

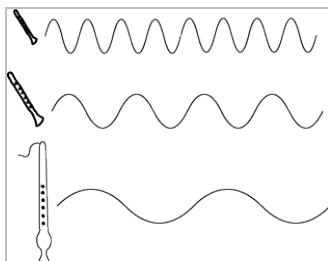


Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

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). Faculty from the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California were invited to review the selected free and open etextboks 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:

Introduction to Music Theory



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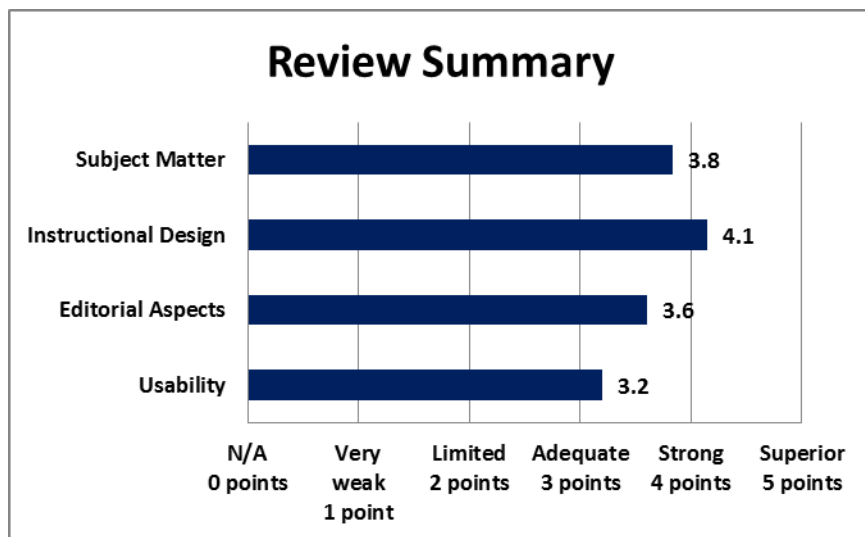
Professor

Format

Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.



Date Reviewed:

August 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		
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: 23 out of 30

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

- Introduction to Music Theory represents a full course in what is commonly called Fundamentals of Music: an introduction to the basics of music notation, key relations and other topics that precede the study of common practice harmonic theory. In that respect it succeeds admirably, with some notable lacunae (noted below).
- The book includes 13 chapters divided into three sections; the first covers Pitch and Interval, the second Keys and Scales, and the third Triads and Chords, with some supplementary materials.
- The first chapter, an introduction to the octave, serves as a model for the whole: a cursory definition of octave equivalence is linked to scientific definition, with ideas for introducing these concepts in the classroom for both young and old.
- Embedded links focus on not only terminology but also offer historical and cultural information (e.g. Western music), and more advanced topics for the adventurous. As an example, in chapter one we find links to major keys, chords, tonal center, minor keys, Western tradition, harmony, beginning harmonic analysis, keyboard, chromatic scale, half/whole steps, circle of fifths, key signature, tuning systems, timbre and transposition. This first chapter also includes listening exercises in major vs. minor, tonal center, and three scales, with links to staff paper download.
- An introduction to ear training in chapter four offers very basic ear-training exercises, as do the chapters on major and minor chords and scales, but most chapters include periodic written exercises in which the student can quiz herself and click a link for the immediate answer.
- The end of each chapter includes a summary of topics covered.

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: 29 out of 35

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

- I find puzzling the lack of any discussion of rhythm: there is no discussion of duration, note grouping or meter.
- At four points the author links to external websites, one introducing improvisation (unfortunately in Dutch!), two online ear-training sites, one offering a simpler version of the fundamentals presented here, and one broken link (<http://www.openingmeasures.com/>). I would have liked to see actual notated works featured, but most instructors will have their own favorite examples for each topic.
- In addition to the lack of rhythmic discussion, I note four other lapses:
 - 1. The introductory octave naming conventions should stress scientific notation, not the outdated Helmholtz system.
 - 2. There are text and exercise references to unidentified figures in chapters 1-2, 2-2, 2-3 and 3-3; in the first three instances one could find the references with a little work (the answers are included), but the missing figure in 3-3 seems to reference the answer of the previous exercise.

- 3. There are links to animated flash examples in the chapter on Cadence that include chord id errors (2nd inversion unlabeled), harmonic errors (reverse progression, bizarre presentation with V-ii rather than vi) and execrable voice-leading in the HC and DC.
- 4. Many chapters include links to pages on acoustics for music theory, harmonic series, tuning, standing waves and musical instruments, orchestral instruments, modes and ragas— yet none of these pages are listed in the contents, and none are included in the epub or pdf versions of the book.

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: 18 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- As noted above, the text links to strong supplementary material on acoustics for music theory, harmonic series, tuning, standing waves and musical instruments, orchestral instruments, modes and ragas, yet none of this is listed in the contents, and none are included in the epub or pdf versions of the book. Strangely enough there is an index of topics in the pdf version, but not online nor in the epub version.

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: 16 out of 25

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

- The textbook is part of the Open Stax CNX at Rice, therefore the search function locates all instances of a term in any volume associated with CNX. The textbook would be improved with an online index or sitemap. The text links within both the epub and pdf versions link, as in all CNX courses, to the online version, not the discrete document.

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	
How willing would you be to adopt this book?	Not at all (0 pts)	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)
					X	

Total Points: 8 out of 10

Overall Comments

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

- The textbook is an easy to use, fairly comprehensive text on the fundamentals of music, featuring clear definitions of basic terms, self-paced exercises, audio examples and quizzes, and links to further materials.
- As the advanced sections of the text cover pop chord symbols and jazz theory, the instructor may wish to clarify how these systems relate to figured bass (which is not included).

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

- Any instructor adopting Introduction to Music would want to supplement the online or downloadable text with material on rhythm, point out to students the missing figures, and avoid the illustrations of HC and DC provided in the chapter on Cadences. This simplification of some basic elements may provoke confuse (e.g. the discussion of dissonance does not cover common dissonance resolutions, and the chapter on harmonic analysis presents a secondary leading chord to V as #IV°, one assumes to avoid a premature discussion of chromatic harmony).

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