

## **MUS:4250:0001 COMPOSITION: ELECTRONIC MEDIA I**

**Fall 2015**

Lawrence Fritts

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

Please email or text message Jonah, Jonathan, and me if you will be late or miss class.

### Associate Directors:

Jonah Elrod

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### Microphone Cabinets Password: #10595#

Goals: This class will be devoted to learning and applying compositional tools in the fixed digital sound media domain. The software used in class is centered on **Pro Tools**. The compositional theory that will be explored is primarily concerned with sound-classes, sound-objects, gestures, and algorithmic composition techniques. 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. 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 Fall EMS concerts, presentation of assignments and works in progress, listening presentations, and optional individual class teaching presentations.

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 assignments (30%), listening presentations (10%), mid-term critique (15%), final critique (15%) and the final composition (30%). Poor attendance will result in a lower grade.

Assignments: 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 all Fall EMS concerts and assist with equipment setup and teardown.

EMS Hard Drives: Each student will be loaned portable hard drive to do their work on. When the semester or year is completed, they will be returned to the studios.

Studio Access: Students can obtain keys to the studios by talking with Jonathan and Jonah. Studio time during the first week of the semester is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Beginning the second week of the semester, students may sign up for two hours of permanent and weekly studio time. Additional studio time may be reserved on the printed calendar outside the studio doors on a first-come, first-serve basis.

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 them there.

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

Equipment Checkout: A wide range of very high quality microphones, Apple laptops, Digidesign interfaces, video cameras, and recording devices can be checked out. Laptops shall be checked out and returned on a two-week basis. Extensions for laptop checkouts require my approval. When you check out something that includes 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 Academic Policies Handbook at <http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/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, k.11).

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

Musician's Health and Safety: For information about how to protect your hearing, neuro-musculoskeletal and vocal health, please visit the "Resources" page of the School of Music website, found here: <http://music.uiowa.edu/resources-students-faculty>.

Academic Honesty: All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

CLAS Final Examination Policies: The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint: Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies 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 Department of Public Safety website.

## Calendar

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|-----------------|---|
| Aug. 24-26      | Course overview, tour of the studios, intro to Pro Tools. Assignment 1 given.   |
| Aug. 31-Sept. 2 | Intro to Pro Tools. Microphones and recording in Pro Tools. Discussion of sound-classes, sound mining, libraries, and gestures. Studio access signup. |
| Sept. 7         | Labor Day, no class.  |
| Sept. 9         | Assignment 1 presented in class. Assignment 2 given in class.   |
| Sept. 13        | EMS Concert, featuring Dave Olive. Becker Auditorium, 7:30 PM   |
| Sept. 14-16     | Compositional applications of Pro Tools.  |
| Sept. 21-23     | Assignment 2 presented in class. Assignment 3 given in class.   |
| Sept. 28-30     | Compositional applications of Pro Tools.  |

Oct. 5-7            Assignment 3 presented in class. Assignment 4 given in class.

Oct. 12-14        Compositional applications of Pro Tools.

Oct. 19-21        Assignment 4 presented in class. Assignment 5 given in class.

Oct. 26-28        Listening Presentations

Nov. 2-4            Assignment 5 presented in class. Assignment 6 given in class.

Nov. 9-11         Midterm Critiques.

Nov. 14            EMS Concert, featuring Elainie Lillios. Becker Auditorium, 7:30 PM

Nov. 16-18        Assignment 6 presented in class.

Nov. 23-25        Thanksgiving week, no class.

Nov. 30-Dec. 2    Compositional applications of Pro Tools.

Dec. 7-9            Final Critiques

Dec. 12            LOUi Concert. UCC Recital Hall, 7:30 PM

Dec. 13?          EMS Concert, featuring student composers. Becker Auditorium, 7:30 PM

Dec. 14-16        Presentation of the final composition in one-on-one meetings with Prof. Fritts