COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS
SYLLABUS: 2014FA  MUSIC 118-12300  POPULAR SONGWRITING

Lecture 4:30-5:20   Monday, Wednesday  PCOH 111
Lab        5:25-6:45   Monday, Wednesday  PCOH 111

INSTRUCTOR: Bill Macpherson
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Office hours:  Monday, Wednesday 3:30-4:30 Bonelli Hall 312

2 REQUIRED TEXTS:
1. Pop, Rock and Jazz Theory by Bill Macpherson(provided by the instructor)
2. The Craft and Business of Songwriting by John Braheny  Cost $24.00

REQUIRED MATERIALS:
Staff paper, at least 50 sheets, pencils

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Lecture:  Evaluate the musical elements used in popular songs in various styles
Lab:    Creating commercial melodies, chord progressions and rhythms

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
An introduction to the process of popular songwriting through the example of successful
songwriters, the study of pop and jazz music theory, the study of the craft of lyric writing,
melody writing. Issues about co-writing, demoing, recording, home studios, production
and publishing will be discussed.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Units: 3.00  CSU 36.00 hours lecture, 54.00 hours lab
Introduces popular song writing and the construction of lyrics for the commercial music
industry. Basic knowledge of music fundamentals is assumed.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:
Lecture/Discussion
Listening/Watching Instructional videos
Student Projects/Demoing/Recording/Performing
Testing/Quizzes/Assignments

GRADING BREAKDOWN
A = 90-100   B + 80-89   C = 70-79   D = 60-69   F = Below 60

GRADING:
Midterm Exam    20 points
Final Exam       20 points
Quiz 1           5 points
Quiz 2           5 points
Performance 10 points
Concert report 10 points
Compositions(2) 10 points
Assignments(4) 20 points

COMPLETION OF ALL ASSIGNMENTS: In order to pass the class students must complete all the required assignments, tests and projects. Failure to do so will result in an F for the class.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: You will be dropped from the course if you miss more than 3 classes total unless for medical reasons and documented with a letter from your doctor or you contact me via cell phone or email at least 24 hours in advance of an absence. Being dropped from the course is at the discretion of the instructor.

LATE POLICY: If you are more than 10 minutes late to class you will be marked tardy. Two tardies equal an absence. After 3 absences you will be dropped from the course.

MAKE-UP POLICY: There will be no make-ups for missed exams or quizzes. No late papers, projects or assignments will be accepted.

ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY: Electronic devices may be solely used for note taking only after first asking permission of the instructor, no web surfing, texting or emailing during class. If observed you will be asked to leave class for the day. No cell phones, lap tops or Note Pads to be visible during exams.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY
Students are expected to do their own work as assigned. At College of the Canyons, we believe that academic integrity and honesty are some of the most important qualities college students need to develop and maintain. To facilitate a culture of academic integrity, College of the Canyons has defined plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Due process procedures have been established when plagiarism or academic dishonesty is suspected. At COC, we define plagiarism as follows:

PLAGIARISM is the submission of someone else’s work or ideas as one’s own, without adequate attribution. When a student submits work for a class assignment that includes the words, ideas or data of others, without acknowledging the source of the information through complete, accurate, and specific references, plagiarism is involved. This may include dual submissions of a similar work for credit for more than one class, without the current instructor’s knowledge and approval.

EXAMS AND QUIZZES:

QUIZ 1: Watch either of these two YouTube videos: How Music Works with Howard Goodall-01-Melody(Full Show) or How Music Works with Howard Goodall-02-Rhythm(Full Show)

Or watch the YouTube video series From The Byrds To The Eagles Parts 1-7. A brilliant Documentary on the Folk Rock Scene in California from the 60’s to the 70’s
MIDTERM EXAM: Covers textbook chapters 1, 2, 3, 4

FINAL EXAM: Covers textbook chapters 5, 6, 7, 12

PERFORMANCE/REPORT/COMPOSITIONS/ASSIGNMENTS

1. Performance: All students must participate in a mandatory performance of the songs they composed and co-wrote during the semester. This performance will take place the week before finals. There will be a rehearsal that same week in class of all the various songs and configurations of performers. A program will be made and flyers made and posted on campus. Friends, family and all the COC student body are invited. This is a free event, open to the public. 10 points

2. Concert report: All students must attend some kind of singer/songwriter showcase/performance. This event must be approved by the instructor. A two page typed paper must be written and turned into the instructor about this performance. List the performers, any links to their website or presence on social media. Describe the concert, the music, the songwriting and the venue. Discuss what you liked, what you didn’t like about the performance and the performers. You must document the event you attend by turning in a program or perhaps a selfie of you at the event or with the performers. The selfie can be emailed to the instructor. Turn in the program with your paper. 10 points

3. Compositions: 2 songs All students must compose, demo and turn in two songs written during the semester. Those two songs are due any time before the last day of class. Both songs must be emailed in MP3 format to the instructor. At least one of these two songs needs to be a co-write with another student in the class. Both songs may be a co-write. All songs need to be pop oriented. All songs must have lyrics and vocals. Songs that have a rap section or sections must also have at least one or two different vocal parts and lyrics including a chorus/hook. Any electronica music submitted must also have lyrics and vocals incorporated as integral and essential parts of the composition, including a chorus/hook. Songs may be demoed in or outside of class. Demos on your smart phone, using Garageband, or any other recording platform will be accepted. Periodically songs that are works in progress will be shared in class as well as in private with the instructor during lab time or class time. 10 points total.

4. Assignments: (4)

A. Song title assignment: Create at least 20 song titles. Type them out and turn that list in to the instructor. Read them out loud to the class the day they are due. 5 points.

B. Composer paper and class presentation: Select a composer you admire, someone contemporary or from the past. Write a typed paper two to five pages long about this person. Include general biographical facts, information about the times they lived in, the cultural surroundings, any bands they were in, any significant co-writers they collaborated with, people they composed for or which artists recorded their songs,
a list of their important songs. List their achievements and discuss their national or international significance and legacy. In class present an aural summary of this composer, play examples of their songs, discuss what made this composer unique, what their signature songwriting qualities were, how they composed, how they think about composing, what inspires them etc. For your verbal presentation pick one of their songs and describe to the class your analysis of the song's form, style, it's arrangement and lyrics. Turn in the paper to the instructor the day of your presentation. Paper must include a bibliography page with at least 3 sources. 5 points.

C. Lyric assignment: Take an existing pop song that you like and compose new lyrics to the existing melody and song form. It is recommended to find a karaoke version of the song to use as a platform for you to write your original lyrics. Perform the new lyrics in class by accompanying yourself on guitar or keyboards, or by having a classmate accompany you or sing them to a karaoke version of the song. If you are not a singer then you may just read your new lyric to the class the day the assignment is due. Type out your lyric and turn it in to the instructor that day. 5 points.

D. Lyric and melody assignment: Compose an original melody and lyric to an instrumental track provided to you by the instructor. This track will be emailed to you. Record your vocals over the track and turn it in to the instructor via email. Present your song to the class on the day it is due. This may be a co-write project if you don't sing yourself. The instructor will assist students in finding a co-write partner for this project. 5 points.

PT 1  Introduction to Pop, Rock and Jazz Chord Scale Theory. Examine various techniques of songwriting/learn how to write simple chord charts/the history and legacy of popular song/examination of important songs, their song form and harmonic makeup, various songwriters and their songwriting techniques and habits.
READING ASSIGNMENTS:  Braheny Chps 1,2,3,4

WEEK 1  Introduction, Theory, Read Chapter 1,2
WEEK 2  Theory, Discuss the reading  Quiz 1 on Wed.
WEEK 3  Read Chapter 3,4 Students present/perform examples of their original work/talents in class.
WEEK 4  Discuss the reading. Co-writing teams are assigned. Assignment A, Song title assignment due on Mon.
WEEK 5  Lecture/Co-writing sessions
WEEK 6  Lecture/Co-writing sessions
WEEK 7  Assignment B, Composer paper due on Mon and class presentations on Mon and Wed
WEEK 8  Review for midterm Mon  MIDTERM EXAM Wed

PT 2  Co-writing/Lyric writing/Song structure/Form/Rhyme. Recording/demoing/home studios/session work/production/producing.
READING ASSIGNMENTS:  Braheny Chps 5,6,7,12
WEEK 9  Read Chapters 5,6. Co-writing sessions  Concert report due on Wed.
WEEK 10 Discuss the reading on Mon. Wed co-writing sessions
WEEK 11 Read Chapters 7,12  Assignment C, Lyric assignment due on Mon
Presentations in class  Co-writing session Wed.
WEEK 12 Discuss the reading on Mon. Wed co-writing sessions
WEEK 13 Quiz 2 on Mon.  Wed co-writing sessions
WEEK 14 Assignment D, Lyric and melody assignment due on Mon Presentations in class. Wed co-writing sessions.
WEEK 15 Mon: Performance dress rehearsal in class.  Wed day no class, Wed evening: PERFORMANCE
WEEK 16 Mon: review for final Wed: FINAL EXAM(all Compositions in MP3 form must have been turned in)