

First-Year Composition

MUTH 14100 – 01

Fall 2021

Location: JJWCM 2312

Class days/time: TR 10:50 – 12:05

Instructor: Dr. Evis Sammoutis | Office: JJWCM 2317

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Office Hours: Tue 09:45 – 10:45 & Wed 09:00 – 10:00 - by appointment

Essential materials

Dave Black & Tom Gerou. *Essential Dictionary of Orchestration*. Los Angeles: Alfred Publishing Company, 1998.

Tom Gerou & Linda Lusk. *Essential Dictionary of Music Notation*. Los Angeles: Alfred Publishing Company, 1996.

Aldwell, Edward. *Harmony & Voice Leading*. Australia; United States: Thomson/Schirmer, 2003.

Materials on Reserve at IC Library

Adler, Samuel. *The Study of Orchestration*. New York: Norton, 2002.

Dallin, Leon. *Techniques of Twentieth-Century Composition*. Dubuque, Iowa: W.C. Brown, 1964.

Kostka, Stefan. *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006.

Persichetti, Vincent. *Twentieth-Century Harmony*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1961.

Schoenberg, Arnold. *Fundamentals of Music Composition*. London: Faber & Faber, 1983.

Style and Idea. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Scores on Reserve at IC Library

Beethoven, Ludwig van. *All nine symphonies (Music Stacks M1001.B4)*

Beethoven, Ludwig van. *The thirty-two piano sonatas*. (M23.B414 L4 Mini Score)

Copland, Aaron. *Appalachian Spring* (M1003.C778 A77 1945)

Several other scores that will be discussed in class will be free to check out following the lectures

Course Description

Practical study of the techniques necessary for coherent expression in a creative work. Students examine established works and assigned musical excerpts, exploring aspects of formal structure and style. Students will develop an individual plan of study focusing on their particular technical needs and creative aspirations. Students will engage with aspects of Melody, Harmony, Pitch, Rhythm, Meter, Form, Texture, Color, Timbre, Instrumentation, and Orchestration as found in works from the classical music repertoire, as well as in seminal 20th century compositions and works from non-western traditions.

Two class meetings per week. Open to first-year composition majors or by permission of the instructor. 3 credits. (F)

Student Learning Outcomes

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

- Recall key composition techniques through a selection of diverse techniques and styles.
- Explain basic key concepts of Acoustic and Electronic Music
- Apply the learned techniques to a series of practical projects
- Analyze key works from the repertoire
- Compose original short works using limited musical material

Course Activities

This course comprises lectures, group and one-on-one in-class lessons, in-class performance of compositions and discussion. The class will analyze and discuss pieces from the literature as examples of specific compositional methods and techniques. Students with performance skills are encouraged to collaborate with classmates in the performance of their own and others' compositions. **Students are responsible for recruiting instrumentalists/vocalists for the performance of their compositions.**

All composition majors attend Composition Seminar on **Tuesdays at 1:10**. Seminars offer an excellent opportunity to interact with fellow composition students and attend lectures/presentations by established composers.

Class Topics

- The musical idea. First steps toward music composition
- Basics of music notation
- The melodic line, thematic material and development: the motive and motivic development; phrase structure and periods; pitch content, rhythm and meter
- Use of dynamics, register, tempo, articulation and timbre (instrumental and vocal); basic instrumental/vocal techniques
- Harmonic explorations: techniques of chord construction; harmonic progression and voice leading
- The contrapuntal texture: use of consonance/dissonance in the simultaneity of voices; contrapuntal techniques in a variety of harmonic idioms
- Pulse, rhythm and meter: pacing of the musical discourse; rhythm and meter and its relation to musical time
- Form: introductions, sections, transitions, endings
- Musical style applied to composition
- Basic introduction to electronic music
- General introduction on most orchestral instruments with practical demonstrations

Composition Projects / Assignments

This course requires the fulfillment of three types of assignments:

- Composition Projects
- Analysis and study of scores
- Reading and listening from reserved books, handouts and audio CDs and/or online reserves/playlists.

Students will complete

- a) 4 Compositional Assignments
- b) 2 Listening Quizzes (given at the Composition Seminar)
- c) 1 complete piece for the Midterm Exam
- d) 1 more substantial composition as part of the Final Project together with a short explanation/diary

The use of a computer notation program such as Finale or Sibelius is recommended but not required. Manuscript scores may be written in pencil and must be clearly legible.

All composers are required to keep a short weekly diary documenting their progress and techniques that they have learned, and they are to share this at the beginning of each class. At the end of the semester, all composers must turn in these notes, together with a short explanation of the techniques used in the Final Exam/composition.

Attendance Policies and Student Responsibilities

Attendance is mandatory for all **for all class sessions, seminars** (Tuesdays 1:10-2:00) and all events listed on the **Composition Seminar Syllabus**.

Students are responsible for making up the missed work. **Grade will be negatively affected after four absences and could result in one letter grade drop from the final grade (minus 10% of the final grade)**. For example, A will become B, and B+ will become C+, etc.

In accordance with New York State law, students who miss class due to their religious beliefs shall be excused from class or examinations on that day. The faculty member is responsible for providing the student with an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study or work requirement that the student may have missed. Any such work is to be completed within a reasonable time frame, as determined by the faculty member.

Any student who misses class due to a family or individual health emergency or to a required appearance in a court of law shall be excused. If the emergency is prolonged or if the student is incapacitated, then the student or a family member/legal guardian should report the absence to the Dean of Students or the Dean of the academic school where the student's program is housed. Students may consider a leave of absence, medical leave of absence, selected course withdrawals, etc., if they miss a significant portion of classwork.

A student may be excused for participation in college-authorized, co-curricular and extracurricular activities if, in the instructor's judgment, this does not impair the specific student's or the other students' ability to succeed in the course.

For all absences except those due to religious beliefs, the course instructor has the right to determine if the number of absences has been excessive in view of the nature of the class that was missed and the stated attendance policy.

Please refer to the Undergraduate Catalog for the attendance policies at Ithaca College as well as other useful information regarding Registration and Course Information:

<https://catalog.ithaca.edu/undergrad/academic-information/registration-course/>

Please visit the following link for more information on Student Responsibilities and expectations as well as the Handbook:

<https://catalog.ithaca.edu/undergrad/student-information/responsibilities/>

Grading			
Midterm project	15%	Listening Quiz (at Seminars)	10%
Assignments (4x10%)	40%	Diary	5%
Final Project	20%		
Attendance: 10%			

Class Exchanges for specific events

Please note that there will be class exchanges for the following programs / series:

Karel Husa Visiting Professor of Composition Series (14 - 17 September 2021): Both classes for that week will be in the form of masterclasses and workshops with our guest composer.

Composition Immersion Day (13 November 2021): No classes for Week 13 (15 November onward), as we will work together on the Immersion Day

Students are required to participate in the activities of these programs.

Grading System

The acceptable grades and corresponding points for grade point average (GPA) calculations are as follows. All grades except P, I, S, W, NG and DG are used in calculating a student’s GPA. For more information on Credit and Grade Information, please visit this page:

<https://catalog.ithaca.edu/undergrad/academic-information/credit-grade>

Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A	4.00	C	2.00
A-	3.70	C-	1.70
B+	3.30	D+	1.30
B	3.00	D	1.00
B-	2.70	D-	0.70
C+	2.30	F	0.00

Grading Criteria: All projects will be graded based on the adherence to the instructor’s guidelines, overall creative/artistic quality, accuracy, technical skill, musicality and effectiveness. Other criteria taken into consideration include that ideas are original and show depth, material is well developed and cohesive, students make good and effective use of taught techniques and compositional issues (thematic and formal development, cohesiveness, etc.). I encourage you to use and customize many of the techniques discussed in this course to suit your musical skills and styles. Writing effective program notes and descriptions of your work is also an important consideration.

Compositions will be graded based on the adherence to the instructor’s guidelines, overall creative/artistic quality, and accuracy, effectiveness and neatness of notation. It is essential that students familiarize themselves with the appropriate musical style by studying the examples from the literature (listening and score analysis).

A short summary of some of the criteria taken into consideration include:

- Musical ideas are original and show depth.
- Material is well developed and cohesive.
- Presentation of score is neat and legible to professional standards. The composer is clear with all markings (dynamics, articulation, expression markings, etc.).

- Notational conventions are well followed, especially when using “extended techniques.”
- Compositions show imagination, originality, appropriateness of instruments or voicings (where applicable) and idiomatic writing.
- Student makes good and effective use of each semester’s taught techniques/taught material.
- In case of choral writing: Text is set convincingly, with attention to natural word stress and text painting.

Composition Premieres/Portfolio

All composition majors are required to present at least one work in one of the Composition Premieres Concert each semester. **This, however, does not apply to First Year Composition Students.** **If** a First Year Student wants to have a piece at a Composition Premieres concert, then that student needs to have the approval of the instructor.

In addition, upon instructor’s approval, **a maximum of one piece may be included as part of the Composition Portfolio.**

About the Use of Computer Notation Software Equipped with Midi Playback Capabilities

The capacity to hear internally constitutes an essential aspect of composition. The refinement of this skill should be one of your foremost goals, not only during this semester but throughout your development as a composer. Computer notation programs should be used **almost exclusively for notation purposes.** Playback may be used as a resource for checking the accuracy of the notation itself, but never as a device for assessing the effectiveness of your composition or for trying out instrumental sounds or orchestral combinations. Playback often provides a deceiving impression of the actual outcome (i.e., a performance with live musicians) and should not be used to determine the choice of instruments, dynamics or any aspect of the compositional process.

E-mail Communication

Students are strongly advised to check their IC e-mail accounts regularly. The instructor will only send e-mail communications to IC accounts.

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism

All assignments for this class should be original work. Ithaca College sets very high standards for academic integrity that have helped shape the quality of its offered degrees. Students are strongly advised to familiarize themselves with the Ithaca College Policy Manual, Vol. VII “Pertaining to the Student Community,” including reviewing the “Student Conduct Code.” Any violations of academic honor and honesty will not be tolerated in this course under any circumstances. For policies regarding fair use/copyright and plagiarism, the Ithaca College Policy Manual states: “Whether intended or not, plagiarism is a serious offense against academic honesty. Under any circumstances, it is deceitful to represent as one’s own work, writing or ideas that belong to another person. Students should be aware of how this offense is defined. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else’s published or unpublished ideas, whether this use consists of directly quoted material or paraphrased ideas.”

Academic Advising Center

You can contact the Advising Center to discuss registration questions, review degree requirements, talk about ICC requirements, discuss adding or changing majors or minors, receive help with study skills and strategies, and get help with any other academic advising related questions. You may also email advisingcenter@ithaca.edu with your advising questions. To schedule an appointment, go to: <https://www.ithaca.edu/academic-advising-center>.

Writing Center

The Writing Center aims to help students from all disciplines, backgrounds, and experiences to develop greater independence as writers. We are committed to helping students see writing as central to critical and creative thinking. Appointments can be made at <https://ithaca.mywconline.com>, which is also linked on the <https://apps.ithaca.edu> page. During business hours, you can message Ithaca College Writing Center on Google Hangouts or email ithacacollegewritingcenter@gmail.com to get real-time assistance or drop-in (subject to tutor availability).

Title IX

Title IX is a federal act mandating that educational institutions receiving federal funding must provide sex and gender equity. All students thus have the right to a campus atmosphere free of sexual harassment, sexual violence, and gender discrimination.

Please note that if you disclose an experience related to sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, dating violence, and/or stalking, sexual harassment or sex-based discrimination), then your professor can inform Linda Koenig, the Title IX Coordinator, lkoenig@ithaca.edu, of all relevant information, including your name. The college will take initial steps to address the incident(s), protect and support those directly affected, and enhance the safety of our community. The Title IX Coordinator will work with you to determine the best way to proceed. Information shared in class assignments, class discussions, and at public events do not constitute an official disclosure, and faculty and staff do not have to report these to the Title IX Coordinator. Faculty and staff should be sure that access to campus and community resources related to sexual misconduct are available to students in the case these subjects do arise. Any other disclosure to faculty and staff needs to be reported to the Title IX Coordinator. To make a report of sexual assault, sexual harassment or gender discrimination, please contact Linda Koenig, Title IX Coordinator; lkoenig@ithaca.edu 607-274-7761. Please visit the following link www.ithaca.edu/share for more information.

Disability

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodation will be provided to students with documented disabilities on a case by case basis. Students must register with the Office of Academic Support Services and provide appropriate documentation to the college before any academic adjustment will be provided. Please note that **accommodations are not retroactive**, so timely contact with Student Accessibility Services is encouraged. Students who wish to meet with an SAS specialist can email sas@ithaca.edu to schedule an appointment.

Mental Health/Counseling

Diminished mental health, including significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, or problems with eating and/or sleeping can interfere with optimal academic performance. The source of symptoms might be strictly related to your course work; if so, please speak with me. However, problems with relationships, family worries, loss, or a personal struggle or crisis can also contribute to decreased academic performance.

Ithaca College provides a Counseling Center to support the academic success of students. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides cost-free services to help you manage personal challenges that threaten your well-being.

The Ithaca College Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) promotes and fosters the academic, personal, and interpersonal development of Ithaca College students by providing short-term individual, group, and relationship counseling, crisis intervention, educational programs to the campus community, and consultation for faculty, staff, parents, and students. Their team of licensed and licensed-eligible professionals value inclusivity, and they are dedicated to creating a diverse, accessible, and welcoming environment that is safe and comfortable for all those they serve and with whom they interact. Staff in the office will answer questions by phone at 607-274-3136; please leave a voicemail if you do not reach a live person. You can also reach the office via email at counseling@ithaca.edu.

In the event I suspect you need additional support, expect that I will express my concerns (and the reasons for them) to you and remind you of resources (e.g., CAPS, Health Center, Chaplains, etc.) that might be helpful. It is not my intention to know the details of what might be bothering you, but simply to let you know I am concerned and that help, if needed, is available. Getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do for yourself and for your loved ones.

Ithaca College Statement on Diversity

Ithaca College values diversity because it enriches our community and the myriad experiences that characterize an Ithaca College education. Diversity encompasses multiple dimensions, including but not limited to race, culture, nationality, ethnicity, religion, ideas, beliefs, geographic origin, class, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, disability, and age. We are dedicated to addressing current and past injustices and promoting excellence and equity. Ithaca College continually strives to build an inclusive and welcoming community of individuals with diverse talents and skills from a multitude of backgrounds who are committed to civility, mutual respect, social justice, and the free and open exchange of ideas. We commit ourselves to change, growth, and action that embrace diversity as an integral part of the educational experience and of the community we create. Please learn more about Ithaca College's commitments: <https://www.ithaca.edu/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-statement>

Names and Pronouns

Everyone can choose to be addressed by their chosen name and pronoun. The class roster includes the student's legal first name, unless one has already designated their preferred first name with the Registrar's office. Please be advised that pronouns are not indicated on rosters, so you will be invited to indicate the pronoun you want to use when asked to share your names at the first-class meeting. **A student's chosen name and pronoun will be respected in my classroom by everyone at all times.**

Health and Safety

The health and safety of our entire campus community are important to us. For this reason, please know that I will expect that we all follow the most current health and safety guidance from the College (<https://www.ithaca.edu/covid-health-safety>), knowing that it might change, in accordance with local or national guidance, during the semester.

In our class, please observe the following protocols:

1. Before you leave your residence to access campus, **complete the electronic daily screening**. If it indicates that you should not be interacting with the campus community, please demonstrate respect for others by remaining in your residential room, residential apartment, or your off-campus housing and refraining from interacting with campus. If you are experiencing symptoms, please reach out to Hammond Health Center at 607-274-3177 to determine if COVID-19 testing might be needed.
2. If you are cleared to access campus, be prepared to **show your IC Health Badge** on your electronic device when you arrive at our classroom.
3. Indoors, **wear a face covering** that appropriately covers both your nose and mouth, regardless of your COVID-19 vaccination status. Have a backup face covering available with you at all times in case it is needed. Please pay close attention to guidance regarding wearing a face covering as this may change throughout the semester.
4. Please **refrain from eating in the classroom**. Eating in class is only permitted if you have a medical reason for doing so. If you must drink, please do so quickly, and replace your face covering immediately.
5. **It is okay to stay home**. I ask that you email me as soon as possible if you are unable to attend class. This class does not offer dual instruction. However, I will work with you to identify alternative ways to make up missed work. Please see the attendance policy section of this syllabus for more information on class attendance and how we can work together if you must miss class due to illness.

Schedule

Please note that in addition to the subjects covered below, there will be several sessions with performance students incorporated. These will be communicated during the semester. Students will acquire a very good practical/working knowledge of most Western orchestral instruments as a result of these interactive sessions. The sessions will go more in depth during the Spring semester, focusing on “extended techniques” as well as electronic music. **Students are encouraged to bring in original melodies to try out during these instrumental sessions;** these melodies will be “tweaked” during the sessions so as to be as vernacular and idiomatic to the instruments as possible (change of register, articulations, use of specific techniques, etc.) **All students are required to do the following lesson’s reading in advance.**

Week 1 (23 August →)

Discussing the syllabus, explaining the course material on Canvas, tour of the Composition Lab, Electronic Music Studios and Hill Center Studio and discussing how to make the most of the online and physical resources (Naxos, library). Completion of the First Year Questionnaire as well as a short test regarding basic musical concepts. Students introduce themselves to the class and present their work, citing influences at the second meeting. Discussing time management strategies/adapting to a new environment. Instructor informs students about possible reschedulings for the semester.

PDFs to cover by name as found on Canvas:

- 1st Year Comp. Fundamentals A Basic Scales/Intervals
- 1st Year Composition Cope David - Techniques of the Contemporary Composer Introduction

Week 2 (30 August →)

Continuation with preliminary exercises and analysis of fundamental compositional principles. Focus on rhythm and meter: Exploring basic rhythmical processes: Use of syncopation, written vs. perceived rhythm, changing time signatures, polymeter, ametric music, added values and non retrogradable rhythms, tempo modulation and polytempo, augmentation and diminution. Students will rewrite simple passages in class using these notions (e.g., changing melodies from 2/4 to 5/8, etc.). Introduction to the notion of rhythmic trees.

Exploration of aspects of ornamentation, suspensions and non-harmony tones. Rewriting melodies using variations of all the above.

PDFs to cover by name as found on Canvas:

- 1st Year Comp. Fundamentals B Rhythm / Meter

Assignment 1: Compose a 32 bar piece focusing on up to three starting rhythmical units, demonstrating good use of the discussed techniques and permutations. (10%)

Week 3 (6 September →)

Performance and discussion of Assignment 1.

Discussing motives, themes and phrases, looking at Paul Klee's pedagogical sketchbook, drawing lines – melodies.

Exploring the relationship between melody and harmony/non-harmony tones and voice leading in depth

PDFs to cover by name as found on Canvas:

- 1st Year Comp. Fundamentals C Melodic Figuration
- 1st Year Comp. Fundamentals D Modulation
- 1st Year Composition Schoenberg A Themes, motives, phrases
- 1st Year Composition Schoenberg Melody and Themes

Assignment 2: Compose a melody, using as much ornamentation as possible on a given harmonic progression. (10%) The example will come from a work from non-Western genres.

Short group discussion/feedback

Week 4 (13 September →)

Visit by Husa Professor

Week 5 (20 September →)

Performance of Assignment 2

Introduction to extended scales, modes and triads. Scale formations in 20th century music: five-note scales, six-note scales, seven-note scales and the diatonic modes, eight-note scales, the chromatic scale, microtonal scales, other scale patterns

Trying out in class some basic melodic and harmonic ideas. Use of dynamics, register, tempo, timbre and color. Short discussion about progress/feedback

PDFs to cover by name as found on Canvas:

- 1st Year Composition Expanding Harmonic Systems / Modes (focusing on melodic aspects)
- 1st Year Composition Cope David - Techniques of the Contemporary Composer Melodies/Modes

Week 6 (27 September →)

Debussy's "Syrinx" and Varese's "Density". Comparing the openings of Beethoven's "9th Symphony", Copland's "Appalachian Spring" and Mahler's "1st Symphony". Use of limited material, the musical idea and the genesis of a new composition. ("To be or not to be" exercise).

PDFs to cover by name as found on Canvas:

- 1st Year Composition Melodic Composition in Modern Styles

Assignment 3: Compose a solo work (for any of the instruments discussed in class), using one or more of the modes learned. (10%)

Short group discussion / feedback

Week 7 (4 October →)

Performance of Assignment 3

Focus on Form: Small ternary form/Theme and variations/Composing variations on a given theme. "Variations on a Theme by Paganini" by Lutoslawski, "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini" by Rachmaninoff" and "The People United will never be defeated" by Frederic Rzewski.

PDFs to cover by name as found on Canvas:

- 1st Year Composition Schoenberg_Form_Theme and Variations
- 1st Year Composition Schoenberg_Form_Ternary form

MIDTERM EXAM: Compose a set of variations on a popular music theme together with a short commentary about the specific techniques used. 15%

Week 8 (11 October →) NB 14 October no class, Fall Break

12 October: Performance of Midterm Exam pieces and class discussion / feedback

Week 9 (18 October →)

Looking at Monophonic, Polyphonic, Homophonic and Heterophonic Textures. Taking the same material and transforming it through the use of texture.

Harmonic focus: Conventional tertian sonorities, tertian chords with added notes, tertian chords with split chord members, open-5th chords, quartal and quintal chords, secundal chords, mixed-interval chords, whole-tone chords, polychords.

Private lessons in preparation for midterm.

PDFs to cover by name as found on Canvas:

1st Year Composition Cope David - Techniques of the Contemporary Composer Harmony

1st Year Composition Expanding Harmonic Systems / Modes (focusing on Harmony)

Week 10 (25 October →)

Writing for two voices/Contrapuntal principles (Imitation).

Chord progressions with melody: Composition of two short pieces using the same material.

Canon and Fugue: Taking old models into the 21st century.

PDFs to cover by name as found on Canvas:

- 1st Year Composition Schoenberg The accompaniment

Assignment 4: Compose a short canon (10%)

Week 11 (1 November →)

Performance of canons and discussion

Rondo form/Sonata Allegro form, Binary and Ternary forms.

Group tutorials/First drafts of new works using combinations of modes.

PDFs to cover by name as found on Canvas:

- 1st Year Composition Schoenberg B Rondo form/sonata form

Week 12 (8 November →)

Luciano Berio's "Folk Songs:" Analysis/Incorporating folk elements in music. Focusing on 2-3 of the songs. Looking at I wonder as I wander in different eras.

Techniques of text setting.

Part creation + 20th century score with notational mistakes discussion.

Short group discussion/feedback

13 November: Composition Immersion Day. All day lessons and group work on new compositions performers identified, intensive work on the new Compositions

Week 13 (15 November →)

No Lectures (Exchange for Composition Immersion Day)

Week 14 (22 November →)

Thanksgiving Break

Week 15 (29 November →)

Group Lesson on new works and discussion

2 December: Performances of Final projects/Discussion/Feedback/Final thoughts

Final project (20%)

Composition of a:

Folksong and 2 variations (voice and up to 3 instruments with a minimum duration of 2 minutes)

or

work for solo instrument (with a minimum duration of 3 minutes)

or

work for chamber ensemble (minimum 2 musicians and minimum duration of 2 minutes)

Short diary, including list of activities (5%)

Short written explanation/diary documenting the student's progress, their grasp of techniques and which techniques they employed in the final composition

FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION: INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME: _____

What do you expect from this course, and/or what would you like to learn in this course?

List any composers/pieces you enjoy listening to.
Do you play a musical instrument? Please mention proficiency and most recent repertoire.

List a few of the compositions you have written. Provide dates and instrumentation.

Have you studied composition in the past? If yes, list courses and/or private instructors.

Have you studied music theory (i.e. harmony, counterpoint) before coming to IC? If so, list the last topics you learned.
