact me with any concerns about accessibility of materials, assignments, or class lectures.