MUS 459.01: Composition IV

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MUSIC 159-459 COMPOSITION
Syllabus and General Requirements
Patrick C. Williams, Area Coordinator

Required texts are listed below.

1. All students are required, but not limited to, **2 completed, concert-ready compositions per semester**. The works may take any of a great number of forms and styles, but must be performable in the classroom setting. It is suggested that these works be written for members of the class, or music students able to perform at a regular class-meeting time. Works for larger ensembles are not advised for first- and second-year students.

2. All students must keep a **notebook** that will include entries from in-class discussions, collected examples of various musical concepts, experimental rhythms, melodic and harmonic sketches, scales (traditional, synthetic and original) and a list of compositional techniques, i.e. sequencing, planing (parallel harmony), invertible counterpoint, improvisation, to name a few. Notebooks will be handed in at the end of each semester during the 1st and 2nd years of study.

3. All students are required to create a **listening list** to accompany the notebook. The Mansfield Library should be your primary center for research. Entries in your personal lists should be representative composers of the 20th and 21st Centuries, primarily post-WWII. The following format is recommended:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer Name</th>
<th>Title of Work</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

“Remarks” will include important information regarding the composers, the style of the piece(s), interesting notational concepts if non-traditional, instrumentation, and any personal observations not including such phrases as “I liked it”, “It stinks”, “Hated it!”

It must be emphasized that this kind of activity will assist the beginning composer in a number of ways in the immediate future: it should/will function as a very useful launching pad for course work in theory and history; it should/will expand your knowledge of contemporary music; it should/will excite your imagination; it should/will stretch your creative horizons, and, if done well, it should/will be a wonderful resource in future years.

4. **Attendance Policy**: Unexcused absences will be noted and so entered in the Great Book. Two absences may mysteriously disappear from the record, but more than two means the final grade will suffer. This policy may be modified or defined by current instructor.
5. **Grading** will be based on compositions presented, quality/clarity of score, notebooks, tests, participation in discussions and attendance record, or as modified/defined by the instructor.

**NOTE TO COMPOSITION/TECHNOLOGY MAJORS:** During the course of study, students are required to write for a broad range of instruments: strings, woodwinds, brass, keyboard (which may include piano, organ, MIDI), percussion, and voice. Works for solo instrument or voice, duets, trios, quartets, brass choir, vocal ensembles of all sizes, chamber winds, chamber orchestra, and, in some cases, full band or orchestra, are very much a part of the composer's world at this institution. The following is a 4-year schedule:

**MUS159 (TTH, 1:10-2:00, Rm. 104)**

a. Works for solo instrument or voice - to include a composition for the composer’s own instrument to be performed on his/her UDRP.
b. Duets and Trios (any combination of instruments and voices)
c. Additional works as requested in class.

**MUS259 (TTH, 1:10-2:00, Rm. 106)**

a. Continuation of types listed above.
b. Single movement works for quartets, quintets, sextets...
c. Works for mixed choir, men’s chorus, women’s chorus...
d. Additional works as requested in class.

**MUS359 (TBA)**

a. Multi-movement works; continuation of types listed above.
b. Works including computer-generated sounds with live performers (may include instrumentalists, vocalists, dancers, readers, other multi-media concepts).
c. Initial planning (sketching) stages for a “large ensemble” work to be presented on the senior recital (required of all composition majors).
d. Additional works as requested.

**MUS459 (TBA)**

During this culminating year of study the composer will continue to create new works, prepare final scores, rehearse and give public performance(s) of original music totaling 40-50 minutes.

Compositions to be included in this recital will be the large-ensemble work, new works and selected pieces from previous years, including a composition utilizing some
aspect/application of contemporary music technology. For the senior recital/project, the student may perform a work of no more than 10 minutes selected and coached by his/her applied teacher.

NOTE: The student is not limited to two complete compositions per semester, but should include the kinds of compositions herein listed as expectations to be honored.

MUS159 CLASS ASSIGNMENTS (to be modified/expanded by the current instructor)

1. Write an 8- to 16-measure piece utilizing two contrasting rhythms. The form and substance of the sketch are left to the composer.

2. Compose a short piece utilizing a scale from the list given in class or an original synthetic scale. Concentrate on melodic material.

3. Compose a short, unaccompanied solo for your own instrument. If your applied instrument is piano, write a two-part invention-type piece, NOT a progression of chords, please.

4. Compose a short piece for two voices. Pay close attention to setting of text (accented syllables on accented beats).

5. MUSIC NOTATION by Gardner Read, and/or assignments as defined by the instructor.

MUS259 CLASS ASSIGNMENTS (to be modified/expanded by the current instructor)

1. Continue with short assignments as directed above.

2. Begin sketches for single movement works: Trios, 4tets, 5tets, etc… Be prepared to share your ideas in class. Have performers ready to present for a regularly scheduled class meeting time.

3. Write a piece for accompanied voice or instrument. May be two or three short movements designed to experiment with contrasting technical concepts for the players. Remember to write playable music, remaining within fairly conservative ranges for your performers.

4. All comp/tech majors are required to compose and perform an original work for their own instrument or voice on their Upper Division Recital Performance, usually scheduled for an afternoon concert during the second year of study. Fall semester should include that work.
5. Compose a work that includes some form of *improvisation within controlled meter*.

6. **TECHNIQUES OF THE CONTEMPORARY COMPOSER** by David Cope, and/or assignments as defined by the instructor.