

BEGINNING COMPOSITION I (MUCP 1180)

SYLLABUS — Fall 2019

class meetings: M 11:00-11:50 am (MUSIC NOW)—Merrill Ellis Intermedia Theater (MEIT, MU 1001)
 W 11:00-11:50 am (lecture)—MU 287
 F 11:00-11:50 am (laboratory)—MEIT or MU 295

instructor: Joseph Klein**email:** joseph.klein@unt.edu**office:** MU 2005**instructor:** Christopher Poovey**e-mail:** ChristopherPoovey@my.unt.edu**teaching assistant:** Andrew Smith**email:** Andrew Smith16@my.unt.edu**office:** MU 2001**RECOMMENDED TEXTS (on reserve):**

Cope, David. *Techniques of the Contemporary Composer*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1997.

*Gould, Elaine. *Behind Bars: The Definitive Guide to Music Notation*. London: Faber Music, 2011.

Ross, Alex. *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*. New York: Picador, 2007.

Kostka, Stefan. *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1997.

Stone, Kurt. *Music Notation in the Twentieth Century*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1980.

**Composition majors continuing in the program will be expected to purchase this text.*

COURSE PRE-REQUISITES:

All students enrolled in MUCP 1180 *must fulfill the following pre-requisite requirements:*

- Admission to the College of Music;
- Enrollment in or completion of Theory I (MUTH 1400) and Aural Skills I (MUTH 1410).

Students who do not meet the above requirements must make an appointment with the course instructor immediately or risk being *dropped from the course*.

Students enrolled in MUCP 1180 who have passed Theory I-IV and Aural Skills I-IV may wish to enroll in MUCP 3090 instead of 1180. The courses meet concurrently and have the same requirements, though they differ as follows:

- MUCP 3090 is 3 credit hours; MUCP 1180 is 2 credit hours;
- Much of the material in MUCP 1180 will have been covered in Theory IV, whereas MUCP 3090 covers mostly new material;
- As a 3000-level course, MUCP 3080 may be applied toward advanced elective credits (e.g., for the Bachelor of Arts degree), whereas MUCP 1180 may not.

Please contact course instructor for more information; any changes must be made by the twelfth day of classes.

COURSE STRUCTURE:**General**

The purpose of this course is to explore a variety of compositional techniques, repertoire, concepts, and aesthetics from the recent past, and to provide students interested in composition with the basic tools needed to compose effectively in contemporary idioms. Because music history and theory curricula focus primarily on music from the “common practice” era (c.1600-1900), this course supplements that material by focusing on music composed since 1900. Thus, it serves as an important foundation for the study of contemporary composition at the undergraduate level.

MUCP 1180 is required for all prospective undergraduate composition majors, and is also offered as an elective course for qualified non-composition majors (including BA students). Given the variety of students enrolled, the course attempts to achieve the following goals:

- To provide a broad foundation for future composition majors, enabling them to effectively practice their craft in a variety of contexts.
- To provide theory and jazz arranging majors with compositional experiences outside of those they are more familiar with in their respective degree programs.
- To provide non-composition majors with the tools necessary to understand and appreciate a wide variety of contemporary musical idioms and aesthetic perspectives.

The material covered in this course is critical to the understanding of current compositional trends; as a result, the amount of work required may be considered quite significant by many students.

Prospective composition majors who do not feel up to this challenge should seriously consider pursuing another major. Although MUCP 1180 may be taken concurrently with Theory I and Aural Skills I (MUTH 1400/1410), students who have little or no previous experience in theory and/or composition may find the material beyond their grasp at present. It is recommended that those students either consider another major or defer enrollment in this course until completing additional semesters of Theory and Aural Skills.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should attain the following skills:

- The ability to create short but cohesive and effective musical compositions, drawing upon a wide range of techniques and stylistic approaches.
- Broadening one's understanding of the term "music" through exposure to a variety of contemporary musical idioms.
- Developing strategies for listening to unfamiliar music, with an understanding of the appropriate cultural, historical, theoretical, and aesthetic contexts.
- Developing critical thinking skills and the ability to assess "quality" in a variety of music.
- Recognizing and applying various melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and structural materials.

Class meetings

The class meets three days each week and consists of three interrelated components:

- Lecture: includes intensive explorations of repertoire, techniques, concepts, and aesthetics presented in the listening, score study, and reading assignments. These topics set the context for the guided composition projects assigned throughout the semester.
- Laboratory: focuses primarily on the technical aspects of the composition projects and general compositional issues. Projects are read (performed) and discussed during the lab sessions and topics from the listening, score study, and reading assignments may be further explored through group discussions.
- Departmental (MUSIC NOW): These weekly meetings are attended by all of the composition students from entering freshmen to doctoral candidates. Because of the diversity of experience represented by the students in attendance, MUSIC NOW presentations may range from introductory-level to very advanced topics, and subjects run the gamut from commercial to avant-garde experimental music. These presentations are intended to expose students to current musical practices and issues, thus supplementing the more historical material covered in the lecture portion of the course. MUSIC NOW presentations include lectures, demonstrations, panel discussions, video presentations, and performances featuring guest artists, faculty, students, and alumni.

The regular meeting schedule is as follows: departmental (MUSIC NOW) on Mondays, lecture on Wednesdays, and laboratory on Fridays; however, this schedule may change in order to accommodate guest artists featured on MUSIC NOW (see schedule below for details).

CANVAS:

You will receive a copy of the course syllabus on the first class day, and project guidelines will be distributed at appropriate times during the semester. These and other materials are available on the course **Canvas site**, and may be downloaded throughout the semester. Make sure you have explored the Canvas site by the end of the first week of class, and that you are familiar with all of the resources that are available there—including listening and reading assignments, weekly logs, lecture slides, quizzes, terminology, and other information.

Additionally, all students enrolled in the course will be expected to complete the online **Preliminary Survey** by the end of the first week of class. This survey will not only provide important advisory information for the course instructors, but will provide information regarding available performing forces for the lab reading sessions throughout the semester. Students will be able to access names, instruments, and email contacts for all of the students enrolled in class, which may be used as a resource for project reading sessions.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Regular assignments include guided **composition projects, listening/score study, readings** pertaining to contemporary music, and posting your observations on the assigned works in a **weekly log**. Guidelines for each of these assignments are included on the course Canvas website. *You are responsible for following these guidelines*, so please make sure you have read this information carefully. *It is important that these assignments are done in a timely manner*, as this material will be discussed during class meetings. Most of the listening and score study materials are available on YouTube; however materials not available online may be found on the *fourth floor of the Willis Library* or on the UNT library website (<https://audioreserves.library.unt.edu>; log in with EUID and password and select this course). Physical scores are available on carrel 433; you may remove them temporarily, but they are to be returned immediately after use. Reading assignments, as well as the project assignments, lecture materials, and other course information may be obtained from the course Canvas website.

The **final project** is a 3- to 5-minute composition for up to five performers, which is either an elaboration/development of one of the previous course projects, or an entirely new composition that applies at least two of the techniques covered in class. All students who are planning to major in composition are expected to present their work in the final project reading session. Students missing more than one composition project grade, those who have not had projects read previously in class, and/or those whose projected course grade is below 70% *will not be eligible* to have their final projects read.

Examinations

There will be three online **quizzes** on repertoire and terminology covered during the course of the semester; these will be short, multiple-choice exams that are to be taken on Canvas by the end of the day Sunday on those weeks that the quiz is administered (see schedule below for details). Note that *there is no final examination* for this course. Students planning to continue in the composition program *will be tested comprehensively on the content of MUCP 1180-1190* at the **Freshman Barrier Examination** prior to enrollment in MUCP 2180; refer to <https://composition.music.unt.edu/composition-handbook#B-04> for details.

PORTFOLIO:

Students in this class—particularly those planning to continue as composition majors—are encouraged to maintain a course portfolio, which will contain the following:

- Composition project materials: an ample supply of lined staff paper, notebook paper, graph paper, and plain paper is recommended.
- Copies of reading materials, course handouts, and score examples: these may be used to prepare for the Freshman Barrier Examination and for reference during future academic work.
- Completed composition projects: prospective composition majors may wish to include these in the subsequent composition portfolio, which will be reviewed at critical points throughout the degree program (e.g., composition jury, senior recital hearing).

ATTENDANCE:

Students are expected to attend all class meetings (including weekly Music Now events) as well as all events presented within the Division of Composition Studies. Events are listed on the Composition Division website (<http://composition.music.unt.edu/calendar>); *make a note of these events at the beginning of the semester and plan your schedule accordingly.* An attendance record will be available to sign at all composition division events including MUSIC NOW; *do not forget to sign this sheet in order to receive attendance credit!*

Since there is much material to cover during the course of the semester, punctuality is crucial; to this end, chronic tardiness will be considered in the attendance portion of the grade (for the purpose of grading, 3 late arrivals = 1 absence). *Students with more than **four** unexcused absences (or the equivalent) are subject to failure at the instructor's discretion.*

GRADING:

Final grades will be based upon *composition projects, weekly log, quizzes, and attendance/class participation* (which includes concert attendance) and distributed as follows:

- Composition projects (40%):
 - Projects 1-5 (5% ea.): 25%
 - Final project/reading: 15%
- Weekly log: 25%
- Quizzes (3): 10%
- Attendance/participation: 25%

Students may keep track of their progress by viewing their grades on Canvas. Please inform the course instructor or teaching assistant immediately if you notice any discrepancies or missing grades.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

In addition to the above information pertaining specifically to this course, the following links provide important information regarding general University policies. Students should familiarize themselves with these policies:

Academic Integrity: https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003.AcadIntegrity.Final_.pdf

Student Behavior: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

Access to Information – Eagle Connect:

Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at my.unt.edu. For more information, please visit eagleconnect.unt.edu/.

ODA Information: disability.unt.edu; phone: (940) 565-4323.

UNT Policy on Diversity:

[https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/04.018_PolicyStateOnDiversity.pub 8.18.0.pdf](https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/04.018_PolicyStateOnDiversity.pub%208.18.0.pdf)

2019-2020 Semester Academic Schedule (with Add/Drop Dates):

<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-registration-guide>

Academic Calendar at a Glance, 2019-2020: <https://www.unt.edu/catalogs/2019-20/calendar>

Final Exam Schedule: <https://registrar.unt.edu/exams/final-exam-schedule/fall>

Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress (Undergraduate): <http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress (Graduate): <http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

Retention of Student Records: <http://ferpa.unt.edu/>

Counseling and Testing: <http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>; for more information on mental health issues, please visit: <https://speakout.unt.edu>.

The counselor for music students is:

Myriam Reynolds

Chestnut Hall, Suite 311

(940) 565-2741

Myriam.reynolds@unt.edu

SCHEDULE (*subject to change*):

1 August 26: MUSIC NOW

- Introductory meeting and CEMI open house

August 28: LECTURE—MU 287

- Course introduction; Listening to music
- LISTENING: Britten—*Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*; Shostakovich—Symphony No. 5;
- READING: Copland — “How We Listen”; Gould — *Behind Bars*, Ch. 1
- ASSIGNMENT: Notation Exercise; Week 1 Log

August 30: LAB (combined sections)—MEIT

- Divide into study groups
- Discuss Notation Exercise
- DUE: Preliminary Survey (online)

2 September 2: NO CLASS (Labor Day)

September 4: LECTURE—MU 287

- Approaching contemporary music; composing a melody
- LISTENING: Pärt—*Fratres*; Gubaidulina—String Quartet No. 2; Ferneyhough— *La chute d'Icare*
- READING: Dallin — Chapter 2; Stucky — “Listening to Contemporary Music”
- ASSIGNMENT: Project #1 (text setting with tonal melody); Week 2 Log

September 6: LAB—MEIT

- Project #1 (text setting with tonal melody)—discussion; schedule Week 3 readings (individual meetings)

3 September 9: MUSIC NOW

September 11: LECTURE

- Basics of composition
- LISTENING: Select one work each by three UNT faculty composers
- READING: Slonimsky — “Introduction”
- ASSIGNMENT: Week 3 Log
- DUE: Project #1 pre-compositional sketches, for review by TA in class

September 13: LAB

- Project #1 (text setting with tonal melody)—readings (individual meetings)

4 September 16: MUSIC NOW

September 18: LECTURE

- New melodic resources I
- LISTENING: Debussy—“Voiles”; “Pagodes”; Bartok—from *Mikrokosmos* (“Crossed Hands”; “Whole-Tone Scales”)
- READING: Gann — “What Composers Talk About”; Service — “Five Myths About Contemporary Classical Music”
- ASSIGNMENT: Project #2 (melodic variations); Week 4 Log
- DUE: Project #1 (text setting with tonal melody)

September 20: LAB

- Project #2 (melodic variations)—discussion

5 September 23: MUSIC NOW

September 25: LECTURE

- New melodic resources II; Impressionism, Exoticism
- LISTENING: Debussy— *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*; Ravel—*Ma Mère l'Oye* (orchestral suite)
- READING: Select one article each by three different authors at newmusicbox.org
- ASSIGNMENT: Online Quiz #1 (Canvas); Week 5 Log
- DUE: Project #2 pre-compositional sketches, for review by TA in class

September 27: LAB

- Project #2 (melodic variations)—readings

6 September 30: MUSIC NOW

October 2: LECTURE

- New harmonic resources I
- LISTENING: Debussy—*Sarabande*; Hindemith—*Kammermusik*; Cowell—*Tides of Manaunaun*
- READING: Hindemith — “Musical Inspiration”
- ASSIGNMENT: Project #3 (harmonic variations); Week 6 Log

October 4: LAB

- Project #3 (harmonic variations)—discussion
- DUE: Project #2 (melodic variations)

7 October 7: LECTURE

- Primitivism, Neoclassicism, Nationalism
- LISTENING: Stravinsky — *Le Sacre du Printemps*; Octet; Bartók — String Quartet No. 4
- READING: Bartók — “The Problem with the New Music”
- ASSIGNMENT: Week 7 Log
- DUE: Project #3 pre-compositional sketches, for review by TA in class

October 9: LAB

- Project #3 (harmonic variations)—readings

October 11: MUSIC NOW

8 Week of October 14: Individual student meetings (*required*); schedule TBA

October 14: LECTURE

- Polytonality
- LISTENING: Bartók—“Harvest Song”; Milhaud — *Saudades do Brasil* (Book I); Stravinsky — *Petrouchka*
- READING: Stravinsky — from *Poetics of Music*
- ASSIGNMENT: Project #4 (polytonal study); Week 8 Log
- DUE: Project #3 (harmonic variations)

October 16: LAB

- Project #4 (polytonal study)—discussion

October 18: MUSIC NOW

9 October 21: MUSIC NOW

October 23: LECTURE

- Structure, form, and process
- LISTENING: Bartók — *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celeste*; Messiaen — *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*
- READING: Messiaen — *Technique of my Musical Language* (excerpts)
- ASSIGNMENT: Week 9 Log
- DUE: Project #4 pre-compositional sketches, for review by TA in class

October 25: LAB

- Project #4 (polytonal study)—readings

10 October 28: MUSIC NOW

October 30: LECTURE

- Free atonality; Expressionism
- LISTENING: Schoenberg — *Pierrot Lunaire* (Nos. 1, 5, 7, 8, 16, 17, 21); Berg — *Wozzeck* (Act III); Webern — *Fünf Orchesterstücke*, Op. 10
- READING: Schoenberg — “Heart and Brain in Music”; Berg — “What is Atonality?”
- ASSIGNMENT: Project #5a (12-tone matrix); Online Quiz #2 (Canvas); Week 10 Log
- DUE: Project #4 (polytonal study)

November 1: LAB

- Project #5a (12-tone matrix)—discussion

11 November 4: MUSIC NOW

- ***Last day to withdraw from course with a grade of W!***

November 6: LECTURE

- Dodecaphony
- LISTENING: Schoenberg — *Variations for Orchestra*; Berg — *Violin Concerto*; Webern — *Concerto*, Op. 24
- READING: Ross — “Why Do We Hate Modern Classical Music?”
- ASSIGNMENT: Project #5b (12-tone study); Week 11 Log
- DUE: Project #5a (12-tone matrix)

November 8: LAB

- Project #5b (12-tone study)—discussion
- ASSIGNMENT: Final Project

12 November 11: MUSIC NOW

November 13: LECTURE

- Influences of serialism
- LISTENING: Ruth Crawford Seeger—*String Quartet 1931*; Stravinsky — *Requiem Canticles*; Copland — *Inscape*
- READING: Stravinsky — “About Music Today”
- ASSIGNMENT: Week 12 Log
- DUE: Project #5b pre-compositional sketches, for review by TA in class

November 15: LAB

- Project #5b (12-tone study)—readings
- DUE: Final Project Proposal

13 November 18: MUSIC NOW

November 20: LECTURE

- Integral (total) serialism I
- LISTENING: Babbitt — *Three Compositions for Piano*; Messiaen — *Modes de valeurs et d'intensités*; Boulez — *Le marteau sans maître*
- READING: Boulez — "Schoenberg is Dead"; Babbitt — "The Composer as Specialist"
- ASSIGNMENT: Week 13 Log

November 22: LAB

- Approved Final Project Proposals returned
- DUE: Project #5b (12-tone study)

14 NOTE: This is the last week of concerts at the UNT College of Music for the semester!

November 25: LECTURE

- Microtonality and alternate tuning systems
- LISTENING: Ives — *Three Quarter-Tone Pieces*; Partch — *Barstow*
- READING: Partch — "Author's Preface"
- ASSIGNMENT: Week 14 Log

November 26: LAB

- Final Project—discussion
- DUE: Final Project pre-compositional sketches

November 28: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Day)

15 December 3: LECTURE — MU 287 (combined with MUCP 1190/3090)

- Explorations in timbre and texture: sound mass
- LISTENING: Varèse — *Intégrales*; Ligeti — Chamber Concerto; Penderecki — *Threnody*
- READING: Ligeti — "Ligeti [interviews] Ligeti"
- ASSIGNMENT: Online Quiz #3 (Canvas); Week 15 Log

December 4: LECTURE — MU 287 (combined with MUCP 1190/3090)

- Concluding discussions

December 6: READING DAY

- Optional Final Project readings in MEIT (TBA); *attendance extra credit*
- **NOTE: This is the last day to submit any pending assignments!**

16 Monday, December 9—9:30 AM-12:30 PM, MEIT (Final Examination Time*)

- Final Project Readings
- DUE: Final project

* NOTE: This session will start one hour earlier than the posted final exam time, as there will be **many** projects to read. Please plan on staying for **at least two hours** of the reading session!