MUS - 251, 451, 651—Composition Lessons
Syllabus

course number: Music 251 (Lower Division); 451 (Upper Division); 651 (Graduate)
Lessons Times: T-Th afternoon & evening
classroom: EMS & Rm 209
instructor: Joseph Waters
office: Room 209
office hours: Tues. 2:30-3:30 & by appointment (please send email or text)
e-mail: joseph.martin.waters@gmail.com
text message: 619-750-7125

NOTE: The best ways to get in touch with me are e-mail or text.

This syllabus is understood to be a contract between instructor and student.
Expectations regarding performance, grading, course content and attendance are stated
below. After reading this syllabus, students will sign and return the attached acceptance
form. No grades for the exercises will be registered until the acceptance form is signed and
turned in.

Suggested Software & Text Books:
Hall

• the computer music tutorial (Roads, Curtis); The MIT Press

Suggested Resources:

• spiral bound notebook (you will be taking notes)

• Sibelius 7.5 music notation software

• Musical Instrument Design: Practical Information for Instrument Design (Bart
Hopkin)

• The Archeology of Mind — Neuroevolutionary Origins of Human Emotions (Jaak Panksepp,
Norton, 2012)

• Music Language & The Brain (Ani Patel - NSI)
http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_i_0_28?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-key
words=music+language+and+the+brain&sprefix=music+language+and+the+brain

• The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the 20th Century (Alex Ross)
available used at Amazon for $7.19 & also as iBook
_1_s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1314679097&sr=1-1
• **Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality** (Susan McClary)
  http://www.amazon.com/Feminine-Endings-Music-Gender-Sexuality/dp/0816641897/ref=pd_sim_b_1

• **Animals In Translation** (Temple Grandin)
available used at Amazon for $1.08 (below) & also as iBook
  http://www.amazon.com/Animals-Translation-Mysteries-Autism-Behavior/dp/0156031442/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1283410168&sr=1-1-spell

• **Electric Sound — The Past and Promise of Electronic Music** (Chadabe, Joel) Prentice

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**Assignments and other requirements:** Each week aesthetic, cognitive or historical concepts will be presented in class. There will be a weekly reading assignments. Students will also be working on original compositions and presenting these in class in a workshop, informal manner. Emphasis is on nurturing a warm, supportive environment for creativity.

  In addition, each week a different student will choose and present an exemplary electro-acoustic work to the class. This will be critically listened to, analyzed and discussed from both technical and compositional points of view.

  The culmination of the course will be a final composition project, to be presented at a concert. This will comprise the final exam for the course — a presentation of the works of the students. Attendance is mandatory and the public will be invited.

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**Student Outcomes:**

• Students will create a dossier of compositions in preparation for the Junior-Level Exam (251); Senior Level Project (451); Graduate Recital (651)

• Students will gain orientation with expectations, procedures and requirements of Global Composition, at undergrad. or graduate level.

• Students will gain familiarity with important composers and works of the past 100 years in the European Classical tradition.

• Students will gain familiarity with important composers and works of the past 100 years in African-American traditions.

• Students will become familiar with contemporary neuro-scientific views on the cognitive processes in music.

• Students will become familiar with contemporary neuro-scientific views on the affective processes in music.

• Students will present their current composition projects and understand how they fit into the weave of contemporary musical creative thought.

• Students will explore contemporary aesthetic ideas in the fine arts, including dance, theater, film, video, painting, sculpture, performance, sound art etc.

• Students will demonstrate integrated understanding of all previous outcomes through the creation of original works of music that incorporate all of the techniques and knowledge outlined above.
Assignments and other requirements:
• Students will bring in their current creative projects and present them during studio lesson.

• Each week a reading assignment, drawn from the 4 required books, will be discussed in lesson.

• There will be several visits to contemporary art exhibits, film, & theater.

• The culmination of the course will be a final composition project, to be presented at a concert. This will comprise the final exam for the course — a presentation of the works of the students. Attendance is mandatory and the public will be invited.

• Upper division undergraduates (3rd semester and beyond) must participate in a Divisional Concert each semester. Please be aware of sign-up deadlines - available in the music office.

Grading: Course grade is based on:

I. Consistent progress in composition.

II. Attendance — Missing lesson will result in grade dropping by 1 grade level.

III. Assignments — Missing an assignment will result in grade dropping by 1 grade level.

IV. Concert attendance & production:
  • NWEAMO Festival (annual)
    — students will:
      1) attend NWEAMO Festival: Two Concert events
         Missing a concert will result in grade lowering by 1 level/concert

         2) volunteer for one of the many jobs necessary for presentation of a professional level public event.
  • 2 off campus experimental music concerts - TBD

4. Master Class Attendance: There are up to 3 master classes to which attendance is required. For this event there will be a sign-in sheet before the class and a sign-out sheet at the end of the class. It is the student’s responsibility to find and sign both sheets. Failure to sign either one will result in no credit being given for attendance.

5. Final concert production — Electronic Music Marathon: — students will
  • present an original electro-acoustic composition composed during the semester;
  • volunteer for one of the many jobs necessary for presentation of a professional level public event.

Missing concert or failure to participate in production will result in class failure.
Lateness Policy: Late-arriving students are very disruptive. Please make every effort to be on time for your lesson. Arriving more than 15 minutes late will be counted as absent (grade will drop by .5 grade level).

Syllabus

LESSONS: PROCEDURES, REQUIREMENTS, EXPECTATIONS, ETIQUETTE ETC.

• There is no standard repertoire in composition. Indeed, it is intrinsic to the composer’s art that each follow his/her unique creative path. Therefore, as composition teacher my challenge is to help you discover your voice and provide you with aesthetic & technical guidance that is appropriate for you. I will work closely with you on this and together we will develop a robust, customized trajectory that will satisfy graduation requirements and prepare you for further study and professional work as appropriate.

• Undergrad. Electro-Acoustic Comp. majors : choose 6 lessons (50 minute lessons) throughout the semester, in the time slots in the online Lesson Sign-up doc. (plus 2 group activities - see below*)

• Graduate-level Comp. majors : choose 12 lessons (50 minute lessons) throughout the semester, in the time slots in the online Lesson Sign-up doc. (plus 2 group activities - see below*)

All lessons are on Tues & Thurs, between 12:30 & 6:00 PM.

PLEASE DO NOT TAKE SOME ELSE'S TIME SLOT -- IF YOU HAVE A CONFLICT PLEASE CONTACT THEM AND SEE IF THEY CAN SWITCH - OR CHOOSE ANOTHER WEEK.

• In addition there will be two day-long group composition events*, culminating in a dinner. These will be Thursdays, TBD. If this presents conflicts with other classes, please let me know. I will write a request to your instructor. I consider this type of activity to be critical to your growth as a composer.

• If you need more lessons we will arrange it — I am here to provide you as much support as you need.

• Composition requires continuous practice -- and you should set aside time every day for composing.

• I will need to see clear and consistent progress over the course of the semester — and a portfolio of work at end of each semester.
• if you do not use all your lessons during the semester, you must make them up in subsequent semesters.

• Please text me, preferably the day before, if you cannot make it to your lesson: 619-750-7125

• When you come for a lesson please come prepared.

• Undergraduate students must participate in a Divisional Concert each semester from the 3rd semester of lessons onward.

WHAT TO BRING TO YOUR LESSON:

• a SCORE i.e. an abstract linear time-based diagram of your work -- and I do not mean Pro-Tools, Performer, Garage Band, Reason etc. screen shots. Those are useful at the mastering stage -- and if we are doing sound design you may want to open up your pro-tools file -- all fine -- but this should be IN ADDITION to a score.

Bring your work in European notation format -- so if there are beats, pitches, chords and anything else that can be represented, including textures -- that is how it must be represented -- This is required for the Junior-Level exam, and more importantly, will force you to develop these very important skills.

LESSON ETIQUETTE:

• Please respect my time and the time of the student who is coming after you.

• Be on time. Lessons will be given in the EMS (room 255A) or my office, RM 209.

• Do not wait out in the hall. When your time has arrived please enter the studio. It is easy in a lesson get wrapped up in a topic and lose track of time -- so don't wait impatiently in the hall, but enter the EMS politely - I will not come out looking for you.
Electronic Music Studio (EMS) Access: After lab fee has been paid you will be allowed to sign up for lab time in the EMS. Each week you will have an assigned block of time during which the advanced workstation will be reserved for your use. You will issued a swipe card. & studio key.

Entering and leaving EMS is a 4 step process:

TO ENTER:

Step #1: Swipe your card at the door.

CAUTION: YOU MUST SWIPE CARD FIRST, BEFORE OPENING THE DOOR. FAILURE TO DO THIS WILL RESULT IN THE POLICE COMING IMMEDIATELY.

Step #2: Unlock the door and enter.

TO LEAVE:

Step #3: Close the door firmly behind you. It will lock automatically. Test the door to be sure that it is latched.

Step #4: Swipe your card. This will send a signal to Campus Police telling them that you have left.

PLEASE NOTE: You are responsible for the care and safe-keeping of the equipment in EMS while you are in the studio. Swiping your card tells the police exactly who is using the studio. If you leave the studio as another student is entering you MUST swipe out and then let the other student swipe in. This will transfer the legal responsibility for the equipment to the incoming student.

NOTE: When you arrive at the EMS, if the GREEN LIGHT IS ON (on swipe card unit), then somebody is already in the studio (or should be). DO NOT SWIPE – This will activate the infrared and any movement within the EMS will trigger an alarm. You may insert key and enter without swiping. When you enter, if no one is in the room, and the light was already green when you arrived, notify me immediately via phone (619) 750-7125.

EMS equipment use policy:

1) You are financially liable for any equipment that is broken or disappears while you are in the studio, or while your card swipe indicates that you are in the studio.

2) Under no circumstances is anyone who is not enrolled in the class to enter the studio.

3) Swipe cards are not to be loaned out. Loaning of swipe cards is grounds for dismissal from the class.

4) Studio key is not to be loaned out. Loaning of Studio key is grounds for dismissal from
the class.

5) Losing studio Key will result in $310 fine. Failure to report immediate loss of key will result in dismissal from the class.

4) Because of the expense and delicacy of the equipment, you are only allowed to use EMS equipment that you have been trained upon in this class. Use of other equipment will be grounds for immediate dismissal. Further, no cables or equipment is to be disconnected or re-connected in any way except as demonstrated by the instructor.

Eating and drinking in the studio: Due to the delicacy of the equipment, eating and drinking in the studio is forbidden.

Bathroom breaks and general working procedure: The door to the studio must remain closed and locked at all times, whether or not you are in the studio. This keeps passers-by from entering while you are working.