

## **Advanced Composition (MUTH 6320) (Letter)**

Spring 2020 -Lesson Times T.B.A. -Room 2018

Corequirement: MUTH 5000 Weekly Seminar: F 1:00-1:50 PM

Dr. Robert Frank -OFAC 2018

Office Phone: (214) 768-2142 email: robfrank@smu.edu

<http://faculty.smu.edu/robfrank/academics.htm>

Office Hours: as posted and 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. Student's 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 (12 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* (recommended text for lessons – available in bookstore or via Linus Publications – link on my web site) 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 1.5 hour per week. If additional lesson time is needed, I am happy make that time available on an as-needed basis. Students will be expected to bring all sketches and materials to their lesson. 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**

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 Semester Studies:**

- Development of a more mature compositional process
- Complete 1-2 works of a small to mid-sized scope (duo to octet) that extend students entering limitations and that would be suitable for performance on the student's graduate recital
- enter at least one competition, commission, call for scores, or other opportunity in the professional field

### **Outcomes for Second Semester Studies:**

- Continued development of a more mature compositional process
- complete 1 or more works of a more extended and sophisticated scope (duration, instrumentation, form, and/or technique) that would be suitable for performance on the student's graduate recital. These works should be written for instruments or voices that help complete a varied, interesting, and balanced portfolio (i.e. a choral work if none have been written to date)
- Discuss ideas and plans for thesis project, graduate recital content, and exit review, and make appropriate plans for successful completion and graduation
- enter at least one competition, commission, call for scores, or other opportunity in the professional field

### **Outcomes for Thesis Studies:**

- File thesis proposal with committee and receive approval
- Work on thesis project, with my role shifting gradually to that of mentor rather than teacher.
- To foster independent self-critique and motivation
- to produce high-quality notation, meeting thesis standards
- to successfully defend the thesis
- NOTE: All thesis students must also enroll in MUTH 6081 each semester of study

### **Assessment:**

Grades are not based upon style or personal aesthetic, but on 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 is 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.

All students are also required to enroll in MUTH 5000 Composition Seminar along with lessons.

- Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) at 214-768-1470 or [www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp](http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4.)
- 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)