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### MUSI 280.01: Composition II

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# The University of Montana

## School of Music

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### U 30192 MUSI 280 01 COMPOSITION II 1:10-2:00 MUS 105/106 1-2 CREDITS

Prof. Patrick C. Williams, MU106/Ext. 4471, office hours by appointment

Prerequisite: 4 credits in MUSI 180.

Composition II is, in the traditional sense, work centering on composing original compositions for the concert stage. Since it is a continuation of instruction in a classroom setting, a number of specific compositional ‘challenges’ – short pieces incorporating notational and expressive concepts – will also play an important role, with in-class presentations generating discussion and evaluation.

### GENERAL SYLLABUS AND REQUIREMENTS

#### Class Assignments

1. All composition majors are required to compose and perform an **original work for their own instrument or voice** to be performed on their **Upper Division Recital Performance**, usually scheduled for an afternoon concert during the spring semester of the second year of study. Fall semester of MUSI 280 should include such a work.
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. Multi-movement compositions are not discouraged, but must be cleared with the instructor.
3. Write pieces for **accompanied and/or unaccompanied voices and instruments**. 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. Compose a work that includes some form of **improvisation**.
5. Reading assignments as directed during the course of study.
  - 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 the composer engage members of the class for in-class performance, or music students able to assist at a regular class-meeting time. Good MIDI recordings, accompanied by a full score, are permissible for larger ensemble pieces. Though hand-written scores are acceptable, it is advised, for the sake of class time, that compositions be prepared in Sibelius and **saved for Sib. 4**.
  - 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 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years of study.

- 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 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries, primarily post-WWII. The following format is recommended:

Composer Name  
Title of Work  
Date Composed  
Instrumentation  
Recording information  
Remarks:

“Remarks” will include important information regarding the composer, the style of the piece(s), interesting notational concepts if non-traditional, 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 composer in a number of ways in the immediate future: it should/will function as a very useful launching pad for advanced course work in theory and history; it should/will expand a student’s knowledge of contemporary music; it should/will excite a student’s imagination; it should/will stretch a composer’s creative horizons, and, if done well, it should/will be a wonderful resource in future years.

**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.

**Grading** will be based on compositions presented, quality/clarity of score, notebooks, participation in discussions, attendance record, performances of new compositions on afternoon recitals and Composers’ Showcase.

**NOTE TO COMPOSITION 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 typical 4-year schedule:

**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.

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