

## Liverpool John Moores University

Title: COMPOSITION AND SONG WRITING SKILLS  
Status: Definitive  
Code: **4503POP** (108561)  
Version Start Date: 01-08-2011

Owning School/Faculty: Liverpool School of Art & Design  
Teaching School/Faculty: Liverpool Community College

Team	Leader
Stuart Borthwick	Y

**Academic Level:** FHEQ4  
**Credit Value:** 12.00  
**Total Delivered Hours:** 38.00  
**Total Learning Hours:** 120  
**Private Study:** 82

### Delivery Options

Course typically offered: Semester 2

Component	Contact Hours
Lecture	24.000
Practical	12.000
Tutorial	2.000

**Grading Basis:** 40 %

### Assessment Details

Category	Short Description	Description	Weighting (%)	Exam Duration
Artefacts	AS1	Instrumental composition with approx. 1000-word commentary on its influences and compositional process	50.0	
Artefacts	AS2	Popular song with approx. 1000-word commentary on word setting techniques used, influences and song writing process (summative)	50.0	

### Aims

*To provide the knowledge and develop the creative and technical skills to compose music in a variety of popular styles.*

*To provide the knowledge and develop the creative and technical skills involved in popular song writing.*

## **Learning Outcomes**

After completing the module the student should be able to:

- 1 Adapt existing or compose original chord progressions.
- 2 Compose melody lines with originality of rhythm or design.
- 3 Demonstrate the influence of other composers' work on his/her work.
- 4 Demonstrate an understanding of melodic devices in composition and song writing.
- 5 Apply rhythmic, harmonic, dynamic, textural and other devices to composition.
- 6 Apply effective word setting and other song writing techniques to his/her songs.

## **Learning Outcomes of Assessments**

The assessment item list is assessed via the learning outcomes listed:

Instrumental composition	1	2	3	4	5
Popular song	1	2	3	4	6

## **Outline Syllabus**

*An overview of composition styles used in popular music from around 1900 onwards.  
Different structures used in popular music composition and standard song forms.  
Typical chord progressions used in popular music composition.  
Rhythmic structures and 'feel' in popular music styles.  
Melody line structure and the use of particular intervals.  
Composing techniques including the use of texture and dynamics.  
Popular song devices and the 'hook'.  
Word setting techniques in song writing.*

## **Learning Activities**

A series of lectures, some practical sessions and occasional progress tutorials for individual formative feedback. It is intended that most of these (and some private study time) should take place in the Composition Room where students will have access to keyboards and music software to try out their ideas, and occasional access to a rehearsal room would allow informal, student-led performance of songs and compositions.

## **References**

<b>Course Material</b>	Book
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<b>Author</b>	Stewart, D.
<b>Publishing Year</b>	2000
<b>Title</b>	Inside the Music
<b>Subtitle</b>	The Musician's Guide to Composition, Improvisation and the Mechanics of Music
<b>Edition</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	Miller Freeman
<b>ISBN</b>	

<b>Course Material</b>	Book
<b>Author</b>	Rooksby, R.
<b>Publishing Year</b>	2004
<b>Title</b>	Melody
<b>Subtitle</b>	How to write great tunes
<b>Edition</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	Backbeat Books
<b>ISBN</b>	

<b>Course Material</b>	Book
<b>Author</b>	Norton, C.
<b>Publishing Year</b>	2002
<b>Title</b>	Write Songs from Scratch
<b>Subtitle</b>	
<b>Edition</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	Boosey & Hawkes
<b>ISBN</b>	

<b>Course Material</b>	Book
<b>Author</b>	Perricone, J.
<b>Publishing Year</b>	2000
<b>Title</b>	Melody in Songwriting
<b>Subtitle</b>	
<b>Edition</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	Berklee Press
<b>ISBN</b>	

<b>Course Material</b>	Book
<b>Author</b>	Wood, C.
<b>Publishing Year</b>	0
<b>Title</b>	The Complete Rhyming Dictionary and Poet's Craftbook
<b>Subtitle</b>	
<b>Edition</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	Garden City
<b>ISBN</b>	

<b>Course Material</b>	Book
<b>Author</b>	Zollo, P.

<b>Publishing Year</b>	2003
<b>Title</b>	Songwriters on Songwriting
<b>Subtitle</b>	Expanded Edition
<b>Edition</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	Da Capo Press
<b>ISBN</b>	

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## Notes

This module is in two parts. First, students will learn composing techniques used in various styles of popular music and the skills necessary to notate their musical ideas in an instrumental context. Second, they will learn about typical song writing techniques by analysing popular songs and their lyrics, and the best ways of putting them down on paper. They will compose music and write a song as their assessed coursework.

It is hoped that it will be possible to enhance the delivery of this module by inviting visiting lecturers involved in composition and song writing to give occasional talks and workshops.