

MSC IND 116A - Digital Production and Beat Design

UCLA

Summer 2024

Instructor: Lauren Kop ([artist name: mini bear](#))

Office Hours: [by appointment](#)

Class Location: SMB 1343

Course Folder: Outside of accessing course materials on Canvas, [you can access the course folder here](#).

***Please be advised that the syllabus will be updated throughout the quarter. It is recommended that you view it on Canvas or Google Drive, rather than downloading it.**

Course Description

Intro to music production through the exploration of beat making in Ableton Live. We will be approaching these practices through the lens of the modern-day music producer - creating on your computer utilizing the tools you have on hand, both digital and analog. Topics covered include: building drum patterns using loops and samples, drum programming with MIDI, quantizing and humanizing your drums, creating drum patterns based on different genres, origins of beatmaking, sampling, non-traditional beat making methods, creative approaches, sound design, creating your own samples, arranging, mixing drums, using VSTs vs hardware, and more.

Course Outcomes

- Leave with a solid foundation of music production and beat making knowledge.
- Cultivate a curiosity that will create a path for becoming your own teacher.
- Establish a creative practice that is consistent, disciplined, and joyful.
- Acquire practical tools that will empower you to develop your career as an artist.
- Find your unique sound. You will be developing ear training skills when it comes to deconstructing songs and emulating different genres. This is a powerful way in which you can understand how songs are made. However, the goal is to craft your own style and to find your own voice as an artist.

Course Materials

Ableton Live

Ableton Live will be used for all classroom demos and is required for class work and assignments. You can download a free 30-day trial of the Suite version here: <https://www.ableton.com/en/trial/>. Beyond the 30-day trial, Ableton is currently offering a 60% discount on Live Intro, Standard, and Suite versions for students, as well as a convenient and interest-free installment option. [You can read about the different Live versions here.](#) **Note:** The minimum version requirement for this course is Intro, however you may want to purchase Standard or Suite if you plan on using Ableton Live outside of this course. [You can access the student discount here.](#)

***Please have Ableton Live installed and with the license activated before the first day of class.**

Note: All class materials can be accessed via Canvas

Course folder: The course folder can be found here: [Google Drive](#)

Additional Resources:

[Learn Ableton Live](#)

[Ableton Live Ultimate Overview for Beginners](#)

[Ableton Live 11 Manual](#)

[Ableton Live Shortcuts](#)

Course Expectations

Assignments and Exercises. Since learning comes from consistent practice, doing the exercises and homework will be essential (and required). To foster community and accountability, there will be opportunities during each class for peer feedback. Exercises will be completed during class (they will be assigned as make-up work if you are absent) and assignments will be due at the beginning of class on the day that they are due. Assignment specifics regarding grading is detailed in this syllabus. Note: Since you will be expected to complete exercises during class, **please bring a computer with Ableton Live installed (see above), as well as a pair of headphones.** It is recommended that you use studio headphones, however earbuds will suffice if studio headphones are not accessible.

Ask Questions. As participation is a significant part of your grade, it is encouraged that you ask questions in class, as well as during office hours. You can book a 15 minute meeting here: <https://calendly.com/minibearmusic/15-minute-on-on-one-meeting>. If you do not see an available time that works for you, please email me.

Develop a creative practice. Developing a consistent creative practice is how you grow as an artist and producer. By the end of this course, you should have a daily and weekly schedule implemented where you are working on music.

Attendance is expected and mandatory. It is highly recommended to minimize the amount of classes you miss, as much of what you will be learning in this course will be covered in the lectures. **Please be advised that it will be difficult to catch up even if you have missed one class, particularly as we only meet once a week.** If you do anticipate missing a class due to illness, emergency, or another life situation, email me ASAP. If at all possible, please submit your absence requests prior to class so that I can properly keep track of attendance. **It is your responsibility to communicate if you will be absent or late. If you do not notify me, it will automatically be marked as unexcused.** Ultimately, I want you to communicate with me regarding attendance, tardiness, and if there is anything I can do to help support you. Grading on attendance and tardiness is detailed in this syllabus.

Grading

Assignments are worth 85% of your grade

Weekly: All weekly assignments add up to 60%

Final Project: 25%

*details for assignments and projects will be provided during the quarter and are subject to change.

Grading Scale

A+: 97-100, A: 93-97; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-90; B: 83-87; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-80; C: 73-77; C-: 70-73; D+: 67-70; D: 63-67; D-: 60-63, F: 0-60.

Grading Policies:

Each assignment will be evaluated based on your understanding of the concepts learned in class, alongside your technical execution. Grading rubrics will be provided for all assignments to prevent ambiguity.

Attendance and Participation - worth 15% of your grade

Attendance

- You are allowed 1 excused absence (please see examples below). For every absence outside of this (ones that are considered unexcused and/or any absences that have exceeded your limit of 2), your participation grade will drop by 5%.
- Examples of an excused absence: illness, family/health emergency, faith based, at your professor's discretion. **Email me ASAP if you need to miss a class. If you do not email, your absence will automatically be marked as unexcused.** If you are absent, you will need to complete make-up exercises and assignments. **If you are ill, please stay home and email me.**

Late Policy: You will be marked as late 10 minutes from the start of class (**after 10 min, it will be marked as an unexcused absence**).

Participation - You will be expected to:

- Ask questions
- Provide specific and constructive feedback to your peers
- Collaborate with your peers if group exercises or projects are assigned.

Late Submission Policy for Assignments and Projects

- All assignments must be turned in/uploaded before class on the day they are due.
- Late assignments - **your grade will be lowered by 10% each day that the assignment is late**. For example, if an assignment is turned in 2 days late, 20% of the grade will be deducted.

Office Hours and Communication

I will hold weekly Office Hours on a first come, first serve basis, [which can be booked via this link](#). If you do not see a time that is available, please email me. My working hours are 9am-5pm M-F, and emails will be responded to within 24 hours. Please be advised that if an email is sent after 5pm on Friday, I may not be able to respond until Monday morning.

In-Class Environment

It is highly important to me that we cultivate a positive space for learning that supports both creativity and collaboration. As such, I ask that you be respectful of your instructor and your colleagues. Discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, ethnic or national origin, civil status, religion, creed, political convictions, language, sex, sexual orientation, disability, social condition, age, personal difference, etc. will not be tolerated. Above all, this classroom should be a space where students feel safe taking artistic and intellectual risks. If there is anything I can do to support making this class a better space, please let me know.

Class Schedule - Summer 2024:

<p><u>Week 1</u> June 25th Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Introductions, class guidelines, goal setting● Intro to Ableton Live● Creating drum patterns using audio loops and 1 shots● Basic rhythm theory and how it relates to the DAW	<p>Assignment (Due July 2nd)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create an 8 bar drum pattern in Arrangement View using 1 shot audio clips and loops● Watch the following assigned Ableton Live tutorial videos:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <u>Watch: Ableton Live Interface</u> - "Live's User Interface", "Session View", "Arrangement View", "Tracks", "Live's Browser", "Detail View", "Live's Mixer", "Transport Bar and Follow Behavior"○ <u>Watch: Ableton Live Setup</u> - "Setting Your Preferences", "Using your sounds and samples", "Saving Projects", "Using third party plugins", "Computer Performance"○ <u>Watch: Ableton Live Workflows</u> - "Editing clips in Arrangement View, "Moving between Session and Arrangement Views", "Exporting", "Basic keyboard shortcuts", "Session View shortcuts", "Arrangement View shortcuts"● Label identifying parts of the window, buttons, and other areas in Ableton Live.
<p><u>Week 2</u> July 2nd Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Listening and peer feedback from week 1's assignment.● Creating drum patterns with with MIDI - recording vs. sequencing● Quantizing● Humanizing techniques● Adding variation with drum patterns● Ableton Live drum racks	<p>Assignment (Due July 9th)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Build your own drum rack and create two separate 4 bar drum patterns using MIDI.● One must be drawn in and the other must be played in (recorded).● Add variation● Apply quantization and humanizing techniques● Watch the following video tutorials:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <u>Watch: Ableton Live Workflows</u> - "Recording MIDI", "Capturing MIDI", "Quantizing MIDI", "Sequencing MIDI" (Parts 1 and 2), "Racks Overview", "Editing

	MIDI clips”
<p><u>Week 3</u> July 9th Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drum patterns in different genres • Origins of beat making • Adding melodic and harmonic elements 	<p>Assignment (Due July 16th)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a drum pattern in the genre of your choosing. • Create a 32 bar song using this drum pattern.
<p><u>Week 4</u> July 16th Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sampling • Sourcing samples • Sampling techniques • Recording your own samples • Creative approaches • Creating new melodies from chops 	<p>Assignment (Due July 23rd)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the provided samples, create a 32 bar song incorporating them. • You must apply the sampling techniques you learned this week.
<p><u>Week 5</u> Feb 12th Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranging • Song sections • Effects • Automation 	<p>Final Project assigned (Due Aug 2nd)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details TBA
<p><u>Week 6</u> July 30th</p> <p>Overview of Lecture Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishing Tracks • Adding transitions • Ear Candy • Basic mixing concepts 	<p>Final Projects Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details TBA

Note: Assignment and project details may change at any point during the quarter.

