

MUSC 2571: Composition Seminar II (Post-tonal) (3-credit)

TTh 10:45a-12:05p * Room DGH 318

Instructor:

Dr. Luke Dahn * DGH 438 * Email: luke.dahn@utah.edu (preferred contact) * Office phone: 801.585.3720

Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-2:00p, Tuesdays 10:00-11:30a (or by appointment)

Required Materials:

1. Staff paper and pencils.
2. There are no required textbooks. However, in lieu of textbooks, students will occasionally be asked to print scores and materials made available in Canvas.
3. Curiosity, creativity, and hard work.

Catalog Course Description:

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

Complete Course Description & Objectives:

MUSC 2571 is a continuation of MUSC 2570, the latter being devoted to tonal composition and the former being an introduction into post-tonal composition. We will therefore explore and develop compositional techniques utilized in a wide variety of post-tonal styles. Our explorations will often be devoted to specific parameters of music (rhythm, gesture, texture, pitch collections, etc.), and a number of composers will serve as models (Debussy, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Webern, Varese, Messiaen, etc.).

In this course, student composers will...

- complete a minimum of 5 composition projects utilizing a variety of instruments
- develop basic compositional techniques in post-tonal idioms
- develop a better understanding of how various instruments and instrument groups are used well
- produce high quality scores of their compositions using neat, accurate and clear notation

Prerequisite: "C" or better in MUSC 2570

COURSE WORK

Five Composition Projects (50% of overall grade)

Each student will complete five compositions projects for the course, each worth 10% of the overall grade. These five projects are 1) an intervallic invention for two instruments (focusing on intervallic composition), 2) a character piece for piano (focusing on texture, timbre, and gesture), 3) a percussion piece (focusing on rhythm), 4) a minimalism piece, and 5) a 12-tone work. As the focus of this course is on exploring post-tonal techniques, your compositions must be based on models studied in class and must follow the specified guidelines for each project.

These projects will be graded on four basic criteria:

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

Eight Score Studies (15% of overall grade)

Score study is an essential part of a composer's growth. We will study a number of works throughout the semester, and you will be required to complete eight score study assignments. Each assignment has two requirements: 1) listen to the piece with score and write a mini-paper (1-2 pages) that identifies and describes two compositional issues/techniques/passages that you find interesting, and 2) compose a 2-3 measure for piano (or another instrument) as a response to one of the compositional ideas in your written mini-paper.

Letter grades for composition projects and score studies can be translated as follows:

A+ = 100 A = 96 A- = 92 B+ = 88 B = 85 B- = 82 C+ = 78 C = 75 C- = 72 D+ = 68 D = 65 D- = 62 F = scored at instructor's discretion

Final Concert (15% of overall grade (5% for each piece))

Having compositions performed is where the *real* learning and development occurs for a composer. We will therefore have a final concert at the end of the semester. Each student is required to program three of the five composition projects on this final concert.

A note about performers: You absolutely *must* be proactive in finding performers to play your compositions. This is an necessary part of being a composer: it is very important to develop relationships with performers! I will help find performers for the class as much as possible, but you must be proactive on your own. (Any student in the class who performs a composition by another classmate will receive extra credit for the Final Concert grade.) Furthermore, it is crucial to arrange to attend a rehearsal well in advance of the concert. You as individual composers, and we as a class, want to represent ourselves well at the concert!

Attendance, Participation, and Project Progress (20% of overall grade)

The quality of this class will depend on the involvement of the students. Therefore, your attendance and engagement is vital. (Being present but not involved will not earn full attendance credit.) Furthermore, students are expected to present projects-in-progress, and all students are expected to provide feedback along the way.

GRADE BREAKDOWN SUMMARY

50% Composition Projects (5 total)
 15% Score Studies (8 total)
 15% Final Concert
 10% Attendance & Participation
 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

New Music Events

Monday, February 4 at 7:30pm (Dumke) – Canyonlands Concert of music by UU senior faculty composers (Rosenzweig, Roens, Chuaqui)
 Thursday, March 21 at 7:30pm (Dumke) – Utah Composers Collective
 Monday, April 1 at 7:30pm (Dumke) – CrossTalk
 Saturday, April 13 at 7:30pm (Dumke) – Composers Forum
 Monday, April 22 at 7:30pm (Dumke) – New Music Ensemble

GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE—MUSC 2571

(Subject to change with advanced notice)

Wk	D	Date	Syllabus
1	T	1.8	Course Introduction; Project 1 Introduction – Intervallic Inventions [WORKING WITH INTERVALS]
	H	1.11	Topics: Sense of direction, Climaxes
2	T	1.15	Score Study No.1 (Bartok, Scriabin, Britten, Debussy); Progress on Project 1
	H	1.17	Progress on Project 1
3	T	1.22	Discussion: Great Composers on Composing & the Compositional Process
	H	1.24	Project 1 DUE (Intervallic Invention) ; Project 2 Introduction – Piano Character Piece [EXPLORING GESTURE, TEXTURE, TIMBRE]
4	T	1.29	Score Study No.2 (Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Pesson)
	H	1.31	Score Study No.3 (Seeger, Bacewicz, Gubaidulina)
5	T	2.5	Topic: Endings; Progress on Project 2
	H	2.7	Progress on Project 2
6	T	2.12	
	H	2.14	Project 2 DUE (Piano Character Piece) ; Project 3 Introduction – Percussion Piece [EXPLORING RHYTHM]
7	T	2.19	Score Study No.4 (Varese, Harrison, Xenakis)
	H	2.21	Progress on Project 3
8	T	2.26	Progress on Project 3
	H	2.28	Project 3 DUE (Percussion Project) ; Project 4 Introduction – Minimalism Piece [EXPLORING PROCESS]
9	T	3.5	Score Study No.5 (Reich, Adams, Glass)
	H	3.7	Score Study No.6 (Pärt, Vasks, Jolley)
SPRING BREAK * MARCH 9-17			
10	T	3.19	Progress on Project 4
	H	3.21	Progress on Project 4
11	T	3.26	
	H	3.28	Project 4 DUE (Minimalism Project) ; Project 5 Introduction – 12-Tone Piece [EXPLORING THE 12-TONE SYSTEM]
12	T	4.2	Score Study No.7 (Webern, Schoenberg)
	H	4.4	Score Study No.8 (Seeger, Dallapiccola)
13	T	4.9	Progress on Project 5
	H	4.11	Progress on Project 5
14	T	4.16	Project 5 DUE (12-Tone Composition)
	H	4.18	
15	T	4.23	
	W	4.24	READING DAY
	TBD		FINAL CONCERT