

LSMSA Course Syllabus

MU 213 – Music Composition

TBA; Room 214 MAB

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

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COURSE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

To gain knowledge and comprehension of basic composition in both common practice period and beyond. We will focus mainly on melody writing—what are the elements of successful melodies; how to expand melodies; and what techniques go into both. This will include, but is not limited to, the structure and form of pieces, ear-training, score reading and analysis, new types of scales and tonality, and 20th-century techniques. Proper preparation in the above will aid the student in beginning to write original music and effective compositions. It will also be beneficial 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. [In some cases, one might continue a more in-depth study of c.p.p.t or compositions from Musical Periods—concentrating on the 20th-century—in lieu of composing specific music.]

MATERIALS

Pencil, paper and manuscript paper brought to each class.

Your text book must be brought to each class.

TEXT

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

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

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

Benjamin, Thomas, Horvit, Michael, and Nelson, Robert: *Music for Analysis* **AND/OR**

Adler, Samuel: *Sight Singing* (1st edition) [You may purchase through Amazon]

The Instructor will also provide individual music sheets and worksheets as needed.

This is your textbook from the appropriate Music Theory course. You must be in a Music Theory course to be in Composition unless waived 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. In the first semester of Composition, there will be melody and/or harmonic writing as we prepare to compose our assigned pieces. This may continue in future semesters of Composition.
- Students will be given a grade based on their class preparedness and participation for each lesson.
- There will be listening assignments outside of class period. The Instructor will provide the appropriate links or files. It is the responsibility of the student to do the listening and be prepared to recognize either all or excerpts from a particular piece or excerpt. Listening identification will be part of the class preparedness and participation grade.
- Depending upon the number of semesters you taken Composition, the actual requirements and number of pieces will vary. For the initial semester, there will be a minimum of two pieces—a solo instrumental piece in the 1st grading period and a more complex piece for the 2nd grading period. This will be discussed in detail when the time arises. For those students who have already had a semester of Composition, more complex pieces will be assigned based on the student's interest and the school's need.
- Students are required to attend at least two classical musical performances during the semester and discuss those concerts during the next class meeting.
- At the discretion of the Instructor, points can be given for either exceptional work or deducted for behavior that is disruptive or refusal to participate in class requirements or assignments. This will be added or subtracted to your class preparedness participation grade given at the end of each lesson.
- [If one is continuing a more in-depth study of c.p.p.t or compositions from Musical Periods, then specifics about this area and grade expectations will be discussed the first week of class.]

Weekly lessons will be given up to 10 points based on your preparation and participation. Your total projects points will be determined by the number of pieces composed. Your final grade is based on total points.

Grade breakdown: Projects 50%; Class participation and preparedness 50%

If two projects are required, Project 1 is due at mid-term (week of Oct. 3-7); Project 2 is due the last week of class (Nov. 28-Dec. 2).

MUSIC ENGRAVING SOFTWARE

Although it is not a requirement, it is recommended that you either purchase online or download Finale's NotePad (current cost \$9.95). <http://www.finalemusic.com/> The Instructor uses Finale software and it is a great benefit if one is able to have his or her material available to open through the Instructor's program. He will instruct you how to save your files so they are compatible with his Finale program. NotePad is a limited program but is sufficient for this course. If you already have a music engraving program that is not part of Finale, let the Instructor know. It is possible that files can be saved in a way that will be compatible with the Finale program. It is possible that the more semesters you are enrolled in Composition, you may need to upgrade your music software to a better program. This will be discussed when the need arises.

If it is cost prohibitive to obtain a music engraving program, then it is acceptable to write your assignments and pieces the old-fashioned way—on music staff paper. If this is the case, it is your responsibility to learn how to engrave music properly and most importantly, readable to the Instructor.

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 your 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. Tardiness is especially disruptive because your individual part is important to an ensemble. 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.