

**COURSE:** MU311 Songwriting  
**CREDIT:** 2 Semester Hours  
**SEMESTER:** FA20, Cycle 1  
**DAY/TIME/LOCATION:** Accelerate Session III, July 27-31, M-F, 8:00 am – 1:00 pm  
**INSTRUCTOR:** Lisa Weyerhaeuser  
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## I. DESCRIPTION

A thorough study of the important elements of planning and writing songs. Students will explore the craft of songwriting from the initial inspiration through the proper completion of a song. The final project includes a polished score ready for publishing. It is recommended that students have completed or are currently enrolled in MU213 – Music Technology.

## II. OBJECTIVES

A. General competencies to be achieved. The student will:

1. Function more effectively in a music related career by developing better understanding of the power of a song to effect and inspire.
  - a. Program Objectives 3
  - b. Assignments A1, D1, E1
2. Discover learning tools and other inspirations that can be used in breaking through writer's block and rediscover deeper creativity.
  - a. Program Objectives 3
  - b. Assignments A1, E1
3. Learn and implement writing exercises to enhance songwriting.
  - a. Program Objectives 3
  - b. Assignments A1, B1, D1
4. Discover the most effective tools to capture ideas and melodies as they are first beginning to emerge.
  - a. Program Objectives 3
  - b. Assignments C1, D1
5. Explore the best ways to follow an idea or inspiration through the journey of creative writing and chord progression to become a fully realized, complete song.
  - a. Program Objectives 3
  - b. Assignments A1, B1, C1, D1

B. Specific competencies to be achieved. The student will:

1. Adequately exhibit functional steps needed to know and identify the characteristics and structure of a song.
2. Adequately apply the use of journaling and songwriting exercises to achieve a richer environment out of which to write a well written, complete song.
3. Adequately exhibit functional use of songwriting tools, and reliance on inspiring activities and environments that lead to better songwriting.
4. Articulate a basic understanding of terminology related to songwriting.
5. Understand, articulate and implement how to write better lyrics and melodies.

### III. REQUIREMENTS

- A. Assignments: Complete the assignments from assigned readings, in room discussions and instructor in a timely manner as specified by the instructor.
- B. Text: Complete assigned readings in the textbook, which will be assigned throughout the term.
- C. Projects: Complete the assigned projects using information from class lectures and assigned readings.
- D. Time:
  1. The student should expect to spend a minimum of one hour per day practicing and honing their songwriting skills.
  2. The student should expect to spend time daily exploring new creative environments, discovering what kinds of experiences and techniques actually inspire the writer to write.
  3. Additional time should be spent on reading, research and projects.
- E. Journaling: Two weeks before class begins, each student will journal one hour a day, 5 days a week. This journaling will take place over the next five week period. Your journaling entries are to take place at the beginning of your day. Write about anything that comes to your mind. Spend one hour writing. Do not feel any need to make these entries thoughtful, or creative. The goal of these “morning pages” is to get out of your system all that gets in the way of your true creativity. Bring your journal to class on the first day of J-term.

### IV. METHODS

- A. In-class methods will include discussion, explanation, exercises, and illustration. Student will attend MU311 25 hours during the modular week.
- B. Out-of-class methods will include personal work at the computer, or other writing venues, reading, practicing, journaling, writing, researching, and completing assignments and projects.

## V. MATERIALS

- A. *Writing Better Lyrics*. 2009. by Pat Pattison. \$18.99. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Writer’s Digest Books, Cincinnati, Ohio, 2009. ISBN: 978-1-58297-577-1
- B. *Optional*: The following texts are highly recommended for any serious songwriter:  
*The Complete Rhyming Dictionary*  
*Webster’s Thesaurus*  
*The War of Art* by Steven Pressfield, *Black Irish Entertainment*, 2002  
*The Artist’s Way* by Julia Cameron, Putnam, 2016
- C. See “Bible is a required textbook” statement below. You may use your familiar Bible translation in class. My preferred translation is the NASB or the ESV.

## VI. GRADING

Class discussion and in-class work	25%
Songwriting assignments	25%
Journaling	25%
Completion of final song	<u>25%</u>
Total	100%

## VII. CLASS SCHEDULE – Class/Lab schedule

- A. The student will spend at least 1 hour per day outside of class, working on songwriting skills. In addition, 1 hour per day will be required before, during, and after the week of class is in session journaling (see Journaling assignment).
- B. Classroom – The students will meet every day of the week with the instructor in the classroom to discuss music, songwriting & applications from the texts.

**Assignments** are due at class time or on the date assigned. Papers and reading assignments must be completed on time. **Work not completed on time will be graded down accordingly.** A song turned in unfinished, according to the definition in class, will receive no credit. Illness is the only acceptable exception.

**The Bible** is a required textbook in every course at Calvary University. To facilitate academic level study, students are required to use for assignments and research an English translation or version of the Bible based on formal equivalence (*meaning that the translation is generally word-for-word from the original languages*), including any of the following: New American Standard (NASB, English Standard Version (ESV), New King James (NKJV), or King James (KJV). Other translations and versions based on dynamic equivalence (*paraphrases, and thought-for-thought translations like NLT and NIV*) may be

used as supplemental sources. Please ask the professor if you have questions about a particular translation or version.

**Students with disabilities** have the responsibility of informing the DSS Director ([dss@calvary.edu](mailto:dss@calvary.edu)) of any disabling condition that may require support.

*Plagiarism is defined as copying any part of a book or paper without identifying the author. This also includes taking another person's ideas and presenting them as your own.*

**The Clark Academic Center** ([learning@calvary.edu](mailto:learning@calvary.edu)) is dedicated to providing free academic assistance for all CU students. Student tutors aid with all facets of the writing process, tutor in various subject areas, prepare students for exams and facilitate tests. Please take advantage of this service.

**All class papers** must follow the Turabian style according to *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition and the Calvary Style Guide, 2019 update.

#### Course Load Assignments

Assignments	Hours	Assigned
“Seat Time” in class	25	25
Reading	15	300 pages
Songwriting exercises	25	Pattison and in class
Daily Journaling	25	Before, during and after course, 1 hour a day, 5 days a week, beginning two weeks prior to class and ending two weeks after.
Daily Songwriting Project/Homework	15	Avg. hours expected to complete project.
Final, completed Song	25	
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	

**Music Department Mission:**

The Calvary University Music Department promotes professional development and advanced intellectual enrichment by preparing Christian musicians to serve the church and the world, according to the biblical worldview.

**Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)**

**The undergraduate program in music will enable students to:**

PLO 1: Translate the mission of Calvary University into an active practice of the principles of biblical truth, professionalism, and a commitment to scholarship through a music ministry.

PLO 2: Articulate a biblical philosophy of music applied to service in the church and world.

PLO 3: Demonstrate competence as a musician, performer, and scholar, to include: aural skills, knowledge and application of music theory and history, acceptable performance practices as soloists and ensemble members and service in worship and teaching through a biblical lens.

**The undergraduate program in music education will enable students to:**

**Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) for Music Education Majors**

PLO 1: Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge and skills appropriate for the teaching of instrumental music, vocal/choral music, and general music, with specialized knowledge in one or more of these areas.

PLO 2: Articulate a biblical philosophy of music applied to service and teaching in the church and world.

PLO 3: Perform as soloists, ensemble members, and chamber musicians at appropriate levels for entering graduate music study and for public school and studio teaching.

PLO 4: Meet the standards articulated by the Missouri State Department of Education for the purpose of attaining certification for public school teaching. (Music Education only)