

025:250 COMPOSITION: ELECTRONIC MEDIA I

Lawrence Fritts

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Office hours: MTW, 12:30-3:30 and after class. Best to email for appointments.

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Goals: Students will learn the technology, techniques, and compositional strategies associated with electronic music. The software used in class includes **Pro Tools**, **Peak**, and **Sound Hack**, as well as **Waves** plug-ins. A preview of **Max/MSP** and **Kyma** will be given at the end of the semester—this software provides the basis for work in spring semester's **025:251 COMPOSITION: ELECTRONIC MEDIA II**. Techniques to be studied include digital recording, editing, and mixing, sound processing, and audio mastering. Compositional strategies will focus on transformation, combination, spatialization, gesture, and pacing. The course work includes EMS concert participation, in-class listening and discussion, and presentation of assignments and works in progress.

Grading: Grades are based on participation/attendance (10%), assignments (10%), listening presentations (15%), mid-term critique (15%), final critique (15%) and the final composition (35%). Poor attendance will result in a lower grade.

Assignments: Students will complete 4 assignments designed to develop skills in editing, mixing, and processing. These will be presented in class. These assignments will be worth 10% of the final grade.

Listening Presentation: Each student will present the music of a composer and lead a discussion in a 15-minute presentation. This presentation will be worth 15% of the final grade.

Mid-term Class Critique: Students will present their work for class discussion and critique. This music will be worth 15% of the final grade. Grading will be primarily based on length of the composition presented: 00:45+ = A; 00:30+ = B; 00:15+ = C; 00:00.001+ = D; 00:00 or less = F. Other factors will be quality and development concept, working method, and materials.

Final Class Critique: Students will present their work for class discussion and critique. This music will be worth 15% of the final grade. Grading will be primarily based on length of the composition presented: 3:00+ = A; 2:00+ = B; 1:00+ = C; 00:30+ = D; 00:29 or less = F. Other factors will be quality, originality, and technique.

Final Project: The final project is a 5-minute or longer composition for fixed electronic media. Grading will be based on quality, originality, and technique. Please turn in one audio CD, clearly labeled with title, name, and date. Also turn in a data CD with a text file containing composer biography and program notes. Both CDs should be clearly labeled and stored in a paper sleeve (some sleeves will be available in the studio desk drawer). These CDs are due in Prof. Fritts's box in 1007 VMB by 4:00 PM Tuesday, December 18, 2007.

EMS Concerts: Students are expected to attend each EMS concert and to assist with set-up or tear-down. Each concert will count as one class.

Class Materials: Students should consider purchasing storage media. A memory stick is invaluable. A portable firewire drive is also a good idea. Material can be stored in a drawer in Studio 1 or a cabinet in Studio 2. No security is provided.

EMS Hard Drives: Students can use hard drives in Studios 1 and 2. Since these drives are not secure, students are responsible for backing up their work after each session on their own media.

Studio Access: Students will be assigned keys to Studios 1 and 2. Schedules will be posted outside each studio door. To receive keys, see Kathy Reeves in the Main Office after Aug. 28. There is a refundable key deposit of \$100 which will be charged to your U-Bill.

Studio Schedules: Students can sign up for studio time on a permanent and weekly basis. Permanent times will be determined in class on Sept. 5.

Studio Maintenance: The studios should be kept clean at all times. Furniture and equipment should be symmetrically arranged and dust-free. Food and open drinks should not be consumed in the studios. Bottled drinks should be carefully handled. During inclement weather, please wipe your shoes carefully before coming into the building. Items left behind after class or studio sessions should be placed in the Studio 1 desk drawer. Extra handouts will also be placed there.

Studio Problems: Please report any problems to the assistants as soon as they occur, by sending them an email or by leaving a note outside their office in Room 2059.

Equipment Check-out: Shure SM57 microphones and cables are kept in a drawer of the desk holding the Moog. To check out a mini-disk recorder and other microphones, please make arrangements with the assistants.

Academic Fraud: Plagiarism and any other activities that result in a student presenting work that is not his or her own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is reported to the departmental DEO and then to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Services in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint: Students have the right to make suggestions or complaints and should first visit with the instructor, then with the course supervisor if appropriate, and next with the departmental DEO. All complaints must be made within six months of the incident.

www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml#5

Accommodations for Disabilities: A student seeking academic accommodations first must register with Student Disability Services and then meet with a SDS counselor who determines eligibility for services. A student approved for accommodations should meet privately with the course instructor to arrange particular accommodations. See

www.uiowa.edu/~sds/

Understanding Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Visit www.sexualharassment.uiowa.edu/ for definitions, assistance, and the full policy.

Administrative Home of the Course: The administrative home of this course is the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which governs academic matters relating to the course such as the add / drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, issues concerning academic fraud or academic probation, and how credits are applied for various CLAS requirements. Please keep in mind that different colleges might have different policies. If you have questions about these or other CLAS policies, visit your academic advisor or 120 Schaeffer Hall and speak with the staff. The CLAS Academic Handbook is another useful source of information on CLAS academic policy:

www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/index.shtml

Calendar

- Aug. 27-29 Introduction to the studios: access, powering up, mixer, software.
Basics of digital audio: acoustics, sampling theory, file formats.
Introduction to **Pro Tools**: session set-up, file management, mix and edit windows.
Compositional strategies: discussion of styles, genres, aesthetics of electronic music.
Viewing: Film strip of electronic music history.
Listening: Representative works from different contemporary styles and genres.
- Sept. 2 **EMS Concert.** Sunday Sept. 2, 8:00 PM Clapp Recital Hall, free.
Assistance with set-up or tear-down is required.
- Sept. 3 **No class.**
- Sept. 5 **Sign up for studio time.**
Recording, editing, mixing in **Pro Tools**.
Compositional strategies: developing source material.
Listening: historical overview of electronic music in the US.

- Sept. 10-12 Editing and mixing in **Pro Tools**.
Compositional strategies: sound object fusion and sound mass techniques.
Listening: historical and contemporary electronic music in the US.
- Sept. 17-19 Overview of **Peak** and **Sound Hack**.
Automation in **Pro Tools**: Volume and panning automation.
Compositional strategies: liveliness and gestures.
Listening: contemporary electronic music in the US.
- Sept. 24-26 **Presentations of Assignment #1: Sound object fusion.**
Plug-ins in **Pro Tools**: EQ and reverberation.
Compositional strategies: placing sounds in a mix.
Listening: historical overview of electronic music in Europe.
- Oct. 1-3 **Listening Presentations**
- Oct. 8-10 **Presentations of Assignment #2: Sound mass.**
8-channel sound in **Pro Tools**.
Compositional strategies: spatialization aesthetics and techniques.
Listening: contemporary electronic music in Europe.
- Oct. 15-17 Compositional Strategies: Additive and subtractive sound-sculpting techniques.
Listening: contemporary electronic music in Europe.
- Oct. 22-24 **Assignment #3. Gestures.**
Compositional strategies: permutational and randomization techniques.
Listening: electronic music in South America, Asia, and Africa.
- Oct. 29-31 **Class critiques.**
- Nov. 5 **Class critiques.**
- Nov. 7 No class (the concert of Sept. 2 counts as a substitution for this class).
- Nov. 12-14 Preview of **Kyma**.
Compositional strategies: pacing and mastering techniques.
Listening: electronic music in South America, Asia, and Africa.
- Nov. 19-21 Preview of **Max/MSP**.
Compositional strategies: composing for instruments with electronics.
Listening: electronic music interaction and performance.
- Nov. 26-29 **THANKSGIVING**
- Dec. 3-5 **Class critiques.**
- Dec. 10-12 **Class critiques.**
- Dec. 18 **Final Projects due in Prof. Fritts's box by 4:00 PM.**