

# MUS110V-510V: Music Composition

## Spring 2017

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**Office hours:** by appointment

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**Online Resources:**

Google Group: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/uri-composers>

Course Website: <http://www.kirstenvolness.com/compuri.htm>

### NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF MUSIC STANDARDS COMPOSITION AND IMPROVISATION

Students must acquire:

1. Rudimentary capacity to create derivative or original music both extemporaneously and in written form.
2. The ability to compose, improvise, or both at a basic level in one or more musical languages, for example, the imitation of various musical styles, improvisation on pre-existing materials, the creation of original compositions, experimentation with various sound sources, and manipulating the common elements in non-traditional ways.

### CREATIVE GOAL

A major purpose of this standard is to encourage the development of rudimentary skill and greater insight into creative and communicative processes of music through the formulation of musical ideas in purely musical terms. While gaining fundamental technical proficiency in composition and improvisation is important to reaching this goal, the primary intent of the standard is to help all musicians gain technical means to reach individual creative ends.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

To achieve the highest possible level of skill in the use of basic concepts, tools, techniques, and procedures to develop a composition from concept to finished product. This involves the ability to work with various media, styles and forms; to use and develop notations, and to apply principles of scoring appropriate to particular compositions. (B.M.C.2.1.)

To achieve fluency in the use of tools needed by composers such as keyboard skills, spoken and written language, conducting and rehearsal skills, analytical techniques, and applicable technologies (electronic music). (B.M.C. 2.2, B.M.5.1, B.M.5.2)

To gain successful opportunities to hear fully realized performances of one's original compositions in public presentations, with critical assessment. (B.M.C.2.3.)

To further discover and develop one's compositional voice and to enhance one's clarity of expression, both musically and verbally.

To engage in the greater new music community by attending concerts featuring contemporary art music and applying for available opportunities in the field whenever possible, such as competitions, grants, and summer programs. Composers are encouraged to collaborate with performers and other artists outside of music to expand and create opportunities to hear and promote their music. *Opportunities will be posted on the door of D-104 or posted to URI-Composers Google group (<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/uri-composers>).*

### POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to present new work each week and to submit assignments in a timely manner. Unexcused absences and lack of consistent progress on individual projects will result in a

lowered final grade. Students will be expected to discuss their process, intent, and compositional decisions in detail, as well as larger concepts and ideas that may inform their work. **Students are also required to attend all composition recitals and participate in the final composers' concert.** (Students having recitals this semester need not present a piece at the final composers' concert, but are required to attend.)

### **GRADING**

- Attendance: 20% (2% will be removed from final grade for each unexcused absence)
- Creative work: 50% (quality 20%, preparation 20%, timely delivery 10%)
- Performance/Recording Review: 10%
- Short written/verbal/listening assignments: 10%
- Performance/ability to rehearse and coordinate concert: 10%

### **LATE WORK**

No late work will be accepted. Please contact me **in advance** if you need an extension or immediately upon encountering extenuating circumstances and your request will receive every consideration.

### **UNIVERSITY ANTI-BIAS STATEMENT**

Each member of the University community has the responsibility to foster an environment of acceptance, mutual respect, and understanding. If you are a target or a witness of a bias incident, you are encouraged to contact the URI Bias Response Team ([www.uri.edu/student\\_life/brt](http://www.uri.edu/student_life/brt)) where you will find people and resources to help.

### **TITLE IX PROTECTIONS**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources here: <http://web.uri.edu/womenscenter/violence-prevention-and-advocacy-services-vpas/>

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

Any student with a documented disability is welcome to contact me as early in the semester as possible so that we may arrange reasonable accommodations. As part of this process, please be in touch with Disability Services for Students Office at 330 Memorial Union, 401-874-2098 (<http://www.uri.edu/disability/dss/>) or 239 Shepard Building, Feinstein Providence Campus, 401-277-5221.

### **THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

Please refer to the most recent edition posted to the course website.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

JAN 23 / 25: Introductions—please bring in scores in progress and ideas about your semester goals

JAN 30 / FEB 1: Creative Project/Listening

FEB 6 / 8: Creative Project/Listening

FEB 13 / FEB 15: Creative Project/Listening

FEB 20 / 22: Creative Project/Listening — No lessons 2/20

FEB 27 / MAR 1: Creative Project/Listening

MAR 6 / 8: Creative Project/Listening

MAR 13 / 15: NO LESSONS — SPRING BREAK

MAR 20 / 22: Creative Project/Listening

MAR 27 / 29: Creative Project/Listening—No lessons 3/27

APR 3 / 5: Creative Project/Listening— **Finalize performers, deliver parts, confirm rehearsal schedule for Composers' Concert**

APR 10 / 12: Creative Project/Listening

APR 17 / APR 19: Creative Project/Listening

APR 24 / APR 26: Creative Project/Listening— **Program information and concert hall form due**

MAY 1: **Final Portfolio due:** PDFs of scores (all works) and parts (for complete works), mp3s/patches if relevant + **Performance/Recording Review and Self-Evaluation due** via email

MAY 7 at 5 pm: **URI New Music Festival (student works on around 7 pm)**

## ASSIGNMENTS

### • Creative projects of the student's own design — to be included in final portfolio

Quantity of work may vary based on the projects at hand and one's individual creative process, but must reflect a consistent and reasonable effort.

### • Short compositional exercises and analytical listening assignments

These will address specific techniques and concepts in relation to the student's individual creative project and experience (at the discretion of the instructor). Students should be prepared to discuss recordings and scores as assigned.

### • Performance/recording review (250-500 words) – Due MAY 1 via email

Attend a new music concert or webcast (50% or more of the program should have been written within the last 50 years) outside of URI, or listen to a contemporary classical music album released in the past year, and write a review that includes a description and evaluation of the music performed as well as other pertinent observations. Write as though it were being published, with attention to detail in describing your ideas.

How stylistically diverse was the program and what elements of the music presented were you drawn to or averse to? What kind of audience was in attendance/would this be marketed to? What did you find successful or lacking about the concert presentation/album? What ideas were sparked from your experience that may inform your own future work? *Events will be posted to URI-Composers Google group (<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/uri-composers>).*

### • Written self-evaluation and goals for the future – Due MAY 1 via email

How have your strengths as a composer changed and what elements of craft, style, or practice do you feel you could continue to improve upon? What goals do you have for your future progress in relation to these observations? What specific creative projects or other activities do you plan to pursue in the short term in light of these goals?

## STUDENT COMPOSERS' CONCERT: Sunday, MAY 7, 2016 at 5 pm

All students are required to present a finished piece (written during the semester or completed previously) or a work in progress at the final composers' concert (except those who are having a recital this semester for whom participation is optional). The experience of preparing professional performance materials, recruiting performers, scheduling and participating in rehearsals, writing program notes, and publicizing your event are essential skills for success as a composer. **A completed Concert Hall Event Request form detailing needs for the production of your piece is due APR 26.**

## **URI COMPOSITION CONCERTS — SPRING 2017**

**Attendance is mandatory at composition department recitals and concerts** (marked in bold below); attendance at other concerts is recommended. Concerts take place at B101 Concert Hall unless otherwise noted. Check URI-Composers Google group for any updates, additions or further details.

- **JAN 31 at 12:30 pm — Joseph Parillo discusses topics in contemporary jazz and performance**
- FEB 3 at 1 pm — Brown University Music Now: Eric Nathan discusses his compositions, Orwig Music Building room 109, 1 Young Orchard, Providence, FREE
- FEB 3 at 7 pm — Maria Finkelmeier, percussion+electronics performs new music including Kirsten Volness's Complacency Will Kill You, Contentment Is A Choice, Music Mansion, 88 Meeting Street, Providence, FREE
- FEB 9 at 7 pm — Momenta Quartet reads Brown University student composer compositions, Grant Recital Hall (behind Orwig Building), 1 Young Orchard, Providence, FREE
- FEB 10 at 8 pm — Momenta Quartet in concert, music by Eric Nathan, Wang Lu, and George Crumb's Black Angels, Martinos Auditorium, Granoff Center, Brown University, 154 Angell St., Providence, FREE
- FEB 11 at 7 pm — Verdant Vibes Benefit Concert, Music Mansion, 88 Meeting Street, Providence, \$25 suggested donation
- FEB 17 at 1 pm — Brown University Music Now: Miya Masaoka discusses her compositions, Orwig Music Building room 109, 1 Young Orchard, Providence, FREE
- **FEB 25 at 8 pm — Distinguished Visiting Artists Yoshihiro Kanno and Noriko Ohtake in concert**
- MAR 3 at 7 pm — Transient Canvas, Music Mansion, 88 Meeting Street, Providence, FREE
- MAR 10 at 1 pm — Brown University Music Now: Marcos Balter discusses his compositions, Orwig Music Building room 109, 1 Young Orchard, Providence, FREE
- MAR 17 at 1 pm — Brown University Music Now: Nina Young discusses her compositions, Orwig Music Building room 109, 1 Young Orchard, Providence, FREE
- **MAR 21 at 12:30 pm — Eliane Aberdam discusses electronic music software Genesis and her compositions**
- **APR 11 at 12:30 pm — Geoffrey Gibbs discusses Japanese influence in his compositions and his father Alonzo Gibbs's poetry, with special guest Manabu Takasawa**
- APR 23 at 6 pm — Verdant Vibes Spring Festival, Southside Cultural Center, 393 Broad Street, Providence, \$10–20 sliding scale
- **APR # — TBD — Tim Coffey's Graduate Composition Recital**
- MAY 5 at 7 pm — Lilit Hartunian and Friends, performing music for strings and electronics by Kirsten Volness, Music Mansion, 88 Meeting Street, Providence, FREE
- **MAY 7 at 5 pm — URI New Music Festival (with installations on view beginning at 4 pm)**
- MAY 11 at 6 pm — Jacob Richman's new multimedia piece at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, featuring Fourth Wall Ensemble and dancers

**If you are performing or are having your compositions performed, please email me** so that I might share it with the rest of the composers. **Support your colleagues and go listen to live music!**