

Course Modality: IVC (Interactive Video Conference) – We will meet during our scheduled class time via Zoom.

Instructor:

Dr. Luke Dahn * DGH 438 * Email: luke.dahn@utah.edu (preferred contact)

Office Hours: by appointment via Zoom. Just email!

Materials:

1. Staff paper (a notebook, or download some here: <http://www.musicsharf.com/>)
2. Pencils. Compositional assignments should always be done in pencil. No pens!
3. There are no required textbooks. However, in lieu of textbooks, students will occasionally be asked to print scores and materials made available in Canvas.
4. Creativity and hard work.

CATALOGUE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Building compositional techniques from small projects to larger ones for undergraduate music majors.

COMPLETE COURSE DESCRIPTION

MUS2570 is an introductory composition course intended to provide students basic compositional techniques through guided compositional projects. MUSC 2570 is taught in the Fall and Spring semesters, but each semester focuses on different material.

This Fall we will focus mostly on tonal composition techniques with occasional explorations into non-tonal idioms in preparation for the Spring MUSC2570 course, which will focus on non-tonal composition techniques. We will study compositions by composers, focusing mostly on the greats such as Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Brahms, Tchaikovsky and many others in order to learn compositional strategies from the masters.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course, students will...

- complete a minimum of 5 composition projects utilizing a variety of instruments
- develop basic compositional techniques in tonal idioms
- develop an understanding of how various instrument groups are used well
- produce high quality scores of their compositions using neat, accurate and clear notation
- be involved in performing and arranging performances of their own compositions and those of their peers

A Personal Note about our IVC (Interactive Video Conference) Format

Every time I have taught this class, I have found the in-class experience where we look at each other's compositional work and provide feedback very rewarding and stimulating. I honestly have some regret that we cannot meet in person for this class, as it is more difficult in an online class to replicate the classroom community, discussion, group work and collaboration that takes place in the classroom. But I believe we can work together to create a very rewarding experience nonetheless, and even perhaps take advantage of some of the things that online learning might uniquely provide. This is my first time teaching a full semester online, so I will be learning along with you. Because of this, I am very open to suggestions and open to experimenting with different strategies for making the class as beneficial and rewarding an experience as possible. Here's to a great semester!

Zoom Class Meetings

We will hold class on Zoom and do our best to replicate a collaborative in-class experience as much as possible. The Zoom format may even be an ideal format for what we want to accomplish, in some ways. (I was surprised at how well Zoom composition lessons worked last semester when forced into them.) With Zoom, we have the ability to share screens and computer audio, so if you have a music notation software program (e.g. Finale, Sibelius, MuseScore, etc.), we can make use of this capability. Portions of class will also be devoted to discussing and analyzing music by the masters, which we can also do on Zoom.

We will plan to meet each Tuesday and Thursday at our regularly scheduled class time, and on occasion, we may switch to short individual lessons in lieu of class, particularly when our compositional projects are nearing completion.

COURSE WORK

Five Composition Projects (50% of overall grade)

Each student will complete at least five composition projects through the semester. These five scheduled projects are a melodic composition, a waltz, a song, a composition project in 4-5 parts (i.e. string quartet, woodwind quintet, brass quintet, etc.), and a composition with restrictive parameters.

These projects will be graded on four basic criteria:

- *Adherence to required parameters of the project (Did you complete the project and follow project requirements? Did you incorporate feedback?)*
- *Idiomatic writing (Is it well-written for instruments/voices involved?)*
- *Score presentation (Is the score neat, clear, and properly notated?)*
- *Creativity (Is there evidence that you put time into the project?)*

Attendance, Project Progress, Assignments (30% of overall grade)

The quality of this class will depend on the involvement of the students. Therefore, your attendance and engagement in class is vital. (Being present but not involved will not earn full attendance credit.) In addition to compositional projects, other in-class work will be required. Students should be willing to present to the class the progress of his or her project. It is very important that you are engaged during this process, as I will frequently ask for feedback from the class. Without this engagement and feedback, a crucial element to the collaborative compositional process is missing.

In addition, other short assignments (readings, score study and other exercises) will occasionally be assigned. I will give an in-class grade every three weeks for each student.

Note: We will on occasion use class time for individual composition lessons or lessons in pairs.

Final (Virtual) Concert (20% of overall grade)

The most valuable experience a young composer can have is having his/her compositions performed. It's through the collaboration with performers and through the performance experience that true learning happens (What worked well? What didn't work well (or didn't work at all)?)

Since we will mostly likely not be able to hold an in-person concert, we will plan to have a virtual concert during which we play recorded performances of our compositions. This will take place either via Zoom or via YouTube streaming so that anyone (like friends and family) can tune in. Each composer in the class should plan to have three of their five composition projects performed for the concert (though more than three may be performed if program space permits). We will discuss together as a class how we want to organize our concert.

The **grade for this final concert** will be determined 1) by having the required three pieces performed, and 2) by ensuring to the best of your ability that your pieces are performed to a high standard.

Note: Related to this second point, the point of this final concert is not to put on a "perfect" performance, whatever that might entail. There are certainly occasions when a performer that a composer has secured does not put in a sufficient amount of rehearsal time for a good performance, which is no fault of the composer. More to the point, this is a good opportunity for you as a composer to do everything you can to ensure that your pieces are performed well, by providing a clean and clear score with proper notation to your performer well in advance, by maintaining contact with your performer(s) in a collaborative spirit, by making necessary revisions based on any feedback from performers, etc.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

50%	Composition Projects (10% each)
30%	Attendance, Project Progress, Assignments
20%	Final Concert
100%	

Grade Scale: A 100-93; A- 92-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-83; B- 82-80; C+ 79-77; C 76-73; C- 72-70; D+ 69-67; D 66-63; D- 62-60; E 59-0

GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE—MUSC 2570

(Subject to change with advance notice)

Wk	D	Date	Syllabus
1	T	8.25	Course Introduction; Project 1 Introduction – Monophonic Compositions (Melodic Construction)
	H	8.27	Topics: Sense of direction (momentum) & Climaxes
2	T	9.1	Topics: Implied harmony, Two-part melody, Non-pitch parameters; Progress on Project 1 (all)
	H	9.3	Project 2 Introduction – Waltzes (Melody + Harmony) Topic: “Markedness” (Expected vs. Unexpected) Discussion: Exploring Composer Opportunities
3	T	9.8	Project 1 Due ; Waltzes: Analyzing Schubert Waltzes Discussion: Great Composers on Composing
	H	9.10	Progress on Project 2 (half) Topic: Dissonance & Consonance; Exploring Non-Chord Tones
4	T	9.15	Progress on Project 2 (half)
	H	9.17	Project 2 Due ; Project 3 Introduction – Songs (Text-Setting) Topics: General Text-Setting Principles, Syllabic Stress, Types of Accent
5	T	9.22	Topics: Accompaniments & Transitions
	H	9.24	Analysis: The British Masters – Vaughan Williams, Quilter, Finzi, and Britten
6	T	9.29	Progress on Project 3 (half); More Examples from the Literature
	H	10.1	Progress on Project 3 (half); Discussion: The Composing Process
7	T	10.6	TBD
	H	10.8	Project 3 Due ; Project 4 Introduction – Composition in 4-5 parts (choral, string quartet, brass quintet, woodwind quintet, or any other mixed combination) Discussion: Writing Program Notes
8	T	10.13	Instrumentation Lecture – Working with Strings
	H	10.15	Instrumentation Lecture – More Strings (Harmonics & Double-stops) Topics: Large-scale considerations, Foreground-Background
9	T	10.20	Progress on Project 4 Analysis: Models from Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky
	H	10.22	Progress on Project 4; Analysis: More Models from Debussy, Ravel, Borodin, and Elgar
10	T	10.27	Lessons in Pairs
	H	10.29	Topics: More Techniques with Multiple Voices – Heterophony, Imitation, Doublings
11	T	11.3	Progress on Project 4
	H	11.5	Topics: Endings, Editing Parts; Conceptualizing the Final Concert
12	T	11.10	Project 4 Due ; Project 5 Introduction – Composition with Restrictive Parameters (Exploring new idioms)
	H	11.12	Exploring new scale constructs
13	T	11.17	Progress on Project 4; Exploring new harmonic constructs
	H	11.19	No Class – Thanksgiving Break
14	T	11.24	TBD
	H	11.26	Project 5 Due
15	T	12.1	WEEK OF FINAL CONCERT: Date & Time TBD
	H	12.3	

IMPORTANT DATES

Classes begin:	Monday, August 24	Last day to withdraw:	Friday, October 16
Last day to drop:	Friday, September 4	Thanksgiving break:	November 26-27
Labor Day:	Monday, September 7	Classes end:	Thursday, December 3
Fall break:	<i>cancelled</i>	Final exam period:	December 7-11

UNIVERSITY POLICY STATEMENTS

Official COVID-19 Campus Guidelines

Students are required to self-report if they test positive for COVID-19 via this website: <https://coronavirus.utah.edu/>.

COVID-19 Central @ the U: <https://coronavirus.utah.edu/>

Face coverings: The University requires everyone to wear face coverings in shared public spaces on campus, including our classroom. Students who repeatedly fail to wear a face covering in class will be referred to the Dean of Students for a possible violation of the Student Code. Note that some students may qualify for accommodations through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you think you meet these criteria and desire an exception to the face covering policy, contact the [Center for Disability and Access](#) (CDA). Accommodations should be obtained prior to the first day of class so that I am notified by CDA of any students who are not required to wear a face covering.

ACCOMODATIONS AND POLICIES

Center for Disability & Access

801-581-5020

disability.utah.edu

ADA Statement

ADA Statement

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Faculty and Student Rights and Responsibilities

All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee. Faculty...must strive in the classroom to maintain a climate conducive to thinking and learning. PPM 6-316. Students have a right to support and assistance from the University in maintaining a climate conducive to thinking and learning. PPM 6-400.

Addressing Sexual Misconduct

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

Accommodations Policy

Some of the writings, lectures, films, or presentations in this course may include material that conflicts with the core beliefs of some students. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is one that you are committed to taking. If you have a concern, please discuss it with me at your earliest convenience.

Wellness Statement

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness; www.wellness.utah.edu; 801-581-7776.

Non-Contract Note

"The syllabus is not a binding legal contract. It may be modified by the instructor when the student is given reasonable notice of the modification."