

New Mexico School for the Arts
Composition
Dr. Sean Kennedy
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Course Description

This course is designed to give students the tools needed for the study and practice of composition. The class will be a multi-faceted course in music theory, composition technique, orchestration, music history, and artistic aesthetic. This class is a required course for graduation with a diploma from the New Mexico School of the Arts Music Department.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be given daily and weekly assignments to further many aspects of their compositional skills. These assignments are tailored to the class and will be given out with adequate time for proper completion.

- To create a better fundament level of music theory
- To create a better fundament level music history
- To create a better fundament level of music nomenclature
- To create a better fundament level of compositional technique
- To establish a deep understating of the creation music
- To create a thinking, feeling musician
- To establish an artist level of thinking about music
- To help further a student's playing technique
- To maintain a high level of sound production
- To establish effective methods of personal practice
- To help establish a basic tool-set for all styles and genres of composition
- To develop an effective nomenclature technique
- To establish a compositional voice in any style of music

Weekly Schedule

This class is structured to give students an enriched teaching and creational environment. The first half of arts block will be a compositional techniques class with Dr. Kennedy. This class will cover many aspects of the creation of music. The second half of arts block will be time for students to work on assignments and compose music.

Teaching Methodology

The methodology of the course is to establish a firm technical basis of musical composition. This will be established from topics presented in class. With these concepts, the student will learn how to write and think clearly, and compose with in an idea of expectation. From there the student will be asked to write weekly exercises that will engage many ideas of composition and orchestration. Therefore allowing the student to further many skills at once needed for larger scale works. There will also be listening assignments that are designed to make a student utilize and strengthen their ideals of music. Finally the student will hone their craft by having their composed pieces performed for audiences.

Course Policies

- Come to lessons prepared. If not then what is there to teach.
- Cell phone usage in this course is an emergency use only policy.

- Computer usage in this course will be determined each class as well.
- Bring all materials assigned to you.
- Have your assignments prepared
- This class has built in time for creation; this time must be used properly. If the time is misused, then the student will be reprimanded in various way.
- Be accountable for your time. Create when asked and be smart about how you use your time.

Attendance

Attendance is required for this course. Each student is required to attend each class. And absence in class, means an absence in materials and learning. If a student must miss class, the student must contact Dr. Kennedy. Proper guidelines are given in both the NMSA student handbook and the NMSA music handbook. Attendance grades can be made up by writing additional listening logs. Please contact Dr. Kennedy for more information.

Assessment and Grading

The grading method for this course is hinged on four major ideas for final grade.

- Weekly participation grade 30%
 - Are you prepared?
 - Have all assignments ready
 - Are you answering questions?
 - Do you try?
 - Are you creating progress?
- Weekly assignments 30%
 - Are they prepared as requested
 - Clarity of nomenclature
 - Can you discuss what you put on the page?
 - Are you showing what you are learning in class?
- Studio Projects (Writing Assignments) 20%
 - How well is it written?
 - Good grammar
 - Insightful
 - Please refer to the written assignments portion of the syllabus
- Assessment 20%
 - How well did the student perform
 - What did the committee think of the performance

Writing Assignments

Every week students will be required to turn in a reflective paper on recordings that the student will listen to outside of the class. The paper must be well written and thoughtful. This exercise is geared to allow students to learn how to discuss, critique, and listen critically to any level of musician.

The assignment will be turned in via Google Docs. Write your observations in a document and share your document before the due date. My email is sean.kennedy@nmsa-ai.org

- 500 Words
- Must be of a recording of a professional quality
- Grammarly correct
- Correct spelling

- Thoughtful
- Honest
- Turned in on time

These papers will be due every Friday. The first will be due on August 23rd, 2018. Listening examples will be determined in class each week.

Due Dates for each paper

- August 23rd 2018
- August 30th 2018
- September 6th 2018
- September 13th 2018
- September 20th 2018
- September 27th 2018
- October 4th 2018
- October 11th 2018
- October 18th 2018
- October 25th 2018
- November 1st 2018
- ETC

Late Assignment Policy

Late work will be accepted, but for each day the assignment is late, a letter grade will be taken off the final grade. A student will be allowed to recover points lost, by adding 25 words per each day late. Dr. Kennedy can give exact numbers of how many days late, and how much to add to an assignment if needed.

For late composition work, time must be added to make up for lost points. 15% of the assigned time must be added per day late. For example, 60 seconds would add 9 additional seconds per day late and 30 seconds would add 4.5/5 seconds per day late.

Assessments

Trimester 1 – Nov. 1 2019

Trimester 2 – Feb. 14 2020

Trimester 3- May 1 2020

Senior Project/ Recital

The senior project will be chosen from one of three options. If wanted, different aspects of each choice can be combined into a larger ideal. Please discuss with Dr. Kennedy for all final decisions.

1. Traditional performance/ recital: This would be a performance of 30 minutes of their music. Must include a work that is for acoustic instrument(s) and an electronic piece. There should also be a componet of one solo work and one chamber work.

2. Non traditional performance: This will include instillation pieces, performance pieces, and anything on that line. These must include sketches, plans (install and take down), needed performers, needed supplies, performance notes, permission from locations, and if needed permits and plans for permits. They will need to get all parts approved to finally do the actual performance.

3. Analysis: The student must do an analysis of either an established composer or their own work. The work that will be analyzed must be a minimum of 10 minutes. And the paper must be 2500 words (double space). The analysis must include theoretical ideals, musicological ideals, and aesthetic ideals discussed in the paper.

Concerts

There are 4 mandatory concerts this school year, that each aligns roughly with the end of a trimester. Composers will be in attendance to setup their presented pieces, and to support their colleagues in the music department.

Fall Concert

Date: October 18th 2019

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: IMH Retreat Center

Labs Feature Concert

Date: October 31st, 2019

Time: 3:00 pm

Location: NMSA

Winter Concert

Date: January 31th 2020

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Warehouse 21

Spring Concert and Composition Feature

Date: April 25rd 2020

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Warehouse 21

Arts Spring

Date: May 15th and 16th 2020

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: Lencic Performing Arts Center