

The Freelance Musician

57454 / 57754
Fall 2024 Syllabus

- Time & Location:** Tu/Th 11 AM - 12:15 PM, HoA 223
- Faculty:** Monique Mead, Director of Music Entrepreneurship
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- Grad Assistant:** Joanna Lau
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- Office Hours:** By appointment in HoA 230 or via Zoom
- Textbook:** Angela Beeching “Beyond Talent, 3rd Edition”
- Course Schedule:** See end of syllabus

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to make you “roadworthy” as a professional musician, equipping you with the tools, skills, and mindset that would make people want to work with you again and again. I think of it in three stages: “building the vehicle” (portfolio), “tuning the engine” (communication); and “mapping the route” (strategy) to put you on a successful trajectory.

No prior knowledge or experience is required to take this course. You have already spent thousands of hours practicing to become a fine musician. Turning your artistry into a livelihood requires an entirely different skill set. But, with just one semester of focused attention, you can get your professional presence up and running, so let’s get going!

Course Objectives

- Articulate what you contribute to society and why it matters.
- Learn where to find freelance work and how to create your own.
- Establish your professional online presence with expert help.
- Interact with innovative musicians and practice entrepreneurial thinking.
- Refine your promotional materials and business documents (bio, photos, contract, etc.)
- Practice professional etiquette in your contract negotiations, email, and communication.
- Develop ease in public speaking.

Course Structure

The course meets in person twice a week and all materials reside on Canvas. We learn by doing. You'll hear presentations by experts in the field and work on your professional materials with peer/faculty support. As a six-unit course with 140 minutes of class time you should expect to spend about 1.5 hours per week on assignments.

IMPORTANT!

The "Weekly Roadmaps" on Canvas provide a breakdown of what to prepare for each class, what is covered in class, and what assignments are due. If you go only by assignment due dates, you'll be missing important steps and information. Consult the Roadmaps FIRST.

ASSESSMENT

Item	% of Grade
Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timely attendance• Check-In• Discussion board/reflection	30%
Portfolio <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotional materials (7)• Business documents (4)	25%
Client Management & Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Musicians Making It" presentation• Website• Client Communication• Client Gig	25%
Entrepreneurial Musicians <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dream Project Presentation	20%

FINAL GRADE

Your final grade will appear as a letter grade according to the following scale:
90-100% = A; 80-89% = B; 70-79% = C; 60-69% = D; under 60% = R (failing grade)

Assessment Details

PARTICIPATION 30%

Attendance: Your presence as an active, engaged class member is essential. In the interest of practicing professionalism, plan to show up a few minutes early so that we can begin class on time. If you need to miss a class for any reason, send a short e-mail informing me of your absence by the beginning of class.

Check-In (30 points): To ensure you receive personalized attention, plan to attend an individual consultation with me or AnneMarie DeGeorge.

Discussions (70 points): You will receive a participation grade (up to 5 points) based on the weekly discussion/reading, either online or in person. **You can skip two discussions** without affecting your grade.

PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO 25%

Promotional Materials (60 points): During the first half of the semester you will be adding documents to your Promo Folder. It will include everything you need to start a website:

1. Personal "Why" statement
2. Bio*
3. Résumé
4. Testimonials
5. Photos/images
6. Promotional audio or video recordings
7. Email list

Business Documents (40 points): You will develop personalized templates for common business documents so that you can easily accept and process gigs and concert engagements in a timely and professional manner. These include:

1. Contract*
2. Invoice (and W9)
3. Flyer*
4. Business card

Your Promo and Business Folders reside in your personal Google Drive or computer. You will be responsible for uploading your documents to Canvas by the due dates. Each item (except the bio, which is graded) will receive 5 points on a complete/incomplete basis. **You may drop two items on the list** without it affecting your grade (*denotes items that cannot be dropped). You will have the opportunity to refine your portfolio during your Check-In with CFA Career Consultant, AnneMarie DeGeorge, or discuss with me during office hours.

CLIENT MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION 25%

“Musicians Making It” Presentations (20): Each student will give a 2-minute presentation on an artist who has innovated a way to contribute to society and thrive during the present time of crisis. This involves topic research and a Q&A. You will be graded on organization, content, and delivery.

Client Communication (30 points): You will be able to select a client with whom you will communicate via email regarding a performance (e.g. church music, school visit, sound bath).

This service is unpaid and counts toward your graduate community engagement requirement. You will manage the emails with the client, negotiate the contract, provide the requested promotional materials, and follow up after the completion of services. You will be graded on your client communication

Website (50 points): You will develop a simple website or online portfolio that allows people to see who you are and contact you for work opportunities. The website is graded for organization, functionality, and visual appeal, but you are not obligated to publish it.

ENTREPRENEURIAL MUSICIANSHIP 20%

Dream Project Outline & Presentation (100 points)

This assignment is designed to help you explore the possibilities of a specific career-related project: something you’ve been curious about, wanted to explore, make happen, or be a part of. By “project” I mean an initiative you would take on: something you are interested in leading, launching, or creating.

Examples include (but are not limited to!): starting your own festival, concert series, teaching studio, or record label, creating and marketing a new music instrument accessory, booking an international tour with your ensemble, raising money to buy a new instrument, creating a new app to help musicians, etc.

GETTING HELP

I am available to help you with your course work or any other issues you would like to bring to my attention. Office hours are as listed at the beginning of the syllabus and will be held in person or via Zoom this semester. I am always available for questions right before or after class.

POLICIES

Late/Make-Up Work

Due dates for every assignment are posted in Canvas. Unless otherwise stated, assignments are due on those days. However, I recognize that sometimes “life happens.” In these instances, you may use your allotted 2 flex passes. These passes allow you to submit an assignment up to five days late without penalty. You can use these passes for any assignment and for any reason. You do not need to provide me with the reason: simply email me and tell me that you would like to use one of your flex passes.

Once you’ve exhausted your flex passes, then point deductions will occur for any assignment submitted after the deadline. There will be a 10% deduction of the maximum number of points allotted for each day your assignment is late. Assignments submitted more than 5 days after the due date will not be accepted. If you experience extenuating circumstances (e.g., you are hospitalized) that prohibit you from submitting your assignments on time, please let me know. I will evaluate these instances on a case-by-case basis.

Respect for Diversity

It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

Your Well-being

Your personal well-being is of utmost importance. Please, take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful. If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is here to help: call 412-268-2922 and visit their website at <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for help getting connected to support that can help.

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Course Schedule 2024

Subject to change

I. LEADING WITH PURPOSE

Week 1

T 8/27 Course Introduction
H 8/29 Purpose-Driven Careers
(James Austin Smith, Tertulia)

Week 2

T 9/3 Start with Why
H 9/5 Why Discovery Workshop

Week 3

T 9/10 Writing a Great Bio
(AnneMarie DeGeorge)
H 9/12 Résumé Workshop
(AnneMarie DeGeorge)

Week 4

T 9/17 Website Design

H 9/19 Website Workshop

II. TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Week 5

T 9/24 Client Management & Email
H 9/26 Networking for Musicians

Week 6

T 10/1 Design
H 10/3 Financial Wellness
(Phil Hilf)

Week 7

T 10/8 Budgets & Basics
(Sarah Steranka)
H 10/10 Tax Preparation
(Sarah Steranka)

Week 8

T 10/22 Auditions, Subbing & Recording
(Rachel Stegeman)

H 10/24 Working in Arts Administration
(Renée Govanucci, Executive Assistant)

Week 9

T 10/29 Finding Jobs/Résumé

H 10/31 Mock Interviews

Week 10

T 11/5 CMU DEMOCRACY DAY
(no classes)
H 11/7 Non Profits & Fundraising
(Denis Colwell)

III. CHARTING YOUR OWN PATH

Week 11

11/12 The Entrepreneurial Musician
(AnneMarie DeGeorge)
11/14 Dream Project Workshop

Week 12

11/19 Dream Project Presentations
11/21 Dream Project Presentations

Week 13

T 11/26 Dream Project Presentations
H 11/28 THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14

T 12/3 GIG RELIEF (no class)
H 12/4 GIG RELIEF (no class)

■ FALL BREAK 10/14-18