

MUS 150, Undergraduate Composition, Spring 2014
Michael Dessen, University of California, Irvine
Syllabus

Course meets: Tues/Thurs, 2pm-3:20pm, MM 316

Course webpage: <http://music.arts.uci.edu/mdessen>

My office: 3023 CAC

Office hours: Tuesdays 12-1 an by **appointment**

Email: mdessen@uci.edu

Course information

This course will introduce a variety of concepts and methods in music composition. More broadly, the goal of the course is to expose you to new ways of listening to and thinking about music, in order to help you cultivate your own musical voice, whether as a performer, composer or both.

The majority of the coursework will consist of composition assignments with varied lengths and formats. Some composition assignments will involve collaboration and/or improvisation, but many will be individually composed and fully notated. Students will also be required to attend concerts, perform in in-class readings of other students' works, and complete some listening assignments and written responses.

Assignments will be announced in class each week and also sent over the course email list. You can find all course email archived on EEE under the Class Mail List tool.

Please note that we will use the scheduled final exam time for final readings of some of the music we'll develop during the quarter (or possibly an informal concert), so you will need to be there for that time: Thursday, June 12, from 1:30-3:30pm.

This is an upper division course for music majors, and you are expected to work roughly 6-9 hours per week outside of class. The prerequisite is MUS 16C.

Required materials and submission formats

You must bring your instrument to class each week, in case we do in-class exercises involving performance.

There are no textbooks or other required materials for this course. For written scores, it is not important whether you notate by hand or software, but in either case you must present clear, proofread work. Do not depend on score notation programs to notate your music correctly because they will fail you.

All scores must be submitted to the appropriate EEE Dropbox folder as PDFs before the beginning of the class in which they are due, and you must also bring to class enough copies of parts for performers to use.

Late policies

Late assignments will not be accepted. In order to receive a passing grade for an assignment, you must turn it in on time. If you have a severe (documented) illness or genuine emergency that prevents you from completing an assignment or attending a class on time, you must contact me on the due date and be able to provide documentation.

Class discussion is also an important part of this course, so failing to attend class or arriving late will lower your attendance and participation grade.

Grading breakdown

Shorter composition assignments: 30%

Longer composition projects (weeks 6-10): 30%
Participation in class discussions and readings: 20%
Concert assignment and other response assignments: 20%

Some shorter assignments and listening or concert responses may be graded pass/fail. For assignments that receive a letter grade, please do not expect an "A" simply because you followed all the instructions and composed extensive amounts of notes. To receive a high grade you should dedicate significant time to the revision process and submit work that reflects careful thought and attention to detail.

Special needs

If you have a disability that affects your performance in this course, you must document it through the [Disabilities Services Office](#) and have them contact me at the beginning of the quarter to establish the necessary arrangements.

Office hours and getting help

If you have any trouble with the course, it is important to seek help as early as possible. If you want to meet for help but cannot make my office hours, please [email me](#) some times you are free.