

Songwriting Syllabus and Schedule Fall 2026

Rosana Eckert, instructor

Liz Townsend, Teaching Assistant

Welcome everyone! We are so glad to have you in Songwriting this semester. Below is the syllabus and schedule, and it is also attached as a document. Be sure to keep it handy for reference.

The purpose of this course is to:

Develop skills related to the various components of songwriting (lyrics, chords, melody, form, etc.)

Practice a variety of methods for beginning and editing a song

Deepen skills in song analysis

Participate in group songwriting workshops with peers

Complete and present six original songs

Attendance: Due to the nature of the class, attendance is required. If you fall ill or have reason for an excused absence (ex: family emergency, out of town gig), text Rosana BEFORE class. 817-368-4422. More than 2 excused absences may result in your being dropped from the class. Unexcused absences or repeated tardiness will result in the lowering of the final grade.

Grading:

Song #1 - 16%

Song #2 - 16%

Song #3 - 16%

Song #4 - 16%

Song #5 - 16%

Song #6 - 16%

Reharmonization - 4%

A priority of this class is meeting a deadline, something of high importance in the professional world. We are also practicing the ability to make decisions in a timely manner!

To get an A on a song, a recording of the “finished” version of the song must be shared with the class on presentation day, and a copy of the chart must be turned in on the day it was performed. The song must be in lead sheet format (including lyrics, if applicable) engraved in Finale, Dorico, or other engraving software. It must follow the assignment instructions and reflect the edits you incorporate into the final performance. Refer to published fake books for a proper lead sheet format. (Please do not turn in a Word document of lyrics with some chords written above.)

Late assignment grading:

Missed reveal day (recording not presented) = -50%

Late lead sheet:

up to 1 day (24 hours) tardy = -5 points, 2 days = -10 points, 3 days = -15 points, 4 days = -20 points, 5 days = -25,

6 days = half credit

7+ days = no credit

Listen and analyze! Push your creativity! There is no such thing as writer's block. Narrow the tunnel, find some structure, make some decisions.

Workshops:

On all workshop days, the class will split into two groups, meeting their assigned room. Group 1 meets in 250 with Prof. Eckert. Group 2 meets in 292 with Liz. On the second workshop day, the groups switch, with Group 1 meeting in 292 and Group 2 in 250. The groups will be different for each assignment.

Everyone must present something on workshop days. This is your chance to get feedback on your song. You will each be given approximately 7 minutes to present the song in progress and get quick feedback from your group. The more you have ready on a workshop day, the more your group has to comment on, but you are not expected to have a completed song at this point. Group feedback can be extremely helpful! Remember, the magic often happens in the editing process. Write down whatever you plan to present at the workshop. It makes the feedback process happen more quickly and easily.

Song Presentations:

On song presentation day, you will upload a lead sheet and recording to Canvas prior to class (melody, chords, lyrics if applicable). The recording of your song will be played in class while we all look at the leadsheet on the projector. The song demo can be as polished as a Logic production or as simple as a voice memo done on your phone in a practice room. You can self-accompany or collaborate with others. Utilize the talents of your fellow classmates!

Semester Schedule – Fall 2026

Aug 17	Syllabus, discussion
Aug 19	Analysis, discussion, listening - write a song! No parameters - try a prompt
Aug 24	Workshop Day 1 – Song #1
Aug 26	Workshop Day 2 - Song #1
Aug 31	Presentation of Song #1
Sept 2	Discussion and analysis: lyric concepts - write a text (present in prose, poetry, or lyric form)
Sept 7	Labor Day - no class
Sept 9	Present your written words! (read out loud in class - in prose, poetry, or lyric form)
Sept 14	Workshop Day 1 – Song #2 (Lyric first)
Sept 16	Workshop Day 2 – Song #2
Sept 21	Presentation of Song #2 (Lyric First)

Sept 23	Discussion and analysis: melody first – <i>begin with a motive</i>
Sept 28	Workshop Day 1 – Song #3 (Melody first)
Sept 30	Workshop Day 2 – Song #3
Oct 5	<i>Presentation of Song #3 (Melody First)</i>
Oct 7	Discussion and analysis: writing with chords first
Oct 12	Discussion/Lecture: Reharmonization techniques - <i>Reharmonize assigned melody</i>
Oct 14	<i>Present reharmonization of assigned melody, begin a song starting with a chord progression</i>
Oct 19	Workshop Day 1 – Song #4 (Chords first)
Oct 21	Workshop Day 2 – Song #4
Oct 26	<i>Presentation of Song #4 (chords first)</i>
Oct 28	Discussion: Collaboration/Copying the Masters – <i>collaborate!</i>
Nov 2	Workshop Day 1 – Song #5
Nov 4	Workshop Day 2 - Song #5
Nov 9	<i>Presentation of Song #5 (Collaboration)</i>
Nov 11	Discussion: Restrictions: <i>organizing components</i> (choose components)
Nov 12	Songwriters Showcase - Tentative Date
Nov 16	Workshop Day 1 – Song #6
Nov 18	Workshop Day 1 – Song #6
Nov 23	No Class - Fall Break
Nov 25	No class - Fall Break
Nov 30	Presentation of Song #6 – (Restrictions)
Dec 2	Final Discussion: Copyright, resources
There is no final exam in this class! Go write more songs!	

Course Syllabi Information

(Additional resources for faculty are included at the end of this document)

For complete information on course syllabi requirements, please see the [university's policy](#).

(<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049>)

In addition to the information below, course syllabi should minimally include the following information:

- Course Title and Course Number
- Course Objectives
- Instructor Office Hours
- Attendance Expectations
- Grading Criteria
- Statement on timely return of student work, particularly final exams or final projects
- Statement that students should not schedule their end-of-semester jury against a regularly scheduled class
- For Faculty, Teaching Fellows and Adjuncts:

- All undergraduate syllabi for lecture courses are required by law to be available to the public. **At UNT, undergraduate syllabi for lecture courses should be uploaded into the Faculty Information System by the 7th class day.**
 - To access the Faculty Information System, go to your my.unt home page. Under the Faculty Tab, click on Faculty Information System.
- UNT requires that all graduate course syllabi to be uploaded into FIS.

Rather than including the text for the information below, it is also an option to include the links in course syllabi and review the information on the first day of class.

DEFIBRILLATORS IN THE COLLEGE OF MUSIC

- Music Building: Across from the west side of the Music Commons, directly across from the elevator
- Music Building: Third floor hallway, across from the staircase that comes up from the Copy Room. Next to Room 322
- Music Building: Across from the Copy Room next to Room 293
- Music Building: Voertman Lobby by the big double set of doors that lead out to the courtyard
- Music Building: Main Office (247) under the student worker's desk
- Music Annex: Next to room MA117, near the triple set of doors on the east side of the building
- Music Practice Building North: First floor on the Avenue C side
- Music Practice Building South: First floor on the Avenue C side
- Bain Hall: First floor by the restrooms
- Murchison Performing Arts Center: Located off the main lobby, beyond the grand staircase, across from the single occupancy restroom (next to the public water fountains)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam [or specify alternative sanction, such as course failure]. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students (Office of Academic Integrity), who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

See: [Academic Integrity](#)

LINK: <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

See: [Student Code of Conduct](#)

Link: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – EAGLE CONNECT

Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at my.unt.edu. All official communication from the university will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect.

See: [Eagle Connect](#)

LINK: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

ODA STATEMENT

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter. You can now request your Letters of Accommodation ONLINE and ODA will mail your Letters of Accommodation to your instructors. You may wish to begin a private discussion with your professors regarding your specific needs in a course. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access.

See: [ODA](#)

LINK: disability.unt.edu. (Phone: (940) 565-4323)

Health and Safety Information

Students can access information about health and safety at: <https://music.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness>

Registration Information for Students

See: [Fall Academic Calendar Information](#)

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html>

Semester Calendar, Fall 2026

See: [Fall Semester Calendar](#)

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html>

Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress

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Undergraduates

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total hours registered. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

Students holding music scholarships must maintain a minimum 2.5 overall cumulative GPA and 3.0 cumulative GPA in music courses.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended that you to schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

See: [Financial Aid](#)

LINK: <http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

Graduates

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per term. Music scholarships require a 3.5 cumulative GPA. Students cannot exceed maximum timeframes established based on the published length of the graduate program. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended you schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college, an advisor in UNT-International or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course.

See: [Financial Aid](#)

LINK: <http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

COUNSELING AND TESTING

UNT's Center for Counseling and Testing has an available counselor for students in need. Please visit the Center's website for further information:

See: [Counseling and Testing](#)

Link: <http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>.

For more information on mental health resources, please visit:

See: [Mental Health Resources](#)

Link: <https://disparities.unt.edu/mental-health-resources>

ADD/DROP POLICY

Please be reminded that dropping classes or failing to complete and pass registered hours may make you ineligible for financial aid. In addition, if you drop below half-time enrollment you may be required to begin paying back your student loans. See Academic Calendar (listed above) for additional add/drop Information.

Drop Information: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html>

STUDENT RESOURCES

The University of North Texas has many resources available to students. For a complete list, go to:

See: [Student Resources](#)

Link: <https://success.unt.edu/aa-sa-resources>

CARE TEAM

The Care Team is a collaborative interdisciplinary committee of university officials that meets regularly to provide a response to student, staff, and faculty whose behavior could be harmful to themselves or others.

See: [Care Team](#)

Link: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care-team>

Additional Resources for Faculty

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (including sample statement for syllabi)

See: [Faculty Guide for the Use of AI](#)

Link: <https://guides.library.unt.edu/artificial-intelligence/AIfaculty>

RETENTION OF STUDENT RECORDS

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university's policy in accordance with those mandates.

See: [FERPA](#)

Link: <http://ferpa.unt.edu/>