

MUST 221: Music Composition 1
Ball State University
School of Music

Class Meeting Times:

- A: TR 12:30 – 1:20
- B: WF 1 – 1:50

Location: Media Lab (MMP Studio 9)

Web Site: teachingmusic.keithkothman.com

Prerequisites: MUST 101, 111

Instructor: Dr. Keith Kothman
(kkothman@bsu.edu)

Office: MU 109B (most often, MU 207)

Phone: 285-5503

Office Hours: tba

Materials Needed:

- *Manuscript paper.* All of your work will be done in pencil on manuscript paper. You can print manuscript paper from several online sources, as well as with Finale or Sibelius. Whatever source you use, it must be blank without any bar lines, brackets, or braces. I have found usable paper at http://www.musicaneo.com/blank_sheet_music.html and <http://people.virginia.edu/~pdr4h/musicpaper/>
- *Pencils and erasers*
- *Ruler and curves*
- It is a highly recommended that you purchase a standard book on notational practice, such as *Music Notation: A Manual of Modern Practice* by Gardner Read, the *Essential Dictionary of Music Notation* from Alfred Publishing, or *Music Notation in the 20th Century: A Practical Guidebook* by Kurt Stone (pricier, but something composers should really consider getting at some point early in their studies).

Course Description:

Music Composition 1 focuses on the basic study of the craft composition through short exercises, analysis, and the composition of short solo and duet instrumental works.

The semester will be divided into two sections. The first half of the semester will be comprised of writing for solo instruments. The second half of the semester will be spent studying two-voice counterpoint in a variety of styles and writing duets.

Course Objectives:

- Students will learn basic techniques of music composition, particularly techniques for solo and duet instrumental music.
- Students will learn how to analyze elements of melodic and contrapuntal writing techniques to incorporate into their own compositional style.
- Students will develop the ability to offer constructive criticism of their work and the work of their classmates.
- Students will compose four short works, with the expectation that at least two of these works will be of sufficient substance to perform outside of our class concert settings.
- Students will learn the importance of developing a daily composing schedule.

Music for Study

We will study a number of model compositions this semester that will help us learn melodic construction and development. You will sometimes be studying compositions and utilizing techniques that may not

now be your preferred style. You should be patient and open-minded. The ability to assimilate styles and techniques will be essential to your continued compositional growth. If you make premature judgments you cut yourself off from potentially important experiences.

Notational Practice

All composition projects and assignments are to be notated accurately and neatly **in pencil**, by hand, and well-spaced on manuscript paper in order to receive a grade. **To be clear, I will not grade composition assignments that are notated with Finale, Sibelius, or other computer notation program. You will receive a grade of zero for any such assignment.** Use a ruler for stems and beams, and curves for slurs. Please date and label each assignment. Assignments and projects must be turned in on time to receive a grade.

We will have limited time to cover notation, so it is good to have some type of notation reference at your disposal. The *Essential Dictionary* is very affordable. Having an accurate and aesthetically pleasing score will lead to better use of rehearsal time when your work is performed, and performers will take your work more seriously than if you provide them with a messy score that is full of errors.

Required Concerts and Other Attendance

You will be required to attend all composition area concerts, which include Student Composers Forum concerts (2/25, 4/8), EM concerts (2/12), Festival of New Music concerts (3/22, 3/23), and the New Music Ensemble concert (4/17). You are also required to attend the weekly Composition Seminar, every Wednesday from 4 – 5 in SoundHouse C, unless you have a verifiable class conflict. Students with conflicts will have other requirements to make up for missing seminar.

Concert Reports

You will be required to write concert reports for two concerts of the Festival of New Music (your choice) and the New Music Ensemble concert. The reports are worth a total of 15% of your overall grade. Each report should be 2 – 3 pages, typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times Roman font. Your reports should primarily discuss melodic aspects of the compositions. How do the melodies develop? What aspects of the melodies are particularly important? Why? How do musical events flow? What is the large-scale formal plan? Does the writing sound idiomatic? How is momentum achieved? Do you musical continuity? Discontinuity? Avoid overly general, non-descript language. Use precise musical terminology relevant to composition. Your reports should be non-judgmental, and well supported with constructive, descriptive statements.

Class Concerts

Some projects will be performed in class. There will be a class concert (or two) for larger projects that everyone will attend. You will be given specific schedule information soon.

Attendance and Participation

Active and constructive participation from all students is required. You will be expected to participate in thoughtful discussion after score and recording study. Lack of appropriate participation could result in lowering your assignment grade for the class.

Students are expected to be in class, on time. You will be allowed two absences during the semester. A third absence will result in a failing grade for the semester. Note that classes will not meet on 1/17 and 1/18 for IMEA.

Grading

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Composition Projects:	60%
Other Assignments:	25%
Concert Reports:	15%

Academic Integrity:

Students of the university must conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty, integrity, and behavior. Academic dishonesty will be treated in accordance with the “Student Academic Ethics Policy.” The full student code is online at

<http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/StudentRights/PoliciesandProcedures/StudentCode.aspx/>. No form of academic misconduct such as plagiarism or cheating will be tolerated—be it in the context of an assignment, composition project, or concert report.

Email and Website Policies:

Students are expected to monitor their BSU email accounts on a regular basis. Periodically, I will need to send important information to you via email. BSU email can be configured to forward to an outside account if you so desire, but I am not responsible for keeping track of your personal (non-BSU) email addresses.

Information regarding course assignment, lectures, and other important notices will be communicated via the course website. It is the student’s responsibility to check the website each day for additional explanations, updates on readings and other assignments, and alterations to course content.

Studio Policies

Your enrollment in this course serves as your agreement to abide by Music Technology Studio Policies. A summary of the most important guidelines for this class includes:

- Only authorized users are allowed in the studios, and only to use authorized equipment. Do not bring your non-authorized friends to hang out with you. Outside visitors require prior approval from faculty or staff. As students in MUST 221, you are only authorized to use the Media Lab – not the DAW rooms or other control rooms.
- No food or drinks may be brought into the studios. You must keep all food and drink in the hallway.
- Do not move furniture from studio to studio.
- Keep the Media Lab neat and professional in appearance.

Special Needs:

Students needing special adaptations for the course, or who require special assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation should contact the instructor privately as soon as possible.