USC Thornton School of Music
MPPM 240: Drumming Proficiency For the Popular Musician
2 units

Course Instructors:
Professor Peter Erskine, Director of Drumset Studies
Chris Brawley, TA
Kevin van den Elzen, TA

Classroom: LPB G122B (Drum Lab)
Office: TMC G145 / *OFFICE HOURS = Tues + Wed 11 - 11:45 a.m. by email appointment only*
Telephone: 213-740-8142
Email: perskine@usc.edu
cbrawley@usc.edu / vandenel@usc.edu
Course hours: 2 x 50-minute sessions per week

Drum Lab Schedule	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9:00 - 9:50	47360 *(Brawley)*		47360 *(Brawley)*		
10:00 - 10:50	47361 *(Brawley)*	47364 *(van den Elzen)*	47361 *(Brawley)*	47366 *(van den Elzen)*	47368 *(van den Elzen)*
11:00 - 11:50	47473 *(Brawley)* *MPPM-340*		47473 *(Brawley)* *MPPM-340*		
12:00 - 12:50					
1:00PM-1:50	47362 *(Brawley)*		47362 *(Brawley)*		
2:00PM - 2:50	47363 *(Brawley)*		47363 *(Brawley)*	47367 *(van den Elzen)*	
3:00PM - 3:50	47474 *(Serfaty)* *MPPM340*				
4:00PM - 4:50	*MPPM340* con't.	46815 MPWP-440 *(Erskine/Serfaty)*		47365 *(van den Elzen)*	
5:00PM - 5:50					

Course Description
The purpose of this 15-week course is to enable a basic level of drumming competency, laying a foundation upon which students can increase their understanding of rhythm, promote a mastery of physical and musical coordination, and establish a set of skills on the drumset. Students will also learn how to communicate their musical wishes to drummers they might work with in the future, both verbally as well as by way of musical notation.

Please note! Professor Erskine is the Instructor of Record *only* for this course. Because of the lab nature of MPPM-240, the day-to-day / class-to-class instruction will be done by TAs Chris Brawley or Kevin van den Elzen.

Students will gain:
- The ability to perform basic drumming rudiments with drumsticks on a practice pad
- The ability to perform a variety of basic drumming styles, patterns and beats
- The ability to play the drums in an ensemble context, i.e., with other musicians
- An understanding of the role and development of the drumset in contemporary music

Mandatory Course Materials (all items available from amazon.com**, etc):**
-1 pair of drumsticks for practice pad studies: Vic Firth SD1 model
-1 pair of drumsticks for drumset studies: Vic Firth "Peter Erskine Big Band" model
-*Drumset Essentials, Vol. 1* by Peter Erskine (Alfred Publishing)
-*Time Awareness for All Musicians* by Peter Erskine (Alfred Publishing)

Drumsets will be provided in the 'Drum Lab' (G122B). Drumsets are Roland electronic pad kits with teacher-to-individual student communications by way of headsets (similar to an electronic keyboard lab). Remo Rhythm Pal Bucket Drums and RhythmTech LapTops will also be provided. USB flash drives are recommended!

Grading Criteria:

- **Attendance and Participation (16%):** Attendance is expected at all classes and is mandatory for exams. Classes which meet once per week can allow one unexcused absence per semester. Each additional unexcused absence will result in a 4% reduction in overall mark. Classes which meet twice a week can allow two unexcused absences per semester. Each additional unexcused absence will result in a 2% reduction in overall mark. Please be on time and participate in class!

- **Listening Assignment (10%):** Students will be emailed a small set of music samples by Week 5 of the semester. Listen to the music provided and compose a journal-style response between 500-1,000 words. The assignment is due, via email, to Professor Erskine and your respective TA by the end of Week 10. More details about the Listening Assignment will be discussed by your TA in class.

- **Mid-term Exam (34%): A)** Written exam testing drumming styles, players and history presented in class. **B)** Playing exam testing basic drumming skills on the practice pad as well as drumset skills that have been learned in class.

- **Final Exam (40%) S**tudents will perform in a jury-type setting for the Instructor. They may be asked to play basic drum rudiments, as well as any of the styles or tempos that have been studied throughout the semester. Drumset chart reading may also be part of the final examination.

Statement for Students with Disabilities
Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to Professor Erskine (or to your TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30am – 4:30pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct
Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offence with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/.

Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* http://equity.usc.edu/ or to the *Department of Public Safety:* http://dps.usc.edu/contact/. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* http://emergency.usc.edu/will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Class Notes

-Practicing: Students are expected to practice approximately 3-4 hours per week outside of class time. The drum lab schedule is provided at the beginning of this document. Any time, 24/7, a class is not scheduled, you may enter with your USC Card to practice.

-It is assumed that most students are right-handed. Students will be asked to swap right-for-left instructions if they are left-handed. A drumset can be set up to accommodate left-hand students, although it is not always practiced by leading professionals. Alternately, left-handed students could play on a right-handed drumset utilizing an "open" grip.

Week 1: Introduction and Basic Techniques

-Introduction to class presented by Professor Peter Erskine
-Basic techniques: grip, stroke technique, relationship to pad etc
-Warm up and coordination exercises
-ASSIGNMENT for next week: *Drumset Essentials Vol 1* Read page 1-25

Week 2: Rudiments, Subdivisions and Beginning Grooves

-Review of Week 1 concepts
-Drumming rudiments (handout provided)
-Discussion of subdivisions from whole notes to 16th notes
-Basic drum notation and slashes
-In-Class Listening: "Billie Jean" by Michael Jackson
-ASSIGNMENT for next week: *Drumset Essentials* Page 29, #'s 1-6

Week 3: Basic Drumbeats #1

-Review / additional Rudiments
-Straight 8th note beats and 4-limb coordination
-16th note variations (3-note) (handout provided)
-In-Class Listening: "Wait For Tomorrow" by Jimi Hendrix and
"Give Me One Reason" by Tracy Chapman
-ASSIGNMENT for next week: *Drumset Essentials* Pages 28-31, #'s 1-10

Week 4: Basic Drumbeats #2

-Rudiments and review of Week 3
-Jazz: Swing Feel, Ride Cymbal Pattern, Basic Coordination
-16th note accents and variations (2 note)
-In-Class Listening: "Freddie Freeloader" by Miles Davis

Week 5: Drumset / Drumming Styles; History and Evolution

-Drumset Development & Influential Drummers
-History of The Blues
-Stylistic Developments
-Mid-term study guide (handout provided)
-ASSIGNMENT for week 10: Listening assignment handed out

Week 6: Review

-Review of all materials covered to date
-ASSIGNMENT for Week 8: Read *Time Awareness For All Musicians*

Week 7: Mid-term Exam

-Hour 1: Written exam; history, drummers, stylistic developments, etc

-Hour 2: Playing exam. All playing material learned in class including rudiments, grooves, independence etc. Refer to study guide provided in Week 5.

Week 8: Independence and Polyrhythms

-Introduction of new rudiments
-Quarter-notes in BD while reading rhythms on SD (handout provided)
-Polyrhythms and Hemiolas: *Time Awareness For All Musicians* Page 38
-Student in-class ensemble play utilizing Remo Rhythm Pal Bucket Drums

Week 9: Advanced Drum Grooves

-Rudiments
-Funk and Pop Rhythms: *Time Awareness* Page 35
-Other Advanced Grooves / Fills: Paradiddle groove, opening HH etc
-In-Class Listening: "Chameleon" by Herbie Hancock
-ASSIGNMENT due at end of next week: Listening Assignment

Week 10: Composition

-Rudiments
-Composition: explanation and practical application
-Compose various grooves / fills
-Student in-class performances
-Student in-class ensemble play utilizing Remo Rhythm Pal Bucket Drums

Week 11: Drum Fills

-Rudiments
-Written, listening and playing examples of drum fills
-Compose solo using information from this and previous lesson
-Student in-class performances
-In-Class Listening: "The End" by The Beatles

Week 12: Drum Charts and Brushes

-Rudiments
-Study of various drum charts (1st hour)
-Basic brush playing (2nd hour)
-In-Class Listening: "Since I've Been Loving You" by Led Zeppelin

Week 13: Contemporary Drumming

-Rudiments
-Contemporary applications of the drumset (Odd-time signatures, latin styles etc.)
-In-Class Listening: "Clocks" by Coldplay
-Final Exam Study Guide (handout provided)

Week 14: Review

-Review of all materials covered to date

Week 15: Final Exam

-All students will perform in a jury-type setting for the instructor. They may be asked to perform drum rudiments, grooves, fills and/or other concepts from the semester. Refer to study guide provided in Week 13.

IN ADDITION: PROFESSOR ERSKINE MAY PROVIDE IN-CLASS LECTURES AS WELL AS OUTSIDE-OF-CLASSROOM WORKSHOPS