This course will combine the study of lyrics, melody, harmony and form to create songs. Simple computer tools will be used to aid in creating, hearing and notating your work. MUS 100 or the equivalent recommended.

**Goal:** everyone finishes the course completing one song documented with handwritten music notation of the song (lead sheet style), printed notation, and a simple audio recording demonstrating the song.

**Required Texts and Materials**

Textbooks (with CDs) *The Songwriter's Workshop: Harmony,* and *The Songwriter's Workshop: Melody,* both by Jimmy Kachulis, Berklee Press; Staff paper & pencils with erasers.

Software – use the free noteflight.com notation software, or other programs with notation capabilities such as GarageBand, Protools, Logic, Cakewalk Sonar, etc. Mixcraft is also recommended as an inexpensive tool.

**Grading** will be on a percentage-of-total points system. Every assignment will be given a number of points based on difficulty. Total points earned will be rated on the standard percentage score scale (90% = A).

**Collaboration:** Most assignments in the first several weeks of the class will be collaborative, with partners assigned. Later in the term, assignments will be individual, but you may still choose to work collaboratively. Just as songwriting teams share their monetary rewards, songwriting teams in this class will share their point “royalties.” Example: in order to get an A on an assignment that calls for ONE fully-harmonized four-bar phrase with lyrics, a songwriting team would have to turn in TWO fully-harmonized four-bar phrases with lyrics.

**Typical assignments**

- Start a song lyric based on a scrap of overheard conversation.
- Analyze the use of rhyme in a favorite song.
- Write a lyric section for each of the following rhyme schemes: AABB ABAB ABCB.
- Write a short melody or melodic fragment that uses passing tones (stepwise motion).
- Write a short melody or melodic fragment and extend it using a sequence.
- Using the same chord progression, write two different melodies, trying to make them as different from each other as possible.
- Write a melody that uses the pentatonic scale.
- Choose two different sets of chords to fit the same melodic fragment.
Late work
While I'd like to accept late work, that won't work for the way I want to run this class. Many of the assignments will be done in class. Work to be done outside of class will be due at the beginning of class so we can discuss it as a group. No sitting on your hands waiting for inspiration allowed. Just do the work! Expect at least one assignment every week. If you miss class due to a legitimate excuse, you can still turn in work the next class, but it will be accepted with a 50% point penalty, since the class discussion of the work is half the point of doing it. Work later than that will not be accepted.

Student Learning Objectives
- Define & use different chord types (assessment methods: worksheets, quizzes, written music)
- Demonstrate understanding of music notation including key signatures and chord symbols (assessment methods: worksheets, written music, handwritten final draft of a song)
- Recognize and use common chord progressions (assessment methods: worksheets, written music)
- Demonstrate techniques of melodic construction by using pentatonic structures, sequences, and motific extension (assessment methods: worksheets, written music)
- Analyze songs in terms of form, melodic construction, lyric strategies, and harmonic style (assessment method: class discussion)
- Create lyrics, melodies and chord progressions for songs (assessment method: composed song)

You will note that the final project includes a handwritten final draft of a song, as well as a computer notated draft. Handwritten notation will be required to demonstrate your grasp of music notation basics.

The power and hazards of music notation
Lennon & McCartney didn't need to read music to have rather successful careers. With that in mind, this course is offering but one way of developing and communicating your musical thinking. THERE ARE NO RULES IN MUSIC, ONLY TENDENCIES AND EXPECTATIONS.

Additional (optional) materials
Students may also want to seek out The Craft of Lyric Writing by Sheila Davis ($25), or the workbook version, Successful Lyric Writing ($23).
Allen Forte’s Listening to Classic American Popular Songs is an enjoyable tour of about 20 songs from the 20s to the 40s. It includes an excellent CD. The author occasionally uses a few idiosyncratic terms. I also recommend buying a songbook or notated sheet music of a favorite artist.

Approximate Schedule
- Priming the pump – some writing exercises for lyrics
- Notation review
- Turning words into rhythm
- Starting a tune
- Let’s meet the computer
- Review of triads and basic progressions
- Extending a melodic idea
- Getting familiar with seventh chords
- Choosing chords for your tune (harmonizing a melody)
- Exploring Options in Form
- Song drafts

Holidays/breaks: 12 Feb, 12 March, Spring Break 5-9 April
final exam is scheduled for Friday, 28 May, at 2:10 p.m.; if we as a class would like to put on an informal showcase performance of our songs, we could schedule that as our final exam.