UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER
School of Performing Arts
course syllabus for
MUSI – 3242 - Electronic Music
Online Instruction

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Course Objectives

This course is an introduction to a broad range of creative and technical applications under the umbrella of "electronic music." This course combines individual research and technical training with creative exploration; its purpose is to cultivate students' foundational technical knowledge about electronic music through class discussions, lectures, readings, critical listening, and creative projects. Study will include a variety of approaches to create music using electronic devices, and the course will cover the basics of sound and sound design; audio signal processing; historical development and context of electronic music; aesthetics of electronic works; and the creative application of these ideas into original work. Lessons may include study in electronics performance, production, engineering, and creativity in addition to the technical and theoretical foundations of electronic music.

Expectations

Due to the nature of any survey course, but especially in a subject as broad as one that combines electronics and music, you must be an active participant and advocate for your own learning. Active participation means asking questions, finding answers to your own questions, and adding relevant information to your rolodex of knowledge. As stated above, this course combines individual research and technical training with creative exploration. Its purpose is to expand and increase students' technical knowledge about electronic music through class discussions, lectures, readings, critical listening, and creative projects. Because of this, there will be many opportunities for you to develop and demonstrate a strong foundational knowledge of this material that you may then apply in your own creative ways.

Reoccurring Items

Weekly quizzes are designed to keep you up to speed with the course material, as well as provide an opportunity for you to apply newly acquired knowledge.

Weekly Response posts are designed to give you an opportunity to engage with the material yourself, as well as with your peers.

Creative Projects are designed to give you the opportunity to apply concepts discussed in the course in your own way.

Required Materials

There is no required text for this course. All course materials will be provided via Canvas. Access to internet will be required, as well as a computer or tablet with a DAW and/or an interactive music environment. **DAW options**: Logic, Reaper, Abelton, FL Studios, Audacity

Chosen software must be able to manipulate live audio, recorded audio, synthesis, etc. Please contact me for assistance if needed. The Computer Lab has access to some of these materials, but it is very important that the student strive to have their own to build proficiency without the restrictions of building closings, etc.

NOTE: This class is not a DAW-class nor is it an audio engineering course. As we are only online, it is not practical for this course to teach the basics of every specific DAW or audio workstation or have a lab component that comprehensively teaches a single device: each student is expected to be proactive and learn their tools on their own.

Introductory resources will be provided by the instructor and Office Hours may be scheduled for impromptu tutorials and help sessions upon request.

Grading

Students will be evaluated on their progress and improvement of technical knowledge, their participation in discussions, and their creative application of topics discussed.

Breakdown of Grade:
- Weekly Response 25%
- Quizzes 25%
- Creative Projects 25%
- Final Projects/Presentations 15%
- Final Exam 10%

Grading Scale 90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, below 60% = F

Weekly Response Posts (12 total - 25% of total Grade)

Response Posts must address both the reading and the listening in an articulate way focusing on technical aspects rather than personalized opinions (ie, do not make statements such as "I don't like this piece" or "I really like this piece" without substantial technical observations). These discussions need not be tomes or longwinded, but ought to engage with the material in a compelling way. This may include analysis, theoretical questioning, technical insight, etc. Regardless, the content is more important; it is better to write a life-changing sentence than a full page of hollow words.

The above outline applies to responses as well; expand on ideas, share insight, and engage. Responses like "you're wrong" or "nioce" are unacceptable. Responses must be articulate, academic, respectful, and courteous, with others learning in mind.

Expect each original observation to contain at least 200 words.

Response Posts are graded holistically on a 5-point scale whereas 5=A, 1=F. However, only an incomplete Response will result in a 0.

Quizzes (8 total - 25% of total grade)

Due Sundays at 11:59 PM (23:59)

Quizzes are created to keep you up to speed with the course material, as well as provide an opportunity for you to apply newly acquired knowledge. These will take the form of multiple choice, short answer, fill-in the blank, etc., and will be in relation to the weekly readings and discussions (not listening). These quizzes will generally focus on

the technical aspects of the course material supplemented with pertinent historical information.

You will have 1 hour to complete all quizzes; however, they are rather short with the "longest" being the first.

You do not need a lockdown browser for the quizzes.

Creative Projects (2 total - 25% of total grade)

Students will compose 2 two-minute etudes using techniques covered in class.

Projects will be assessed using the following *general* criteria:

- **TECHNICAL (25 points)** - Quality and clarity of electronic techniques pertinent to the given project, including lack of unwanted noise, lack of clipping, digital distortion, analog distortion, volume clicking, Adhering to time requirement, etc.
- **PROCESSING/CREATIVE SOUND CREATION (25 points)** - Using unique and original sounds you created and sonic material from any of the electronic music techniques pertinent to the given project, ie. clearly using applications discussed in class to manipulate sounds.
- **FORM/STRUCTURE (20 points)** - Combining materials in a logical way within the context of the composition. Creating flow between sonic environments, formal decisions such as a beginning, middle, and an end, an understanding of sonic relationships between sounds.
- **CONTENT/CREATIVITY (20 points)** - General creative approach to the material; rhythmic elements used in a creative or non-standard way; exploring a sonic environment away from the twelve-pitch paradigm; attempting to explore neverbefore-heard sonic materials; unique applications of the course materials.
- **ANALYSIS/COMENTARY (10 points) –** All projects music be accompanied with an analysis or commentary on the technical application of the composition as well as the creative/compositional process (ie, how you made the piece). This may be typed document or may be prepared and thoughtful video run-down taking the viewer "under the hood" of the project.

All projects will have their own rubrics with emphasis toward the following criteria:

Project 1: Students are required to use only synthesized sounds on this project–recorded audio is not permitted.

Project 2: Students will use processed, recorded audio only on this project- synthesized audio is not permitted.

Final Composition project and presentation (15% of total grade)

Students will create an original composition between 4-6 minutes in length to be presented to the class in a finals week "concert," as well as an oral presentation on the work of no less than 5 minutes (no more than 7).

The composition will use a combination of no less than 3 techniques discussed throughout the entirety of the course.

The oral presentation as well as a performance of the work will be given during the finals-week meeting for this course.

Final Project proposal**:**

Students will submit a written proposal regarding their intended final project to the instructor (1 page max, typed). The proposal must outline techniques that will be used for the composition and express how these ideas relate to the course material. Students may also provide any pre-compositional materials *in addition* to this written document. You get 2 bonus points for completing the proposal.

Final Projects will be assessed using the following *general* criteria:

*   **TECHNICAL (25 points)** - Quality and clarity of electronic techniques pertinent to the given project, including lack of unwanted noise, lack of clipping, digital distortion, analog distortion, volume clicking, Adhering to time requirement, etc.
*   **PROCESSING/CREATIVE SOUND CREATION (25 points)** - Using unique and original sounds you created and sonic material from any of the electronic music techniques pertinent to the given project, ie. clearly using applications discussed in class to manipulate sounds.
*   **FORM/STRUCTURE (20 points)** - Combining materials in a logical way within the context of the composition. Creating flow between sonic environments, formal decisions such as a beginning, middle, and an end, an understanding of sonic relationships between sounds.
*   **CONTENT/CREATIVITY (20 points)** - General creative approach to the material; rhythmic elements used in a creative or non-standard way; exploring a sonic environment away from the twelve-pitch paradigm; attempting to explore neverbefore-heard sonic materials; unique applications of the course materials.
*   **Presentation (10 points) –** All projects music be accompanied with an analysis or commentary on the technical application of the composition as well as the creative/compositional process (ie, how you made the piece). This will be presented to the rest of the class during the final class period.

Final Exam (10% of total grade)

The final exam for this course will be done through canvas with and will be due by 5pm on November 21st. Requires Respondus LockDown Browser.

Late Work Policy

With extremely limited exceptions, late work will not be accepted. I am willing to be flexible in extenuating circumstances, but communication is key; please reach out early if accommodations need to be made.

Suggested Supplemental Reading

Cipriani, Alessandro and Giri, Maurizio: *Electronic Music and Sound Design*
Hass, Jeffrey: *Introduction to Computer Music: An Electronic Textbook*
Holmes, Thom: *Electronic and Experimental Music: Technology, Music, and Culture*
Rodes, Curtis: *The Computer Music Tutorial*