

UNDERGRADUATE/GRADUATE COMPOSITION

Course Syllabus

Dr Stanley Friedman

Textbook:

None is required. Recordings and scores will be placed on reserve. These will include (but not be limited to) traditional masterworks by Bach, Beethoven, Stravinsky, Schoenberg and Bartok, as well as contemporary works by Adams, Glass, Corigliano, D. Freund, Friedman, et al., plus samples of Asian and other non-Western music.

Course Description:

The course is designed to aid students in achieving mastery of the technical skills and aesthetics of musical composition and deep appreciation and knowledge for the Art of Composition in general.

The class will meet three times (hours) per week. One meeting will be an individual studio lesson with the instructor; the other two meetings will be in class/discussion group format, which may include students at different levels.

Individual meetings will focus on the progress of each student's work. Group meetings will include discussions concerning assigned studies and philosophical concepts and examinations of student projects.

The courses basics are the same for graduates and undergraduates, except that

Graduate students will be expected to demonstrate advanced skills and general knowledge;

First and second year students will spend more time on fundamentals and short-term projects;

Senior composition majors and masters candidates will complete a major work in one of the larger forms as a thesis;

4. Graduate students will be expected to lead group discussions once per semester, presenting a detailed analysis of a major masterwork.

Short projects in instrumental and vocal composition are based on studies using specific/assigned compositional techniques, as well as on techniques/aesthetics of students' choosing. Assignments are to include various exercises in tonality, traditional forms, atonality, non-traditional forms, expanded (pseudo) tonality, extended techniques, and projects which may include but not necessarily be limited to explorations in jazz, rock, non-Western aesthetics, etc. Both traditional and computer notational systems will be discussed.

Course Requirements:

Students will complete weekly short composition exercises for solo instrument, voice or small chamber group, as assigned. Course expectations will include the completion of at least one longer and more substantial work per semester, as well as reading/study assignments, as directed. Students' acquisition of essential notational and score/presentation skills (both handwritten and computer) will be assessed, as will be the ability to organize and direct rehearsals and performances of original works. Students will be expected to perform/conduct

their own works, as appropriate.

Seniors and Masters students will present a 1-hour recital of original works for various instruments/voices.

Grading will be based on timely completion of assignments, demonstrated acquisition of compositional, notation and performance production skills/knowledge and on general artistic/professional progress.

SAMPLE WEEK

TU 13.00 GROUP MEETING

Weekly assignments presented: 60–90 second compositions for solo instrument/voice + piano featuring limited pitch sets (4–5 pitches); technical issues addressed include melodic/harmonic generation on limited intervals, use of inversion, tonal versus non-tonal implications, structure of small-scale works, etc. Assignment due following Tuesday: 60–90 second composition for mixed instrumental trio featuring polytonality.

WE 10.00 APLIED COMPOSITION INDIVIDUAL LESSON

One-on-one with Professor Friedman, examining ongoing student project: single-movement work for string orchestra featuring non-Western scales; critique and modifications/suggestions assigned.

TH 13.00 GROUP MEETING

Seminar/discussion on assigned study piece, LE SACRE; recorded excerpts played in class; score studied for examples of modal melody, polytonality, recurring rhythmic motives, use of mixed meters, orchestration as “invention,” co-equal to harmony, melody, rhythm; comparison with other 20th-Century works as examples of “primitivism.”