



## Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

The [California Open Educational Resources Council](http://www.cool4ed.org) has designed and implemented a faculty review process of the free and open etextbooks showcased within the California Open Online Library for Education ([www.cool4ed.org](http://www.cool4ed.org)). Faculty from the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California were invited to review the selected free and open etextbooks using a rubric. Faculty received a stipend for their efforts and funding was provided by the State of California, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Textbook Name:

### MUS101: Introduction to Music



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Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

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Format

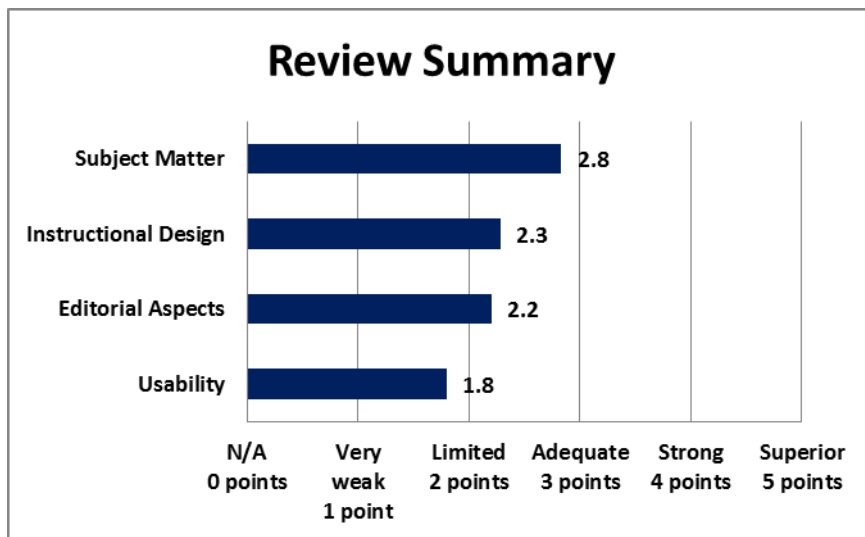
Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Date Reviewed:

December 2015



### California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [MUS 110](#)

| Subject Matter (30 possible points)   | N/A (0 pts) | Very Weak (1pt) | Limited (2 pts) | Adequate (3pts) | Strong (4 pts) | Superior (5 pts) |
|---|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Is the content accurate, error-free, and unbiased?  |             |                 |                 |                 | X              |                  |
| Does the text adequately cover the designated course with a sufficient degree of depth and scope? | X           |                 |                 |                 |                |                  |
| Does the textbook use sufficient and relevant examples to present its subject matter?             |             |                 |                 |                 | X              |                  |
| Does the textbook use a clear, consistent terminology to present its subject matter?              |             |                 |                 | X               |                |                  |
| Does the textbook reflect current knowledge of the subject matter?                                |             |                 |                 | X               |                |                  |

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|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Does the textbook present its subject matter in a culturally sensitive manner? (e.g. Is the textbook free of offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?) |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|

Total Points: 17 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- This review was solicited for courses applying to the CID MUS 110 MUSIC FUNDAMENTALS course. This online resource relates to Music Fundamentals in a peripheral way, there are a few sections that might be of use to a fundamentals instructor, but this material is far better suited for inclusion in MUSIC 100 MUSIC APPRECIATION.
- With that said there are a wide variety of resources available here for teaching elements of music. It is a curated list of online materials available from all over the web. These resources are well sourced with some original material from Saylor.org, but the vast majority of the material are resources from various websites, lectures and web pages from the likes of Yale University, NPR, Connexions, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Vatican, the BBC, Washington State University, BaroqueMusic.org, San Diego State University, Project Gutenberg, thinkquest.org, the Hector Berlioz website, San Francisco Symphony (Keeping Score), Scena.org (La Scena Musicale magazine), YouTube, and Ipl.org. The collected resources are sourced well and are academically sound. There are full length lectures and informational web pages, some better than others. Some are text heavy with few examples and others are well prepared with a variety of media, images, musical scores, sound files and videos.
- This is designed as a course with a few summary assignments, but it is much better viewed as a repository of resources, curated into a course structure that can be used by instructors who want to create their own course materials, linking to these resources and creating their own structure with assignments and quizzes created by the individual instructor. The curated course materials are given with an open Creative Commons license so they can be used and adapted by others. Each linked resource should be vetted for copyright adherence.

| Instructional Design (35 possible points)   | N/A (0 pts) | Very Weak (1pt) | Limited (2 pts) | Adequate (3pts) | Strong (4 pts) | Superior (5 pts) |
|---|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Does the textbook present its subject materials at appropriate reading levels for undergrad use?  |             |                 |                 | X               |                |                  |
| Does the textbook reflect a consideration of different learning styles? (e.g. visual, textual?)   |             |                 |                 | X               |                |                  |
| Does the textbook present explicit learning outcomes aligned with the course and curriculum?  |             |                 | X               |                 |                |                  |
| Is a coherent organization of the textbook evident to the reader/student?   |             |                 |                 | X               |                |                  |
| Does the textbook reflect best practices in the instruction of the designated course?   |             |                 | X               |                 |                |                  |
| Does the textbook contain sufficient effective ancillary materials? (e.g. test banks, individual and/or group activities or exercises, pedagogical apparatus, etc.) |             | X               |                 |                 |                |                  |
| Is the textbook searchable?   |             |                 | X               |                 |                |                  |

Total Points: 16 out of 35

Please provide comments on any aspect of the instructional design of this textbook:

- The instructional design of this course is widely varied based on the nature of it being a curated list. The course materials on saylor.org are well organized with clear descriptions of the course organization, learning outcomes and the expectation of the time required to finish the course.
- There is one serious issue that is worth commenting on. This is a "legacy course", in saylor.org parlance, which is no longer actively supported by saylor.org. This means that it will have progressively more and more dead links and links to pages that are out of date. This is a problem with curated lists of open web resources in general, that some resources don't get updated with changes to technology standards and become nonfunctional, or links stop working as the resources become unsupported by their original authors. The problem is further exacerbated by the lack of support given a "legacy course". As an example the page, Listening Gallery: Musical Form by Anthony Brandt did not work at all in the Chrome browser,

and in Safari the examples would play but the directions spoke to using pull down menus that did not appear. In one more attempt with the Firefox browser the result was the same as it was in Safari. This page reminds the student to have the latest version of Macromedia's Flash software thus suggesting its technological age (Flash was bought by the Adobe Corporation in 2005).

- The "Chant" page from NPR includes RealPlayer files that were uploaded in 1999. After some experimentation with these files that would not play, I spent about an hour trying out different ways of making them work using legacy software and different converters. I finally succeeded when I installed the application VLC (avoiding numerous attempts at malware installation along the way). This is not a process that the average student will make it through.
- There are some dead links e.g. Assignment: Duke University's "Theme and Variation Assignment", Thinkquest.org.

| Editorial Aspects (25 possible points)  | N/A (0 pts) | Very Weak (1pt) | Limited (2 pts) | Adequate (3pts) | Strong (4 pts) | Superior (5 pts) |
|---|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Is the language of the textbook free of grammatical, spelling, usage, and typographical errors?   |             |                 |                 | X               |                |                  |
| Is the textbook written in a clear, engaging style?   |             |                 |                 | X               |                |                  |
| Does the textbook adhere to effective principles of design? (e.g. are pages laid out and organized to be clear and visually engaging and effective? Are colors, font, and typography consistent and unified?) |             |                 | X               |                 |                |                  |
| Does the textbook include conventional editorial features? (e.g. a table of contents, glossary, citations and further references)   |             | X               |                 |                 |                |                  |
| How effective are multimedia elements of the textbook? (e.g. graphics, animations, audio)   |             |                 | X               |                 |                |                  |

Total Points: 11 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook:

- Editorial design is hard to address when the course relies on outside materials from a wide variety of outside sources. Some are excellent and some might be described as just "good". The curation of these resources was well done and there did not appear to be any "Poor" resources, but there were a few dead links and pages that did not function properly due to issues of outdated technology.

| Usability (25 possible points)  | N/A (0 pts) | Very Weak (1pt) | Limited (2 pts) | Adequate (3pts) | Strong (4 pts) | Superior (5 pts) |
|---|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Is the textbook compatible with standard and commonly available hardware/software in college/university campus student computer labs? |             |                 |                 | X               |                |                  |
| Is the textbook accessible in a variety of different electronic formats? (e.g. .txt, .pdf, .epub, etc.)                               |             |                 | X               |                 |                |                  |
| Can the textbook be printed easily?   |             | X               |                 |                 |                |                  |
| Does the user interface implicitly inform the reader how to interact with and navigate the textbook?                                  |             |                 | X               |                 |                |                  |
| How easily can the textbook be annotated by students and instructors?   |             | X               |                 |                 |                |                  |

Total Points: 9 out of 25

Please provide comments on any aspect of access concerning this textbook:

- Many video resources are not captioned and thus will not be useable in California colleges and universities.

| Overall Ratings                                  | Not at all (0 pts) | Very Weak (1 pt)           | Limited (2 pts)             | Adequate (3 pts) | Strong (4 pts)           | Superior (5 pts)                 |
|--|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| What is your overall impression of the textbook? |                    |                            | X                           |                  |                          |                                  |
|  | Not at all (0 pts) | Strong reservations (1 pt) | Limited willingness (2 pts) | Willing (3 pts)  | Strongly willing (4 pts) | Enthusiastically willing (5 pts) |

|  |  |  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| How willing would you be to adopt this book? |  |  |  | X |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|

Total Points: 5 out of 10

## Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?

- This is an excellent list of online resources that can be appropriated for self-curated courses. The individual links need to be individually vetted and tested before adoption.
- It leads the student down a marvelous rabbit hole of good quality educational materials. For example links to Craig Wright's "Listening to Music" lectures from Open Yale Courses opens the door to this well produced series of 23 lectures based on developing aural skills and an understanding of music in the Western tradition. This Saylor course links to a few of them, but the motivated student might become inspired to view the entire series.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?

- This "Legacy Course" is no longer a fully viable course text resource. It would need to be un-archived by Saylor Academy and updated with fixed links, additional new material and removal of nonfunctional pages.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to [the textbook site in MERLOT](#)  
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For questions or more information, contact the [CA Open Educational Resources Council](#).



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