

025:250 COMPOSITION: ELECTRONIC MEDIA I

Lawrence Fritts

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Office hours: MW, 5:00 PM. Best to email for appointments.

Please email or text message me if you will be late or miss class.

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Goals: This class will be devoted to learning and applying compositional tools in the fixed digital sound media domain. The software used in class includes **Peak** and **Pro Tools**. The compositional theory that will be explored is primarily concerned with sound-classes, sound-objects, gestures, narrative form, and pacing. Practical issues covered in class include sample recording in the studios, field, and anechoic chamber, as well as mixing, EQing, and mastering for laptop listening, studio presentations, and large venues for concerts and festivals. The techniques learned in this class will be developed in works for fixed media alone, although other forms such as algorithmically-generated fixed media, instruments and fixed or algorithmically-generated fixed media, and instruments and live computer interaction may be explored by suitably prepared students. The compositional format of each student's final project will be decided as the semester progresses. Additionally, students with appropriate backgrounds may explore in this semester the software tools provided by **Kyma**, and **Max/MSP** that will be the focus of next semester's course. The calendar of topics and events this semester will be modified according to student background, progress, and interests. The activities of the class will include participation in the two EMS concerts, presentation of assignments and works in progress, listening presentations, and optional individual class teaching presentations.

Preparation for the Course: Topics in acoustics, history of electronic music, and electronic music repertoire will not be covered in depth in this class, as it is assumed that students have studied these as undergraduates. Students who have not studied these topics can remedy this through reading and listening on their own or in groups. Professor Fritts and the EMS assistants will be glad to steer you to readings and listenings.

Teaching Experience: Because many academic jobs for composers include teaching of music technology, students will be given the opportunity to develop their teaching skills in this class, primarily through listening presentations, discussed below. On an optional basis, qualified students will be given opportunities to prepare a handout and lead a short discussion of a technical nature, usually pertaining to some aspect of the software used in class.

Grading: Grades are based on participation/attendance (5%), assignments (30%), listening presentations (10%), mid-term critique (15%), final critique (15%) and the final composition (25%). Poor attendance will result in a lower grade.

Assignments: Several assignments will be given primarily to guide the student through the compositional process of creating electronic music. The assignments are cumulative, in the sense that each assignment develops or extends the work done in the previous assignment.

Listening Presentation: Each student will present a work by an important composer in the field of electronic music. This presentation will be worth 10% 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. A good length at this point is 1 minute. Other factors will be quality and concept development, 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. A good length at this point is 4 minutes. Other factors will be quality, originality, and technique.

Final Project: The final project should be at least 5 minutes in length, unless the critiques suggest otherwise. We will set up individual ½-hour meeting times early in the finals week to play and discuss the final work.

EMS Concerts: Students should plan to attend each EMS concert and assist with set-up and tear-down. Each concert is equivalent to one class. This will be explained in class.

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 flash drives or hard drives.

Studio Access: Students can obtain keys to the studios by talking with Shane or Zach. Students can sign up for studio time on a permanent and weekly basis. The permanent schedule will be determined in Week 2 of class.

Studio Maintenance: The studios should be kept clean at all times. Furniture and equipment should be symmetrically arranged and dust-free. To keep surfaces clear of pens and papers left behind, we should try to put them in one of the drawers in the racks. I'll also put old handouts there, so if you miss a class, you can find the handout there.

Studio Problems: Please report any problems to Shane and Zach as soon as they occur. Most problems are incredibly easy to solve, but they have to know about them to fix them.

Equipment Check-out: A wide range of very high quality microphones, Apple laptops, Digidesign interfaces, video cameras, and recording devices can be checked out. When you check out something that comes with cables, power supply, etc., please double check that you return everything.

Administrative Home: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Electronic Communication: University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (Operations Manual, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11.)

Accommodations for Disabilities: A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Academic Fraud: Plagiarism and any other activities when students present work that is not their own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is a serious matter and is reported to the departmental DEO and to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum. Instructors and DEOs decide on appropriate consequences at the departmental level while the Associate Dean enforces additional consequences at the collegiate level. See the CLAS Academic Fraud section of the Student Academic Handbook.

CLAS Final Examination Policies: Final exams may be offered only during finals week. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. Students should not ask their instructor to reschedule a final exam since the College does not permit rescheduling of a final exam once the semester has begun. Questions should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint: Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Understanding Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather: In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Public Safety web site.

Calendar

Aug. 22-24	Overview of course, tour of the studios, recommended reading and listening. Basics of acoustics, special terminology and compositional theory. Intro to Peak and Pro Tools. Class topics in the following weeks will make use of Peak and Pro Tools. Other software, such as SoundHack, Kyma, and Max/MSP may be used this semester, depending on students' ability and interest.
Aug. 29-31	Microphones and recording. Soundfile and regions editing as compositional techniques.
Sept. 5	Labor Day. No class.
Sept. 7	Assignment 1 given to class.
Sept. 12-14	Mixing and processing at the sub-signal level of composition.
Sept. 19-21	In-class presentations of Assignment 1. Assignment 2 given to class.
Sept. 26-28	Transformation and processing techniques and their use in composition.
Oct. 3-5	In-class presentations of Assignment 2. Assignment 3 given.
Oct. 10-12	Exploring gestures, phrases, and sound-masses.
Oct. 17-19	In-class presentations of Assignment 3. Assignment 4 given.
Oct. 23	EMS Concert, featuring the music of James Dashow. 7:30 PM, Becker Auditorium.
Oct. 24	Lecture by James Dashow
Oct. 26	Controlling pitch and rhythm.
Oct. 31-Nov. 2	In-class presentations of Assignment 4.
Nov. 7-9	Varying, developing, and extending sonic material and musical ideas.
Nov. 14-16	Midterm Critiques
Nov. 21-23	Thanksgiving. No class
Nov. 28-30	Listening Presentations.
Dec. 5-7	Final Critiques
Dec. 11	EMS Concert. 7:30 PM, Becker Auditorium.
Dec. 12-14	Finals Week. Presentation of the final work in one-on-one meetings with Prof. Fritts.