

# Composition Skills 1 (MUC 1211)

University of Florida Fall 2020

Dr. Scott Lee - scott.lee@ufl.edu

M/W 10:40-11:30 AM, Online

Online Office Hours: TBA

## How to get in touch with me:

For short questions: E-mail me. As a general rule, I answer e-mails between 9:00-5:00, and I try to answer emails within 24 hours of receipt, except on weekends.

For everything else: Come to digital office hours or make an appointment. Office hours are a chance for you to get help on assignments, go over material covered in class, and talk about connections between class material and other ideas. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this time.

## Course Description and Goals:

An introduction to the craft of contemporary music composition through score study, composition projects, assignments, and discussions.

## Course Materials

Manuscript paper, computer notation software (Finale or Sibelius are recommended).

## Course Structure

This class is structured around the fundamentals of music composition: Melody, Harmony, Notation, Rhythm, Development, Form, Timbre, and Texture. Each of these units will have roughly the same structure:

- First, you'll be given a "Discovery" assignment, where you'll seek out and share musical examples in a discussion post that display interesting characteristics relating to the topic.
- Next, we'll spend one class introducing the topic, encountering a number of musical excerpts to illustrate core concepts.
- We will then spend a class studying a single piece in-depth through the lens of that topic.
  - When encountering new repertoire in class, you are expected to listen to the assigned repertoire while following the score **before class**, and to do some basic research about it, including the composer's biographical information and details about the piece (i.e. instrumentation, context of premiere, interesting compositional aspects, etc.). You will be asked to share your findings with the class as part of your participation grade. If you are unable to fully participate in class discussion because you failed to complete the assignments for a given day, your grade in the class will be adjusted accordingly.
- You'll then be assigned a short composition exercise focusing on the topic, which you will share in class and receive feedback on in a group lesson setting.

Over the course of the semester you'll also be assigned two composition projects, through which you will explore the compositional techniques learned in class in greater depth. Finally, towards the end of the course we will spend some time on professional development, discovering the necessary skills for succeeding as a composer in the real world.

## **Additional Course Requirements**

Students will also be asked to present their own work and perform on their instruments. Students will present a portfolio of their work to the full composition faculty at composition juries on Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. All students studying composition are encouraged to attend the weekly composition studio, Mondays at 4:05pm. A Zoom link will be shared through an announcement on Canvas.

## **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled classes. Each unexcused absence over three will result in a one-point deduction from your final grade. Any student with eight or more unexcused absences will fail the course. An excused absence is an approved UF event, a family emergency, or an illness documented by a doctor's note (to be presented in the first class attended after your sickness). Students knowing in advance that they will miss a class must contact me **beforehand via email**. Please do not schedule non-urgent doctor's appointments during class time. In the case of an absence (excused or unexcused), that student is responsible for determining what material was covered, and what assignments were given.

## **Tardy Policy**

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class. Students who are not present when I take attendance will be marked as tardy. Three tardies will count as one unexcused absence. There are no excused tardies.

## **Evaluation:**

Students will be evaluated through participation, projects, labs, and exercises in combination with their final jury grade.

Participation & Preparation:	10%
Composition Assignment & Exercises:	40%
Composition Projects:	40%
Final Jury Grade:	10%

## **Scale:**

A = 93-100 / A- = 90-92 / B+ = 87-89 / B = 83-86 / B- = 80-82 / C+ = 77-79 / C = 73-76 C- = 70-72 / D+ = 67-69 / D = 66-65 / D- = 63-64 / E = 0-62

## **UF Student Honor Code**

You are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. Any violation of the academic integrity expected of you will result in a minimum academic sanction of a failing grade on the assignment or assessment. Any alleged violations of the Student Honor Code will result in a referral to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Please review the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code at <http://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

## **Technology Policy:**

Your attention is your most valuable asset; use it to the best of your ability. I reserve the right to dock your grade and/or ask you to leave class if you are inappropriately using technology in class.

## **Zoom Policy**

You must have access to a webcam and microphone. Please sign in to zoom with your full name (first and last) as you'd like me to refer to you in class. Mute your microphone when you aren't talking. Turn on your video whenever possible, as it's very helpful to me to be able to see everyone when teaching, just like an in-person class. I encourage the use of virtual backgrounds if you'd rather not

share your personal space with the rest of the class. In general, please respect our zoom meetings as you would a normal class (i.e. please don't come to class while lying in bed in your pajamas).

### **Digital Resources**

We will make use of Canvas for communication and assignments <https://ufl.instructure.com/>  
Please check it frequently.

### **Students Requesting Accommodations due to Disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. To request classroom accommodations, contact the Assistant Dean of Students/Director of the Disability Resources Program at P202 Peabody Hall or call 392-1261 (V), 392-3008 (TDD).

### **Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

**Schedule below** (subject to change)

Wk	Date	Day	Unit	Topic	Repertoire	Projects/Assignment
1	8/31	Mon		Course Introduction		Melody Discovery
	9/2	Wed	Melody	Melody Introduction	Various excerpts	
2	9/9	Wed		In-depth study	Joan Tower, <i>Wild Purple</i>	Melody Composition
3	9/14	Mon		In-class feedback		Harmony Discovery
	9/16	Wed	Harmony/Pitch	Harmony Introduction	Various excerpts	Midterm Project
4	9/21	Mon		In-depth study	Debussy, <i>Voiles</i>	
	9/23	Wed		In-depth study	Stravinsky, <i>Rite of Spring</i>	Harmony Composition
5	9/28	Mon		In-class feedback		
	9/30	Wed	Notation	Notation Basics		Notation Correction
6	10/5	Mon		Notation Continued		Notation Discovery
	10/7	Wed		Unconventional notation	Various excerpts	
7	10/12	Mon	Midterm Project	Performances Day 1		Midterm Project Due
	10/14	Wed		Performances Day 2		Rhythm Discovery
8	10/19	Mon	Rhythm	Rhythm Introduction	Various excerpts	
	10/21	Wed		In-depth study	Messiaen, <i>Quartet for the End of Time</i>	Rhythm Composition
9	10/26	Mon		In-class feedback		
	10/28	Wed	Development & Form	Development Introduction	Various excerpts	
10	11/2	Mon		In-depth study	Britten, <i>Peter Grimes</i> , "Passacaglia"	
	11/4	Wed		In-depth study	Ives, <i>Fourth of July</i>	Final Project

11	11/9	Mon	Timbre	In-depth study	Caroline Shaw, <i>Partita for 8 Voices</i>	Timbre Composition
12	11/16	Mon		In-class feedback		
	11/18	Wed	Texture	Texture Introduction	Various excerpts	
13	11/23	Mon		In-depth study	Bartók, String Quartet No. 5: <i>I. Allegro</i>	
14	11/30	Mon	Professional Development	Prof. Development Day 1		Bio/Resume
	12/2	Wed		Prof. Development Day 2		
15	12/7	Mon	Final Project	Performances Day 1		Final Project Due
	12/9	Wed		Performances Day 2		
	12/14		Juries	Juries		