



UNIVERSIDADE LUSÍADA
LISBOA

Course Unit Program
Improvisation in Music Therapy

Academic Year 2026/2027

1. Organic Unit

Institute of Psychology and Educational Sciences

2. Course

MUSIC THERAPY

3. Cycle

2nd

4. Course Unit

Improvisation in Music Therapy (O9107)

5. Scientific Area

6. Curricular Year

1st

7. Type of Curricular Unit / Semester

2nd Semester



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8. Class type and workload (work time)

Theoretical classes:	
Practical classes:	
Theoretical-Practical Classes	20,00
Tutorial Guidance:	15,00

9. ECTS Credits

5,00

10. Scientific Area Coordinator

11. Regent

Prof. Doutor NUNO ALEXANDRE PINTO RIBEIRO DA COSTA

12. Assistants

13. Teaching Language

Portuguese

14. General Objectives

Expose the future music therapist, both theoretically and practically, to diverse musical contexts from harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic perspectives. Develop auditory and improvisational skills, applying them to instrumental practice. Develop essential improvisation competencies for therapeutic interventions with populations from various social and cultural backgrounds.

15. Specific Objectives

Contact with different music genres to develop a comprehensive theoretical and practical understanding. Study and differentiate the key elements of the repertoire: form, rhythm, harmony, melody, improvisation, and composition. Understand the historical, social, and cultural context of music. Recognize the importance of improvisation as essential for interaction in musical and therapeutic processes. Use various improvisation tools to create melodies and harmonic progressions.

16. Skills to be acquired

1. Musical analysis skills.
2. Musical adaptation to the therapeutic context: assimilation, transposition, improvisation, and composition.
3. Auditory, practical, and theoretical understanding of the characteristics of the studied repertoire.
4. Develop the ability to transcribe and create a body of repertoire.
5. Develop the ability to improvise in different stylistic contexts.



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17. Teaching Methodology

Oral presentation of the contents.
Presentation of relevant videos and recordings with commented analysis.
Conducting debates.
Presentation of works.
Instrumental practice of the covered materials.

18. Course Unit Program

1. Concepts of improvisation, creativity, and composition: main emerging theoretical issues.
2. Improvisation: melody, harmony, rhythm, musical texture, dynamics, articulation, and timbre.
3. Interaction as a fundamental element in improvisation.
4. Relevance and historical influence of the Blues on improvisation in popular music.
5. 12-bar Blues form.
6. Pentatonic scales and their application.
7. Blues scales and their application.
8. Composition vs. improvisation using the major scale and its modes.
9. Modes of the major scale and free, modal, and tonal context improvisation.
10. Auditory application of the studied materials.
11. Repertoire transcription.
12. Development of harmonic progressions and melody harmonization.
13. Instrumental practice with melodic and harmonic instruments.

19. Assessment Methods

Evaluation in accordance with the assessment regulations for Master's programs at the Universidade Lusíada de Lisboa.
Oral presentations in the classroom.
Musical performances in the classroom or recorded on video.
Submission of written assignments.

20. Didactic Resources

Various audio and video materials, presented in classes.
Recommended literature and other provided texts.
Musical instruments.
MuseScore or equivalent notation software.
Various music production software.

21. Sustainability Objectives

- Good Health and Well-Being
- Quality Education
- Gender Equality
- Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Reduced Inequalities
- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions



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22. Keywords

Improvisation
Form
Vamp
Phrase
Rhythm
Blues
Pentatonic scales
Gregorian modes



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23. Main Bibliography

Author(s): Laitz, Steven & Callahan, Michael
Title: The complete musician: an integrated approach to theory, analysis, and listening
Edition: 5^a Year: 2023
Local: Nova Iorque, NY, EUA
Publisher: Oxford University Press
ISBN Code:

Author(s): Metz, Will
Title: Music theory for the self-taught musician: level 2: harmony, composition, and improvisation
Edition: 1^a Year: 2022
Local: Lanham, MD, EUA
Publisher: Backbeat Books
ISBN Code:

Author(s): Crook, Hal
Title: Ready, aim, improvise!: exploring the basics of jazz improvisation, book 1
Edition: 1^a Year: 2021
Local:
Publisher: Advance Music
ISBN Code:

24. Complementary Bibliography

Author(s): Lee, Colin A. & Houde, Marc
Title: Improvising in styles: a workbook for music therapists, educators, and musicians
Edition: 1^a Year: 2010
Local: Gilsum, NH, EUA
Publisher: Barcelona Publishers
ISBN Code:

Author(s): Radley, Roberta
Title: The real easy ear training book
Edition: 1^a Year: 2008
Local: Petaluma, CA, EUA



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Publisher: Sher Music Co.

ISBN Code:

Ficha técnica MIP / MIP Datasheet	
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Autor / Author	Prof. Doutor NUNO ALEXANDRE PINTO RIBEIRO DA COSTA
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