

Private Composition - MUTH 3200/3300 (Letter Grade)

Spring 2015 - Lesson Times T.B.A. - Room 2018

Required co-enrollment: MUTH 5000: F 1:00-1:50 PM

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Office Hours: as posted or by appointment

Recommended Text: Frank, Robert J. *Beyond the Common Practice*. Linus Publications

Required software: Finale (Sibelius will be accepted, but not supported personally)

Rationale and Policies:

My overall goal for the course is to guide and encourage the student to grow and mature as a composer, to build their portfolio of professional, creative and original works, and to be a mentor and advocate for their future success as a composer. Students are expected to bring with them an enthusiastic, open, and positive attitude; a willingness to reach beyond their present state; and to dedicate the necessary time to their art (6 or more hours per week composing/research time).

I believe strongly in the philosophy of composing by *intent*, not out of ignorance. For this reason, all students are required to be familiar with the basic orchestration and notation texts (Adler, Blatter, Cope, Stone, etc.) and frequent reference will be made to specialized texts dealing with each individual instrument/medium (as outlined in my text: *Tools for Composers and Arrangers; A Selective, Annotated Bibliography of Resources*, Free publication via my web site.) I will also reference materials in my text *Beyond the Common Practice*. Students are also expected to study related works from the repertoire as assigned and have a thorough understanding of the genre and medium for which they are composing. Projects will be expected to be original, creative, idiomatic, and professionally presented. All new works will be expected to receive a reading or performance.

Lessons will be scheduled for 1 hour per week. If additional lesson time is needed, I am happy make that time available on an as-needed basis. Students will be required to bring hard copies of all sketches and materials to their lesson along with their laptops with all files. Listening assignments may be made, with written notes on the listening due at the lesson as a part of your project. Ideas are free; writing down your ideas will count toward progress and work on a project. This may be in the form of listening notes, recordings, scores (from library or elsewhere) original sketches, all in either hard copy or computer file formats. **A lesson with no new work completed is the same as a missed lesson.** To be excused, students must contact me no less than 24 hours prior to the lesson or have a legitimate written excuse or emergency situation.

Goals and Outcomes

General Goals:

It is hoped that during private composition studies and departmental seminars students will:

- Gain familiarity with major trends and styles of music, medieval to present
- Explore various approaches to the creative and compositional process
- Acquire a familiarity with traditional writing styles as well as the development of an unique, individual style
- Develop a portfolio of creative, original, works with professional looking scores and recorded readings and/or performances. Works should include solo, solo and piano, small ensemble, and large ensemble works for vocal, instrumental and electro-acoustic media.
- Explore the possibility of an interdisciplinary, collaborative project with students from dance, theatre, film, or art departments.
- Demonstrate professional skills via submission of scores to juried competitions, in response to calls for scores, and through commissions and public performances.
- Gain confidence in their abilities through the successful completions rehearsal, and performance of works
- Develop the patience, self-discipline, perseverance, and leadership skills to enable the successful development of one's chosen career intent.

Outcomes for First Year Studies:

- Overview of career options in composition
- Overview of principle compositional trends and the creative process
- Study various approaches to melody, rhythm, form, means of development, modeling, sketching, and other pre-compositional techniques,
- Complete short (1-5 minutes) idiomatic original works for solo instruments and small ensembles
- reading and recording of compositions

Outcomes for Second Year Studies:

- Continued study of compositional trends and styles
- Continued development of compositional techniques
- Development and extension of harmonic, rhythmic, and formal processes
- Complete works for small ensembles (3-5 performers)
- Compose for more extended forms, with durations longer than 5-6 minutes
- Public performance of works
- Juried review of all composition students will take place in the third semester of study.
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Outcomes for Third Year Students:

- Continued study of compositional trends and styles
- Continued development of compositional techniques
- Study and composing of larger forms and open form
- Public performance of works
- Entry in national competitions and/or calls for scores

Outcomes for Fourth Year Studies:

- Refinement of compositional skills
- Development of professional skills
- Completion of a work for large ensemble, film, theater, etc.
- Senior Recital of works completed during studies, 40-50 minutes duration, including acoustic and electro-acoustic media. Student is responsible for all scheduling, publicity, rehearsal, and production of this event. All works and programs must receive prior approval by instructor.

Assessment:

Grades are not based upon style or personal aesthetic, but on creativity, exploration of new techniques, craft, mastery of established, professional standards (MOLA Guidelines, published scores of a similar nature, and orchestration texts) and personal growth in musical thought, ideas, development, and realization. One completed work of appropriate length and scope, as per the guidelines under *Goals and Outcomes*, is expected to be completed to receive a grade of "A". A completed work (project) consists of a neat, professional, bound score and parts (90%), and a reading or performance (10%). Electro-acoustic works and other compositions in a scoreless medium will be evaluated by the final performance medium (film, recording, etc.) Grades and evaluation of progress are assessed by the instructor alone as to completion of the project as previously defined. Exceptions will be made for special or larger projects or for extenuating circumstances at the sole discretion of the instructor. Unexcused absences will lower your final grade one letter grade per absence. 24 hours notice by SMU email or SMU voicemail at my number is required for advance rescheduling of lessons.

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS> to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible, present a DASS Accommodation Letter, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement.

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)