UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER
School of Performing Arts

course syllabus for

MUAP xx87 (1187, 2187): Composition (Lower-Division Group Lessons)
Fall 2026
M 4:05–5:00 p.m. – FAC 2006

Professor: Dr. Kyle Gullings
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Office Hours: (contact me to set an appointment, or…)
Mondays 10:10 – 11:10 a.m.
Wednesdays 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.
Thursdays 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Course Description: MUAP 1187 and 2187 consist of private, weekly applied lessons in Composition at the Freshman/Sophomore grade levels. The focus is on fundamental skills development, technical writing exercises, style copy assignments, and listening assignments.

Course Information: Permission codes to enroll may be obtained by contacting the Music office. Fees will be charged for this course and are subject to change. Each level of applied lessons may be taken twice for credit. Upper-division lessons are delivered in an individual setting in the instructor's university studio. Lower-division lessons are delivered in a group studio setting, usually in a classroom.

Prerequisite: None.

Course Learning Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Complete discrete tasks** as assigned involving the fundamentals of music composition: melody, harmony, rhythm, form, texture, timbre, counterpoint, and orchestration.
2. **Apply** the above aspects of music in the service of small-scale composition assignments with well-defined parameters.
3. **Speak** knowledgably concerning musical literature, with a particular focus on Common Practice Period music and more contemporary literature.
4. **Engrave, edit, and distribute** their compositions through use of music notation software.

Required Materials: No textbook is required. Students must have regular access to manuscript paper and a pencil, and music notation software.

Assessment:

Grade Weighting	Weekly Original Composition Progress (Composer Readings piece, other) x6	30%
	Composition Etudes x3	20%
	Listening Reflections x3	20%
	Class Participation (includes in-class interactions and discussion boards)	10%
	Final Portfolio	20%

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

Methods for Assessing Outcomes: The final grade will reflect the degree of significant progress made by the student each week, and the scope and quality of the final Portfolio of composition etudes and listening assignments.

Methods of Instruction: Enrolled students will meet weekly with the instructor in a group setting to discuss assigned music literature listening, receive critiques of their composition etudes and short compositions, and work on building related techniques. This group meeting is in addition to any individual applied composition lessons.

** **Attendance Policy:** Weekly attendance is essential and expected. Weekly grades are given for each lesson, and unexcused absences will result in a grade of 0% for that week's lesson. Four (4) unexcused lessons (including those assigned for lack of progress) within a semester will result in an automatic semester grade of "F", and no further lessons will be scheduled for the remainder of the semester.

At the instructor's discretion, absences may be considered *excused* only for legitimate, *documented* reasons (serious illness, family emergency, etc.). Even in cases of *excused absences*, any outstanding assignments are due at the following class period. In all cases, it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of absences with as much advance notice as possible, and to *document* that absence if an excused absence is being requested.

Make-up sessions are not offered for lower-division group lessons, even for excused absences. Make-up lessons for upper-division individual lessons are only offered upon student request, for excused absences approved by the instructor; make-ups are not offered for unexcused absences or due to lack of preparation or writing progress.

** **Composer Readings:** Once each semester, as funds and circumstances allow, the Music Department will arrange for performer(s) to present student compositions in a workshop/performance format. Instrumentation will be announced near the beginning of each semester. All students enrolled in upper-division individual composition lessons and/or lower-division group lessons are required to participate in these Readings to avoid a reduction of the final semester grade. Students not enrolled in lessons are also encouraged to participate, subject to the approval of the instructor. The performers will generally conduct open rehearsal workshop sessions with time for discussion and revisions, followed by a public recital concluding with a talkback session featuring the performers, composers, and audience members.

** **Other Composition Events:** From time to time, special events of interest to composers will be held, such as guest speakers/master classes, performances, and sessions on entering competitions, resume writing, and marketing. These events will be clearly posted in advance. When offered, these sessions are required for all Composition majors and all students enrolled in upper- or lower-division composition lessons. Composers unable to attend for excused reasons must communicate their absence in advance to the instructor. Unexcused absences from composition events will count against the semester grade in lessons.

** **Lesson Format/Expectations:** All official composition assignments must ultimately be notated using computer software such as MuseScore, Dorico, Sibelius, or Finale. Hand-written drafts are acceptable for weekly lessons, but not the final Portfolio / Jury. Notation software on a laptop or manuscript paper and pencil are required at each lesson.

** **Portfolio / Juries:** Near the end of each semester, students in lower-division group lessons will prepare a Portfolio of all listening assignments, etudes, and assigned compositions completed, representing his/her work over that semester only. All notated compositions and excerpts must include computer-engraved score(s) plus suitable audio renditions (synthesized or recorded), submitted digitally to the primary instructor only.

Only students enrolled in upper-division individual composition lessons will prepare a *separate* end-of-semester Jury of original compositions, ahead of a live feedback session with a faculty committee. Students enrolled in both levels of composition lessons will submit *both* a Portfolio and a Jury.

** **Grading Requirement – Public Performance of Compositions:** Every student enrolled in applied composition lessons (upper- or lower-division) must arrange for a public performance of at least one original composition each semester. The piece chosen needn't be written during the current semester of study. Both acoustic and electronic compositions (though not mere MIDI realizations of acoustic works) satisfy this requirement.

Suitable opportunities for public performance include Departmental Student Recitals, Degree Recitals (the composer's or others'), Composer Readings Recitals (detailed above), and any other student- or Department-organized events recognized on the official Music Department calendar. Students may perform their own works or enlist the help of colleagues. While the Department strives to arrange a number of performance opportunities each semester, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to secure performances. Failure to complete this requirement by the end of each semester will result in a lowering of that semester's grade by one letter grade.

** **Senior Recital:** During the last year of study, students majoring in Composition must present a 50+ minute recital of original works. While every effort will be made by the Department to help facilitate the performance, **it is solely the**

student's responsibility to enroll in MUAP 4100, secure a 3-member Faculty Committee, schedule a date and location for the hearing and recital, and ensure that performers are secured, rehearsed, and prepared to perform at a passable level. While all circumstances will be taken fully into account, the recital will be graded primarily on the quality of the compositions as reflected in the performance.

No later than four weeks before the recital, the student must present a live Recital Hearing with all performers present. At the hearing, the Faculty Committee will hear the entire program and vote on whether the recital will be ready for performance. If the hearing is passed, the recital is cleared to proceed. If the hearing receives a provisional pass, the student generally has two weeks to rectify any concerns of the committee. If the student does not pass the hearing or resolve the provisional pass, the recital is postponed until the following semester and the student will receive a grade of "F" for MUAP 4100, unless an Incomplete is warranted by circumstances outside the student's control.

Students enrolled in MUAP 4100 must also be enrolled in MUAP 4287 upper-division individual composition lessons in the same semester. Please see www.uttyler.edu/music for additional details regarding recital policies.

** **Communication:** Students are required to regularly check their Patriot e-mail account and the class Canvas page.

** **Academic Integrity**: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated (cheating, copying homework, plagiarism, etc.).

Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in This Course: For this course, students are allowed to use artificial intelligence (AI) to brainstorm or improve on composition strategies, creative concepts, and lists of related repertoire for listening. All such uses of AI in this course must be disclosed at the time of submission. Unless you get prior permission from your instructor, you may **not** use AI in any other ways to assist with any text-based assignments (listening reflections, etc.) or to generate audio or music notation for any purpose in this course.

Other: For additional **Student Resources** and **University Policies and Information**, please those sections on our course Canvas site under the Syllabus Module.

Composition (Lower-Division Group Lessons) – Fall 2026

Course Calendar

(assignment due dates subject to change)

Date(s)	Event
8/24 Mon.	- Classes Begin (Group and individual lessons scheduled individually)
9/7 Mon.	- *NO CLASSES:* Labor Day
9/8 Tue.	- *Census Date* (Last day to withdraw from course without penalty)
9/29 Tue.	**Composer Readings: First Draft Due 5:00pm in Canvas (score + audio)** (the work is substantially complete; no major additions or changes)
10/13 Tue.	**Composer Readings: Final Draft Due 5:00pm in Canvas (score + audio)** (no revisions after this date unless requested by your performer(s))
10/30 Fri.	- *Withdrawal Deadline*
11/2 Mon.	Registration Begins: Meet CAS Advising and your Music faculty for advising prior to today
11/11-11/13	- *NO LESSONS:* Instructor out of town for a conference (reschedule)
11/17 Thr.	**Composer Readings: Piano Studio & Composer Readings Recital 6:00–7:00pm BRH**
11/23-11/27	- *NO CLASSES:* Thanksgiving Holiday
12/3 Thr.	**Composition Portfolios** (lower-division) & **Jury Submissions** (upper-division) **Due 5:00pm**
12/7 Mon.	**Composition Juries** (upper-division only; slots 2:30–4:10pm, see Canvas)

Please keep an eye out for possible updates to this calendar, including:

- Composer Readings: Workshop on effective piano writing
- Composer Readings: Workshop and feedback session
- Composer Readings: Dress rehearsal
- Composer exchange events, on or off campus