

Nashville State Community College
English, Humanities, & Creative Technologies
Music Technology

Fall 2022 Master Course Syllabus

MST-1170 Songwriting I

The purpose of the syllabus is to tell you how the course is organized, what the expectations are, and how you will be graded. In addition, there is important information about how the college will operate during severe weather and how the college will communicate with you. The syllabus is not a contract. Instead, it is meant to help you succeed in this course. If any of the content changes during the semester, you will be notified.

Course information:

Course Title: MST-1170 Songwriting I

Credits: 3

Class Hours: 3 Class Hours

Course Description:

Introductions to basic songwriting: Topics include lyric and melody construction, working with music publishers and performance rights organizations. Professionally written songs and students' songs are analyzed in class.

Not part of a Tennessee Transfer Pathway

Instructor Information:

Name:

Email:

Office Phone:

Office Location:

Office Hours:

Instructor Zoom Room link:

Class Session Zoom Link Information (if virtual):

Password:

Required Textbook(s) & Other Materials:

Textbook(s): Six Steps to Songwriting Success, 2nd Edition, Jason Blume, Watson-Guption Publications

ISBN: 9780823084777

Access Code: To Be Determined Reference by Textbook Publisher

Reference Materials: Internet access outside of normal class hours may be required to complete some homework assignments and quiz activities. Students that do not have Internet

access may need to schedule time in the college computer labs. Students will have access to digital copies of reference guides in the content section of the course shell or at manufacturer websites.

Supplies: Notebook, pencil, and recording device if available.

Once you have registered for your courses, you should make sure you have the correct textbook and materials for each course. Before courses begin, you can do this by looking up your courses on the bookstore's website (<https://www.bkstr.com/nscctestore/shop/textbooks-and-course-materials>) using your A# or by entering your course information. If you are registered with the Access Center and need an alternate format for the textbook and other course materials, please contact the Access Center at 615-353-3721, 615-353-3741, or accesscenter@nscctest.edu

Digital Course Materials: These ensure you pay less for your course materials and have easy access through D2L throughout the semester. When you registered for this course, the charge for these materials appeared on your account. If you decide you do not want to purchase the course materials embedded in NS Online, you can opt out of the program **until the end of the second week of classes**. If you opt out, you will be responsible for purchasing the required course materials on your own. For more information, please visit www.nscctest.edu/dcm.

Honors Option: Honors credit is available in some classes. If you are interested in participating in the Honors Program, please see your instructor within the first four weeks of class.

Course Outcomes: At the end of the semester, this is what you should know and/or be able to do:

1. Identify and analyze basic song form and structure.
2. Apply appropriate lyric techniques in the development of plot and storyline.
3. Identify and apply musical elements in composing original melodies.
4. Use creative problem-solving skills in completing original song ideas.

Course Competencies:

The following are detailed course competencies, or specific skills or knowledge, intended to help you achieve the course outcomes:

1. Identify common song forms.
2. Maintain and organize a collection of original song ideas.
3. Describe the attributes of a professional songwriter.
4. Demonstrate the ability to record a simple song demo.
5. Demonstrate the ability to create and develop original song ideas.
6. Identify different song market requirements.
7. Write an appropriate lyric, given an emotional context.
8. Identify common songwriting pitfalls and how to avoid them.
9. Utilize common songwriting tools and resources in the creation of original songs.

10. Define the characteristics of a great melody.
11. Create an original melody with or without instruments.
12. Explain common songwriting royalty arrangements.
13. Calculate the cost of producing song demos.
14. Describe the factors that help a songwriter develop leverage when negotiating a publishing deal.
15. List commonly agreed to songwriting royalty rates.
16. List the contractual protections a songwriter should request when negotiating a publishing deal.
17. Describe the impact of new technologies on the songwriting industry.

The following are general education competencies intended to support the course outcomes:

1. Write clear, well-organized lyric sheets in common industry formats.
2. Locate, evaluate, and use multiple sources of information to avoid potential copyright infringement.
3. Participate as co-writers in the creation of original compositions that meet assigned requirements.
4. Write songs for a variety of markets.

Topics to Be Covered:

1. What is a song?
 - A. Introduction to class
 - B. Components of the song
 - C. Different song forms

2. Being ready to write
 - A. Be prepared and organized (recorder and "hook book")
 - B. Developing great ideas and titles
 - C. Routine, working at it, open your mind, find the time
 - D. Believe in your own creativity

3. Successful lyric writing, Part 1
 - A. Successful to who?
 1. Writing from your emotional experience
 2. Don't force it. Integrity of the song
 3. Who are you trying to impress?
 4. On the other hand, give it a wide audience
 5. Why bother?

 - B. Three subjects: life, love and death.
 1. Write a strong title
 2. Some title tricks
 3. Write what's real for you. Write what you feel. Write what you love.

4. Successful lyric writing, Part 2
 - A. The "three step method"
 1. Start with a great title or hook
 2. Discuss and outline the story/meaning
 3. Write/sing the lyrics
 - B. Focusing the lyric
 1. The whole brain
 2. Focus points
 3. Know what/who the song is for
 - C. Things to look out for/common mistakes
 1. Too obscure? Intentionally mysterious?
 2. Singer with negative persona (hard to pitch)
 3. Don't bore us, get to the chorus.
 4. Phrases that hangover
 5. Tongue twisters
 6. No one can hear punctuation
 7. Present , past or future?
 8. Pictures instead of plain words
 9. How long is too long?
 10. Poetry doesn't always translate to lyrics
 11. Do your rhymes rhyme?
 - D. Tools for successful lyric writing
5. Writing a great melody
 - A. What makes a melody great?
 1. Ascending (up) or descending (down).
 2. Steps and leaps
 3. Contour and shape
 4. Climax and resolution
 5. Static or chants
 6. Prosody (matching of melody to lyric)
 - B. Writing with or without instruments
 1. A Capella: more freedom
 2. With instruments: more structure
 - C. Keeping it singable, uncomplicated, MEMORABLE
 - D. Helpful Hints
6. Putting it all together

- A. Why do we love a song we love?
- B. Does my song do that?
- C. Can I accept criticism?
- D. Re-writing and re-writing 'til it's right

7. Collaboration

- A. Sometimes two heads are better than one.
- B. Agree on the splits before you start
- C. Getting on the same page
- D. Give and take

8. Demoing your song

- A. Get feedback first
- B. Work tape or full-blown demo
 - 1. Is your production "part of the song"?
 - 2. Guitar or piano and vocal demos
- C. In the studio
 - 1. Producing vs. overproducing
 - 2. Let the musicians play
 - 3. Who is the right singer?
 - 4. Keep it short and sweet
 - 5. Time for more feedback

9. Pitching your song

- A. How to approach a publisher
 - 1. First steps
 - 2. Picking your best three songs
 - 3. How to package and present your song
- B. Building relationships
- C. What's good "deal"?
- D. Going directly to the artist/producer

10. Politics, TV and Film, and rest of it

- A. The politics of getting a song cut
- B. TV and Film, etc.
 - 1. Commercials
 - 2. Video games
 - 3. Other uses
- C. Exploit your own copyrights
 - 1. Developing artists
 - 2. Starting a label
- D. NSAI, ASCAP, BMI, SESAC, SGA. etc.

Note: This course outline is subject to change at any time during the semester. Revisions will be posted on D2L.

Course Assessments: We will use the following assessments to demonstrate your understanding, knowledge, and skills: *(include type and point/percentage breakdown here)*

Grading Policy:

Final grades are based on class participation, worksheets, assignments, labs, projects, quizzes, & exams. These activities will be used to determine mastery of skills and concepts.

Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage Range
A	90-100%
B	80-89.99%
C	70-79.99%
D	60-69.99%
F	0-59.99%

FA

If you stop attending class or if you are in an online class and stop submitting assignments, but do not turn in a withdrawal form by the deadline, you are still enrolled in class. You will be given a grade of FA, which means you have failed due to not attending class and not completing your assignments. Please refer to the current academic calendar available on the Nashville State web site, looking for the date that indicates it is the “Last Day to Earn F for Attendance (FA).” If you stop attending your course after this date, you will receive an F.

Last date to earn an F for attendance is XXXX, 2022.

FN

An FN is awarded if you have never attended your course or done any of the work in an online course.

Late Work Policy & Make-up Procedures for Missed Assignments and Work:

Students should contact the instructor regarding opportunities to make-up missed assignments, labs, quizzes, and exams.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to complete assigned coursework prior to deadlines. To do so, students should fully participate in each class meeting. If a student needs to be absent from a class, please contact the instructor to arrange virtual participation or a plan to make-up missed work.

General Policy

If you have been exposed to COVID-19 or have tested positive, you must email virusinfo@nsc.edu.

- *Absences in a course may affect your final grade.*
- *Tardiness may also affect your final grade.*
- *You are responsible for all work/tests that occur during any missed course session(s) regardless of reason(s) for absence.*
- *If you are not well enough to attend a course session (class), you must notify the instructor as soon as possible before the scheduled course time.*
 - *If you are unable to notify an instructor before the scheduled course time, you must contact the instructor as soon as reasonably possible.*
- *If you have an unavoidable conflict with a scheduled course session, you must notify the instructor before the course session.*
 - *If you are unable to notify an instructor before the scheduled course time, you must contact the instructor as soon as reasonably possible.*

Instructor's Policy

Two consecutive or non-consecutive class absences will result in a one full letter grade deduction. Showing up after the appointed class start time or leaving before the appointed class end time will be recorded as 1/2 of a class missed and counted toward the two class missed grade deduction. Two times late, or left early, equals one missed class. A student is considered late if they arrive at class after the instructor has started class. Students are responsible for all course work missed due to class absence.

First absence does not affect final grade. Second absence, one full letter grade. Third or more absence, one full letter grade each.

For financial aid purposes, **attendance** is measured by participation in the course. Instructors can determine your level of participation in several ways. Some of those ways are:

- continued attendance
- participation in on-ground or virtual class sessions
- participating in D2L as prompted
- responding to an instructor's email
- posting to a discussion board
- completing and submitting assignments

Technology Statement

- All classes at the College are web enhanced. "Web enhanced" means that components of the course, such as assignments and online discussions, may be located online in the class D2L/NS Online course shell and used in the course, even if the course meets in a classroom on ground.
- You must have access to a computer and an internet connection to complete assignments, engage in online discussions, and access various course materials through D2L/NS Online course shells.
- You may also be required to use free video conferencing platforms (examples: Zoom, Teams, etc.) for course sessions and meetings.
- You will be responsible for appropriate dress while on video. This means that you are expected to dress as if you were in a classroom.
- You will be responsible for a distraction free environment while on video. This means that the professor and others in the course should not be able to hear noise in your home, such as cell phones, TVs, or barking dogs. The best way to do this is to keep yourself on "mute" until you need to speak.
- You will be responsible for making sure your background is neutral. Keep in mind that students and professors come from all around the world, and you are all a part of our community. Therefore, please avoid having images in your background that may be offensive to your classmates.
- Certain publisher materials, such as textbook figures, may not work on cellphones and may require a laptop or a tablet.
- If you have questions or concerns regarding access to a computer or internet resources, please contact your instructor. Additional information is available on this website: <https://www.nsc.edu/current-students/student-online-resources/access-to-internet-and-technology>.

Computer Labs

Computers are available for all Nashville State students to use at each campus during open hours. Open computer lab availability may vary from campus to campus. You should check the NSCC website for current hours of operation.

D2L/NS Online and myNSCC

It is your responsibility to check your email in **both** D2L/NS Online course shells and your @my.nsc.edu (student email) on a regular basis. These are the official communication

channels between the college and you. You are responsible for the information communicated through these email channels. D2L/NS Online emails contain specific course information and @my.nsc.edu emails contain important information from college offices, such as Financial Aid.

ADA Compliance Statement

If you need accommodations due to a disability, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Access Center. Disabilities for which you can receive accommodations include documented physical, emotional, and/or learning conditions. Nashville State is committed to supporting your success, and we encourage you to get assistance if needed. If you require accommodations for any courses in which you are enrolled, contact the Access Center at 615.353.3741 or 615.353.3721, or e-mail accesscenter@nsc.edu.

Classroom Misconduct

Disruptive conduct is not allowed in the classroom. Disruptive conduct is any behavior that prevents students from learning and interferes with the ability of the instructor to teach. This may change from course to course; therefore, your individual instructors will give you guidance on what qualifies as “disruptive conduct” in their courses. Please review the [Nashville State Student Code of Conduct policy](#). Please be aware that children are not allowed in class or to be left unattended on campus.

Academic Misconduct

You have started this academic journey to prepare for a future career. Because of this, it is important that you learn the materials being presented in your courses. For this reason, cheating, in any form, robs you of your opportunity to learn and master the material that will enable you to succeed in that future career. Nashville State has a clear [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) that you are expected to follow. In addition, your instructors will clarify what Academic Misconduct looks like and the consequences for violations in each course that you take. The instructor has the authority to assign an “F” or a “zero” for such violations or for the semester grade.

Insert instructor academic misconduct policy here

Academic Early Alert System

If you are not doing well in your course, your instructor may send you an Early Alert through your @my.nsc.edu email. This email will go to your academic advisor and Student Success advisor, as well. If you get an Early Alert, contact your instructor immediately. Instructors send these when they want to help you figure out how to get extra support to pass the course. An Early Alert does not mean that you have already failed the course. Rather, it means you are in danger of failing the course if you do not change your learning strategy. Please use an Early Alert to your advantage and as an opportunity to improve your grade.

RAVE Emergency Alert System

You can log in to this free alert system to receive text messages about emergencies related to NSCC campuses: <https://www.getrave.com/login/nscc>. The instructions for this are listed below.

- Your RAVE Username is your NSCC email address.
- If you've never received an email from RAVE with your password, or if you need to reset your password, select “Forgot your password?” and a new password will be emailed to you.
- Should the RAVE system indicate “user not found”, select Register and create your own RAVE account.

Student Wellness

Your well-being is important to us. With this in mind, the college has several resources available to provide support when needed:

- Free tutoring: <https://www.nsc.edu/current-students/on-campus-resources/learning-center-and-tutoring>
- NSCC email, scheduling, online courses, textbooks, tech check out and support, computer labs on campuses, academic advising, financial advising, COVID-19 information and procedures on campuses: <https://www.nsc.edu/current-students/student-online-resources>
- Services that help with bus passes, food, childcare, textbooks, housing, financial counseling, personal counseling, suicide prevention, health insurance: <https://www.nsc.edu/current-students/on-campus-resources/student-support-services>

Equity Statement

We are taking steps to become more aware of the many different needs of students. Faculty, staff and administrators are committed to helping students find ways to meet their needs so that ALL students can reach their goals. Please ask for things you need.

Inclement Weather & Campus Closings

You get notices about campus closings in these places: text messages from RAVE and www.nsc.edu.

Even when campuses are closed, you are still responsible for completing all assigned work. Check D2L/NS Online for a message from your instructor so you do not miss important assignments and due dates, which may change due to the campus closure.

Class Cancellation Policy

Our instructors post messages about cancelling classes in the D2L/NSOnline course shells and/or on the classroom door on campus. These messages can be found in the News and Content section or the Email tab in the online shell. Please check these to be sure that you take advantage of opportunities for learning and points toward your grade.