

**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER**  
**School of Performing Arts**

*course syllabus for*

**MUAP xx87 (3287, 3387, 4287, 4387):**  
**Undergraduate Composition (Upper Division)**  
**Spring 2022**

**By appointment, scheduled during Week 1 – FAC 1215**

**Professor:** Marcel Castro-Lima

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**Office Hours:** (subject to change)

Tuesday 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

or scheduled Zoom meetings.

**Course Description:** MUAP 3287, 3387, 4287, and 4387 consist of private, weekly applied lessons in Composition at the Junior/Senior grade levels. All lessons will be taught in the instructor's university studio. Permission to enroll and appropriate computer call number 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 repeated twice for credit.

**Prerequisite:** MUSI 2312 (Music Theory IV), equivalent, or instructor approval. Students not possessing the prerequisite will be administratively removed from the class unless otherwise approved by the department.

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

1. Understand, discuss, and creatively utilize a variety of compositional techniques, with an emphasis on the canon of Western art music – particularly that of twentieth- and twenty-first-century models.
2. Deploy the above techniques through solo, chamber, vocal, large ensemble, and electronic mediums.
3. Show the clear beginnings of a unique, contemporary compositional style, balancing creativity and craft.
4. Articulate the aesthetic and practical relevance of their output within the artistic landscape they occupy.
5. Engrave, edit, and distribute their compositions through proficient use of music notation software.
6. Present a public recital, during their senior year, of original compositions.

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

**Assessment:**

<b>Grade Weighting</b>	Weekly Composition Progress	80%
	Final Jury / Portfolio	20%
<b>Grading Scale</b>	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, as well as the scope and quality of the final Jury.

**Methods of Instruction:** Enrolled students will meet weekly, individually, with the instructor to receive critiques of their compositions, discuss progress and techniques, assess and develop composer-specific proficiencies, and set specific goals for the following week. Outside listening and score study may also be assigned to serve as creative models. This individual meeting is in addition to any group applied composition lessons.

**\*\* Attendance Policy:** Weekly attendance is essential and expected. Make-up lessons may not be rescheduled for unexcused absences or due to lack of preparation or progress on compositions. Weekly grades are given for each lesson, and absences without advance notice 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.). In cases of excused absences, the weekly lesson grade will not be impacted, and all attempts will be made to make up the missed lesson. In all cases, students who must miss a lesson should inform the instructor, with as much advance notice as possible.

- \*\* Composer Readings:** Once each semester, as funds and circumstances allow, the Music Department will hire regional professional musicians to present student compositions in a workshop/performance format. Instruments used will be announced near the beginning of each semester. All students enrolled in Applied Composition Lessons are required to participate in these Readings to avoid a reduction of the final semester grade. Students not enrolled in lessons are still highly encouraged to participate, with 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 Applied 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 private lessons.
- \*\* Lesson Format/Expectations:** At the start of each semester, the instructor and the student will jointly create a contract of pieces to be composed and specific skills to be improved during the semester. Student progress and grading will be evaluated based on fulfillment of this contract. Students in MUAP 3287 and 4287 are expected to create at least one original work of approximately five minutes of music each semester. Students in 3387 and 4387 are expected to create at least one or two original works of approximately ten minutes of music each semester. Failure to meet these requirements will result in a lowering of the final semester grade, at the instructor’s discretion.

We spend the majority of our lesson time discussing your compositions in progress, which are the most direct demonstration of your ideas and skills. Just as with any other private music lesson, improvement and success will come only with regular practice. As a composer, time spent composing IS your practice. This activity is the primary focus for the successful Composition Major.

While school work, family and job concerns, and writer’s block will occasionally hinder the well-meaning composer, regular production of new music is essential to earning and maintaining the title “composer.” Therefore, occurrences of no or unsatisfactory weekly progress within a semester will be handled as follows:

1. First time – No grade penalty. The hour will be spent on idea generation strategies, composer proficiency etudes, score study, and future goals.
2. Second and third times – 0% for the weekly lesson grade, and the lesson will be canceled. The composer will be encouraged to spend this time composing for the following week.
3. Fourth time – Automatic semester grade of “F”, and no further lessons will be scheduled for the remainder of the semester.

All composition assignments must ultimately be notated using computer software such as Finale or Sibelius. Hand-written drafts are acceptable for weekly lessons, but not the final Jury portfolio. Notation software on a laptop or manuscript paper and a pencil are required at each lesson.

- \*\* Juries:** At the end of each semester (during final exam week), the student will schedule and present a Composition Jury attended by a committee of faculty members. For the Jury, the student will prepare and present a portfolio of compositions completed, representing his/her work over that semester only. If enrolled in group lessons (lower division), the student should put these shorter technical pieces at the end of the regular Jury binder. The student's compositions will be graded by the faculty jury, and the student must provide three (3) copies of the score(s) plus a suitable audio rendition for the committee (synthesized, recorded, or live). The Jury will factor into the final semester grade for Applied Composition Lessons. Note: Students completing a Senior Recital in Composition in the same

semester as Applied Composition Lessons are exempt from the Jury requirement, but may participate in Juries at their discretion. If not taking a Jury, the final Senior Recital grade will serve as the 20% “Jury” component of the Applied Composition Lesson grade.

**\*\* Grading Requirement – Public Performance of Compositions:** Every student enrolled in Applied Composition Lessons 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. End-of-semester Jury performances do not 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 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, a Faculty Committee consisting of the instructor and two other faculty members 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 “I” for MUAP 4100. Please see [www.uttyler.edu/music](http://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.).

*Information for Classrooms and Laboratories:* Students are expected to wear face masks covering their nose and mouth in public settings (including classrooms and laboratories). The UT Tyler community of Patriots views adoption of these practices consistent with its [Honor Code \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and a sign of good citizenship and respectful care of fellow classmates, faculty, and staff.

Students who are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing, digestive issues (e.g. nausea, diarrhea), or a higher than normal temperature should stay at home and are encouraged to use the [UT Tyler COVID-19 Information and Procedures \(Links to an external site.\)](#) website to review protocols, check symptoms, and report possible exposure. Students needing additional accommodations may contact the Office of Student Accessibility and Resources at University Center 3150, or call (903) 566-7079 or email [saroffice@uttyler.edu](mailto:saroffice@uttyler.edu).