

LSMSA Course Syllabus

MU 313 – Advanced Music Composition

TR 11:00-12:00; Room 214 MAB

Dr. Al Benner (318) 357-2537

Room 214 MAB - office hours as posted on office door or on website

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COURSE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

To continue the knowledge and comprehension of the common practice period of music theory and other techniques critical to a fundamental understanding of how theory began and where it stands today as we approach the 21st century. We will complete our study of diatonic materials (from *Introduction to Music Theory*) and advance to the study of chromatic materials. This will mainly involve 4-part analysis. Also included will be a look at the basic structure of pieces, involving melodies, harmonies, and rhythms, score reading and analysis, and the formal attributes that comprise common practice theory. Proper preparation in the above will aid the student not only in an effective use of common period practice theory, but will also be a tremendous benefit in the performance of music. The student will be given the opportunity to be challenged; to develop musical skills that will express his/her abilities that will aid in future instrumental and/or vocal playing, and will be beneficial in other music courses.

MATERIALS

Pencil, paper and manuscript paper brought to each class.

Your text book must be brought to each class.

You will be instructed when to bring your supplemental text.

TEXT

Benjamin, Thomas, Horvit, Michael, and Nelson, Robert: *Techniques and Materials of Tonal Music, 3rd ed.* **AND** Benjamin, Thomas, Horvit, Michael, and Nelson, Robert: *Music for Analysis*

The Instructor will also provide individual music sheets as needed.

Supplemental Text

Ottman, Robert W.: *Advanced Harmony: Theory and Practice, 5th ed.*

Listening CD or cassette as provided by the Instructor.

EXAMINATIONS AND GRADING

Specifics about grading procedures will be discussed in class by the Instructor. In general:

- The Instructor expects material to be learned in a timely manner. Exams and quizzes will be given to ensure proper understanding of the material covered and as a review. In some cases, these might take the form of a take-home exam or quiz. It is expected that no outside assistance will be given in those cases.
- There will be an individual mid-term exam on material covered up to that point. There will also be a final exam covering material for the entire semester.
- There will be class assignments (or homework) fairly frequently. These assignments will either be on materials already discussed and/or materials we will be discussing in the next class period. Credit will be given for all homework assignments. Assignments not turned in will receive 0 points. You have up to one week after the due date to turn in homework assignments to receive partial credit. It is better, however, to turn in all assignments, no matter how late. Some credit may be awarded depending upon circumstances. Homework assignment points come particularly in play for those in “gray” areas.
- Students are required to attend **two** musical performances (as described by the Instructor) during the semester and turn in a written (computer or typed) report, minimum one page, single and ½ spaced, font no larger than 12 point, about the event (**due no later than one week after the performance date**). **One is required by the mid-term exam; the other the last day of class.** Reports turned in after the week period will not receive full credit. You can always turn in your reports before the due dates. You will receive up to 10 points for each paper depending upon meeting the qualifications above. If one of your papers is not turned in by mid-term, you will receive a 5 point deduction from your mid-semester grade. For the overall semester, missing reports will result in a 10 point deduction from your overall class average—consequently, without both reports, you cannot make an "A" in this course.

- At the discretion of the Instructor, a point(s) can be given for either exceptional work or a minus(es) for behavior that is disruptive or refusal to participate in class requirements or assignments.
- There will be at least 2 class projects. These will be discussed in class as to specifics.

For the quizzes and exams, you will be given a point total to determine a letter grade of A, B, C, or D. Grades are determined as a percentage according to: 100-90=A; 89-80=B, 79-70=C, 69 or below=D. Your final grade is determined based on the overall point total.

Exams are based on unequal points. Consequently, your grade will be determined by a percentage correct on each exam. The project will be based on 100 points. The breakdown of the final grade will be: Mid-term 15%; Quizzes 20%; Projects 25%; Final Exam 20%; Homework 5%; Class Participation 5%; Concert Papers 10%.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Although this may vary, we will basically cover in your main textbook Part II—Diatonic Materials and Part III—Chromatic Materials throughout the semester. We will use your analysis text as additional learning material. A good portion of this class will be analyses of Bach chorales. These will be given to you when the time comes.

EXAMS SCHEDULE

By mid-term there will be a project, several exams or quizzes, and then the mid-term exam. After mid-term, there will also be a project, several exams or quizzes, and then the final exam. (The number of quizzes will be determined by class participation and standing.) **IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO ME THAT YOU LEARN THE MATERIAL THAN GIVING A SPECIFIC GRADE.**

The following is a guideline and may be altered depending upon the progress of the class. Major exams will be during the prescribed weeks covering the Arts Faculty. These will be discussed at least a week in advance of when they are given. The mid-term exam will be either Oct. 4 or 6. Final exam is as posted. Quizzes will be spaced throughout the semester to correspond to when material should be learned in a timely manner. The projects will be assigned a specific due date to fall within the Arts Faculty testing guidelines. These dates will be told to the student when the project is assigned. At the discretion of the Instructor, an additional project may be assigned in place of an exam. This will be discussed in class before the assignment is given. Depending upon discussed changes, the percentages that comprise the breakdown of grades will be altered. If this occurs, students will be notified about those percentage changes.

ATTENDANCE

Students must adhere to the LSMSA attendance policy. Failure to attend a class will be reported on the attendance report. The administration and/or the school nurse, not the Instructor, will determine whether or not an absence is excused. If you do miss a class for any reason, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate to know what took place during your absence and to prepare for any class assignment or exam that will take place upon you return. Unexcused absences will result in a minus for any class assignment you missed. Attendance is taken at the beginning of class. If you enter after attendance is taken, you will be marked tardy. Three unexcused tardies are considered as one absence. You are tardy once class begins. If you are tardy, it is your responsibility to get the material you missed from a classmate.

HONOR CODE

Students will abide by the Honor Code regulations as stated in the student handbook.

LIFE PHILOSOPHY

Do what is right even if it is unpopular.
 Take responsibility for your actions.
 Don't let others think for you.
 There is always a choice.
 Be true to yourself.

I can think of no good reason to use “curse” words in the context of this class. You will not hear such language from me either in or out of the classroom. I don't expect to hear it from you.