

Music Composition Studies Handbook

Eastern Illinois University

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Table of Contents:

Admission Requirements 5

Curriculum 5

Advisement..... 6

Textbooks and Other Materials.....6

Lesson Requirements 7

Grading..... 7

MUS 1560 – Introduction to Composition 7

MUS 1570 – Intermediate Composition..... 8

MUS 3570 – Advanced Composition 8

MUS 5570 – Graduate Composition 8

Composition Studio Meeting Time..... 9

Composers’ Forums..... 9

Capstone Projects 9

Juries and Applied Study 9

Recital Requirements10

Recital Guidelines.....10

Recital/Ensemble Concert Attendance.....11

Electronic Music Requirements.....11

Multimedia and Interdisciplinary Collaborations11

Independent Study Requirements12

Listening and Reading List13

Admission Requirements

Prospective composition majors should submit a portfolio of any completed original compositions, either electronically or through the mail, to Dr. Brad Decker (bddecker@eiu.edu). Recordings, if available, are also welcome. Portfolio submissions should be sent during the application process, and before your scheduled audition and meeting (see below).

Since the Composition Concentration is within the Music Performance degree, prospective students must also audition on their primary instrument. For these requirements, contact the appropriate applied instructor.

On the day of your audition, arrange for a meeting with Dr. Decker to discuss your interests in composition, your submitted portfolio (if available), and the composition program in general. The purpose of this meeting is to determine if the Composition Concentration is a good fit for your interests and abilities, and to see if we think you would be successful as a composition major.

Students who do not have any previous experience in composition, but are nevertheless interested in majoring in composition, are encouraged to apply on their primary instrument and arrange to meet with Dr. Decker as stated above. However, it is typically best to take at least one semester of Musicianship (Theory and Aural Skills) and other introductory music classes before enrolling in composition courses. MUS 1560, Introduction to Composition, is offered in the Spring term, and is intended to be taken after at least one semester of study as a Music Major. (see below)

Curriculum

Once accepted, Composition majors will enroll in the recommended course curriculum <https://www.eiu.edu/music/BM.Perf.Composition.AY20.pdf>

In addition to the courses associated with the Performance Option, those in the Composition Concentration will take the following courses:

- MUS 1070 – Introduction to Music Technology
- MUS 1560 – Introduction to Music Composition
- MUS 1570 – Intermediate Composition I and II
- MUS 3570 – Advanced Composition I and II
- MUS 2070 – Electroacoustic Music Techniques I
- MUS 2155 – Conducting I
- MUS 3155 – Conducting II
- MUS 3542 – Post Tonal Analysis

- MUS 3547 – Orchestration
- MUS 4541 – Counterpoint
- MUS 4600 – Independent Study in Music Theory Pedagogy

Advisement

After the completion of your freshman year, your primary advisor will be your composition instructor. Students are required to meet with their advisor once each semester to make appropriate choices in curriculum planning. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for this meeting before their scheduled enrollment date.

Textbooks and Other Materials

Composition majors will be issued textbooks from EIU Textbook Rental Services according to the applied course they enroll in.

- MUS 1560 – No textbooks issued
- MUS 1570
 - Gardner Reed. *Music Notation: A Manual of Modern Practice*
 - Samuel Adler. *The Study of Orchestration*
- MUS 3570
 - Kurt Stone. *Music Notation in the Twentieth Century*
 - Samuel Adler. *The Study of Orchestration*
- MUS 5570 – No textbooks issued

You are not required to bring these books to your applied lessons, but you are required to be familiar with the content in these books for the purpose of writing and properly notating instrumental and choral music.

You are also required to keep a notebook of staff paper for sketching and notating your ideas by hand. These staff paper notebooks can be purchased in various sizes from the EIU bookstore as well as online booksellers. It is also recommended to keep a supply of pencils and erasers for this purpose, and a small straight edge for beams and measures.

Notation software is provided for you in the EIU Music Computer Lab (DFAC 1620). This lab is equipped with MuseScore and Sibelius notation software and MIDI keyboards. You may of course purchase your own software of choice for your own computer, but this is not initially required. Eventually, you may find it necessary to purchase a program for your regular use.

Students are to assume all responsibility for printing and binding of scores. Large scores should be printed on laser-jet printers. Copies can be made and bound at Copy-X in the EIU Martin Luther King Jr. University Union at reasonable prices.

Lesson Requirements

Students enrolled in 1570, 3570, or 5570 take applied lessons with their composition instructor. Both instructor and student must agree upon a mutual meeting time before the end of the first week of classes. The instructor must approve any changes in the meeting time.

Students need to schedule regular writing time into their weekly schedules. Similar to practicing an instrument, composers need to regularly engage with their project ideas for the best results.

Regular composition lesson attendance is expected. Students are however given one “freebie” – one unexcused absence that will not affect their grade. Missed lessons will not be made up. If a student needs to rearrange their lesson time in advance of an excused absence, they must do so at least THREE CLASS DAYS before the scheduled lesson, to ensure they will not lose credit for that lesson.

A Successful Lesson is one where:

- The student is prepared with new, earnest progress on their composition project
- A two-way discussion takes place between student and instructor about their project
- The student has new ideas about what they might do going forward with their project, and opinions about what they’ve accomplished so far
- The student has significant material either written down or in a notation file
- The written material/notation file is also present in the lesson, and able to be read/viewed
- The student can articulate and explain their work, and how it contributes to the project.

Grading

Each unexcused absence, after the “freebie”, will result in a half-letter grade deduction from their final grade

Students are expected to meet the Successful Lesson requirements listed above. Each week’s lesson will be graded accordingly by letter grade. An average of these letter grades will determine their final semester grade.

Students should strive to produce a new work on the Composers’ Forum (see below) for the semester they are enrolled in. It is assumed that if the student consistently meets the above requirements, their work will likely be able to be produced on the Forum. If the student project does not make it onto the Forum, that does not necessarily mean a failing grade.

MUS 1560 – Introduction to Composition

MUS 1560 meets in the Spring semester, and is an introduction to techniques and concepts associated with music composition in the modern era. It is expected that students have passed

(with a C or better) at least one semester of musicianship (MUS 1501) before taking this course. This class meets as a group twice a week for 50 minutes.

Intro to Composition is intended for students with little or no experience in modern music composition. Therefore all incoming composition majors (and those who need to take composition for their major) must take 1560 before enrolling in MUS 1570.

MUS 1570 – Intermediate Composition

MUS 1570.001 is a half-hour lesson, and is an introduction to the one-on-one composition lesson format. Students usually strive to produce one 5-6 minute work for a solo instrument or solo instrument and piano. The instrument of choice can be one they already play or are familiar with.

MUS 1570.002 is a one-hour lesson. Students work on somewhat larger pieces. Typically these include solo and accompaniment, duos, or trios, no longer than 7 minutes in length.

It is expected that final scores and parts be notated legibly and with a high level of detail, either by hand or using notation software.

MUS 3570 – Advanced Composition

MUS 3570 continues the process of expanding the ability to write longer pieces, multi-movement pieces, and for larger or more diverse instrumentation. It is expected that the student create 6-8 minutes of music, for chamber ensemble, or a similar work for virtuosic solo performance.

MUS 3570 can also be used to produce a work that includes electronic media (see below) after taking MUS 2070 – Electroacoustic Music Studio Techniques.

All final scores and parts are to be created on notation software, and at a professional level.

MUS 5570 – Graduate Composition

MUS 5570 is taken by Graduate Composition majors, or those who are interested in taking composition at the graduate level. For Graduate Composition majors, a high level of effort and quality is expected. The instructor and student at the outset of the semester determine the scope of the piece, according to their level of previous experience.

Graduate composers are expected to set an example for those at the undergraduate level. Therefore, a higher standard is set for the length, scope, and quality of their work. It is also expected that their work be produced on the Composers' Forum (see below).

Composition Studio Meeting Time

Composition Majors are required to attend any scheduled Composition Studio meeting times. The composition instructor will schedule these meetings in the first weeks of each term.

Composition Studio typically meets once for 50 minutes every other week, during a time that fits everyone's class schedules. This schedule will be sent via EIU email.

Composers' Forums

Composers' Forums are held at least once a semester, and showcase the work of EIU student composers. The composition instructor must approve all programmed works. Every effort should be made by those taking composition lessons to produce a work on the Forum. The student composer organizes all performances and rehearsals. Title, performer names, and program notes must be submitted to your composition instructor by the due date. (Program notes are required for composition majors). Composers may also submit a printed score of their piece to be on display before and after the concert.

All students registered for composition lessons in any capacity are required to attend the Forum.

Capstone Projects

Composition majors also must complete a capstone project during their final semesters of their course of study (either senior year of their undergraduate degree, or their final year of classes as a graduate student). This work should be near 10 minutes in duration, possibly multi-movement, and for a large ensemble (orchestra or chamber orchestra, wind symphony, mixed chorus, percussion ensemble, etc.). Due to logistical concerns, this project may or may not be performed at EIU. Contact the ensemble director to discuss performance possibilities. Large ensemble works cannot be performed during the Composers' Forums.

Juries and Applied Study

Since the Composition Concentration is a part of the Performance Option, you are required to study a primary instrument or voice throughout your course of study, and meet the requirements of the appropriate studio. These requirements must be obtained from your studio teacher.

Advanced Standing Juries are required of all music majors in order to take applied lessons at the 3000 level. The adjudicating panel will consist of the instrumental or keyboard faculty. The content of the jury is as follows: one or more standard work(s) for the instrument with a minimum of ten minutes length; major and minor scales and sight reading. Percussionists will use a set of guidelines determined by the percussion instructor.

There is not a Composition Advanced Standing Jury; however, you are expected to take on larger and more complex works while taking MUS 3570 Advanced Composition. Your composition instructor will determine if and when you are ready to advance to that level.

Recital Requirements

Composition Majors will present three recitals as part of their performance requirements. The student must receive a passing grade for each recital by a vote of faculty panel. The content of these recitals is as follows:

- A. Sophomore Recital (15 minutes minimum)
 - a. Standard solo literature on your applied instrument
 - b. One originally composed work (at least 5 minutes), performed on your applied instrument
- B. Junior Recital (25 minutes)
 - a. Standard solo literature (~12 minutes)
 - b. One or two originally composed works (~13 minutes)
- C. Senior Recital (50 minutes)
 - a. All original compositions
 - b. One must be performed on your primary instrument

The Sophomore and Junior Recitals are adjudicated by the appropriate area faculty (instrumental, keyboard, etc.) and at least one member of the composition faculty. Recital previews are typically for the studio repertoire only.

Recital Guidelines

Recital Requests

- A composition major wishing to organize one of the required recitals should fill out a recital request form, available on the Department of Music website.

Scheduling the Recital

- The assigned date will normally be one of the choices you made out the recital request form. You must inform your composition and applied studio advisor of this date.

Preparing Your Recital

- The student is responsible for arranging rehearsals of groups performing for junior/senior recitals. Personnel must be selected and approved by the composition or applied studio advisor at least six weeks prior to the recital. Poor preparation will not be

tolerated. The advisor may recommend cancellation when preparation has not been managed properly.

Pre-Recital Hearing

- All recitalists must arrange for a pre-recital hearing (preview) of applied studio repertoire. It must be held no later than two weeks before your recital and be heard by three faculty members.

Recital Logistics

- Sound reinforcement or other electronic needs should be discussed with your composition advisor. If needed, you must enlist the services of a sound engineer. Requests to use the equipment must be placed through your composition advisor, or the recording engineer.

Recital Recording

- Please refer to the music department handbook for current policies regarding the recording of your recital.

Recital/Ensemble Concert Attendance

It is appropriate for all involved with Composition at EIU to attend New Music events and concerts. This refers to Composition majors, graduate assistants, and faculty. This show of support and the camaraderie it develops is extremely important to the program.

Composition majors are required to attend all Composers' Forum concerts, electronic music concerts, and any concerts by visiting composers or artists.

Electronic Music Requirements

After completing MUS 1070: Introduction to Music Technology, and MUS 2070: Electroacoustic Music Studio Techniques, you are required to compose at least one work involving electronic media while studying at the Advanced (3570) level. This may involve mixed media, interactive media, multimedia, or any combination thereof. Your composition instructor must approve the nature of this project.

Multimedia and Interdisciplinary Collaborations

Upperclassmen are highly encouraged to seek out opportunities to collaborate with other artistic disciplines at EIU. (Art, English, theater, film, etc.) Multimedia projects, including those for music and film, music and dance, installations, etc., are also strongly encouraged. If large enough, these types of projects can be substituted for the Senior Project described above.

Independent Study Requirements

During the senior year of study, Composition students are encouraged to take Independent Study MUS 4600 (as a 2 credit "Music Elective") with their composition instructor for the purpose of a) studying music theory pedagogy, or b) researching the works of a composer from the last 50 years. Your instructor must approve the composer you choose, as well as the scope of the final project.

Listening and Reading List

Below are some suggested composers and authors for further listening and reading.

Composers/Artists: (Incomplete, and mostly 20th / 21st century)

- Anderson, Laurie
- Andriessen, Louis
- Armstrong, Louis
- Babbitt, Milton
- Bartók, Béla
- Berg, Alban
- Berio, Luciano
- Birtwistle, Harrison
- Boulez, Pierre
- Braxton, Anthony
- Bussotti, Sylvano
- Cage, John
- Cardew, Cornelius
- Carter, Elliott
- Coltrane, John
- Crawford, Ruth
- Crumb, George
- Davis, Miles
- Dodge, Charles
- Donatoni, Franco
- Ellington, Duke
- Feldman, Morton
- Ferneyhough, Brian
- Finnissy, Michael
- Grainger, Percy
- Haas, George Fredereic
- Harvey, Jonathan
- Henze, Hans Werner
- Hyla, Lee
- Ives, Charles
- Janacek, Leos
- Lachenmann, Helmut
- Lansky, Paul
- Lewis, George
- Ligeti, György
- Maderna, Bruno
- Messiaen, Olivier
- Mingus, Charles
- Monk, Thelonious
- Nono, Luigi
- Oliveros, Pauline
- Parker, Charlie
- Partch, Harry
- Penderecki, Krzysztof
- Ravel, Maurice
- Reed Thomas, Augusta
- Reich, Steve
- Reinhardt, Django
- Rouse, Christopher
- Saariaho, Kaija
- Satie, Erik
- Scelsi, Giacinto
- Scodanibbio, Stefano
- Schnittke, Alfred
- Schönberg, Arnold
- Scriabin, Alexander
- Spiegel, Laurie
- Stockhausen, Karlheinz
- Stravinsky, Igor
- Takemitsu, Toru
- Taylor, Cecil
- Truax, Barry
- Tudor, David
- Varèse, Edgard
- Webern, Anton
- Weill, Kurt
- Wolff, Christian
- Wolpe, Stefan
- Xenakis, Iannis
- Young, La Monte
- Ysaye, Eugène
- Zappa, Frank

Readings: (Incomplete)

- Brün, Herbert. "On Anticommunication" from *Words and Spaces: An anthology of twentieth Century Musical Experiments in Language and Sonic Environments*
- Cage, John: *Silence*
- Chadabe, Joel. *Electric Sound*
- Cope, David. *New Directions in Music*
- Eno, Brian: *A Year (with Swollen Appendices)*
- Feldman, Morton. *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*
- Ferneyhough, Brian. *Collected Writings*
- Griffiths, Paul. *Modern Music*
- Hindemith, Paul. *The Craft of Musical Composition*
- Holmes, Thomas. *Electronic and Experimental Music: Pioneers in Technology and Composition*
- Messiaen, Olivier. *The Technique of My Musical Language*
- Morgan, Robert. *Twentieth Century Music*
- Nyman, Michael. *Experimental Music*
- Partch, Harry. *Genesis of a Music*
- Roads, Curtis. *Microsound*
- Schönberg, Arnold. *Style and Idea*
- Smith, Geoff /Nicola Walker Smith. *New Voices*
 - Pauline Oliveros [meditative, minimal]
 - Terry Riley [minimalism]
 - Steve Reich [minimalism]
 - Laurie Anderson [multimedia]
 - Glenn Branca [rock/symphony/tuning/altered instruments]
 - Charles Amirkhanian [text, percussion]
 - Allison Knowles [multimedia, conceptual]
- Stravinsky, Igor. *Poetics of Music*
- Oliver Strunk, Ed. *Source Readings in Music History: Vol. 7 The Twentieth Century* – edited by Robert P. Morgan
 - Milton Babbitt. "Who Cares if You Listen?" (1958)
 - Evan Ziporyn. "Who Listens if You Care?" (1991)
 - Luigi Russolo. "The Art of Noises: Futurist Manifesto" (1913)
 - Charles Ives. "Music and Its Future" (1929)
 - Edgard Varèse. "The Liberation of Sound" (1936 - 1959)
 - Steve Reich. "Music as a Gradual Process" (1968)
 - Kurt Weill. "Shifts in Musical Production" (1972)
 - Cornelius Cardew. from "A Skcratch Orchestra: Draft Constitution" (1969)
 - Eva Rieger. "'I recycle Sounds': Do Women Compose Differently?" (1992)
 - Erik Satie. from "Memoirs of an Amnesiac" (1912 – 1914)
- Taylor, Timothy. *Strange Sounds: Music, Technology and Culture*
- Watkins, Glenn. *Soundings*
- Webern, Anton. *The Path to the New Music*
- Wuorinen, Charles. *Simple Composition*

