

Sul Ross State University  
Independent Study in Music Composition  
Music 3117, Fall 2017  
(composition lessons)

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It is Sul Ross State University policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you would like to request such accommodations because of a physical, mental, or learning disability, please contact the ADA coordinator for Program Accessibility located in the UC or call 837-8203.

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Synthesize learning in music into the compositional process.
2. Create original melodies, rhythms, and harmonies, eventually selecting them for a larger work.
3. Out of these, create and refine ideas into an entire musical composition.
4. Perform the composition(s) in a public recital if possible.
5. Read and research a variety of books on the compositional process available in the Wildenthal Library.

**Student Learning Outcomes for Music Majors:**

SLO 1: All students will demonstrate the ability to integrate appropriate musical expression into performance.

SLO 2: All students will demonstrate the ability to research and prepare appropriate program notes.

SLO 3: All students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate and critique a musical performance.

Text:

Brindle, Reginald Smith. *Musical Composition*. New York: Boosey & Hawkes. Individual exercises as assigned. Supplemental texts in library for Research (see separate list; includes Hindemith, Davison, Dallin, Gordon Jacob, among others; to wit, famous composers and composition teachers on composing)

Lessons and Schedule of Topics

Week 1-15 composition excerpts as assigned. These will be specific to the individual student.

Attendance is required for all composition lessons, which will meet weekly unless otherwise scheduled. Make-up lessons will be scheduled if the student notifies me prior to the lesson, assuming the reason for missing is reasonable and there is time to reschedule. Please Note: Time for rescheduling may be limited due to my schedule. Skipped lessons will not be made up. If I miss a lesson, that lesson will be rescheduled. Lessons may be scheduled either individually or in groups.

Week 1	Composition: Key to musicianship; First ideas (Ch. 1,2)
Week 2	Formal principles; melody (Ch. 3, 4) Melody Exercise 4 (1), a,b,c (Exercises begin on p. 168)
Week 3	Melody Exercise 4 (2) a,b,c
Week 4	Melody Exercise 3, 4, 5, p. 169
Week 5:	Melody Exercise 7, 8
Week 6:	Harmony & Counterpoint (Ch. 5) Harmony Exercise 1 (169-170)
Week 7:	Harmony Exercise 3
Week 8:	Counterpoint Exercise 3 (
Week 9:	Vocal Writing (Ch. 6) Vocal Writing Exercise 1, p. 172
Week 10	Vocal Writing Exercise 4, p. 173 TURN IN IDEA FOR FINAL PROJECT (Solo piece, suite of several movements, fantasia, sonatina, solo song, choral piece, etc.)
Week 11	FINAL PROJECT
Week 12	FINAL PROJECT

Week 12	FINAL PROJECT
Week 13	FINAL PROJECT
Week 14	Performance Of FINAL PROJECT

### Independent Study Projects

All composition students will be expected to complete at least one significant project each semester. A major project could be a multi-movement work, or several individual works, a short suite, a song or set of songs, or a piano or choral composition. Independent readings or exercises may be required by the professor as part of the lessons, in order to increase student skills. Progress (i.e., new work, revision, sketch or outline, ideas, or questions about work in progress) will be expected at each lesson, assigned at the previous lesson. The student and the professor will discuss plans and projects for the semester during the initial lessons; try to come to the second lesson with some ideas in mind. If possible, we will seek performance of these projects. Students should be prepared to provide performers for their final projects. Please consider the resources of the music department when composing, so that performance will be possible, within reason.

### Assignments

There will also be individual assignments due during the semester which will be different in scope for each student, but will be geared toward learning various compositional processes and helping each student encounter the process of writing music. Weekly independent work in composition, using melodies and harmonies that the student develops, will be expected. This can vary from student to student, but generally involves a section or movement per week, in sketch format. See above for a schedule.

### Sketchbook

Students must keep a sketchbook of all musical ideas developed, to be turned in at the end of the term.

### Reading of Texts

One chapter in music composition will be read per week, with a 3-5 page written report on salient features provided to the professor.

### Grading

**Attendance and preparation 25%. 1 unexcused absence = B. 2 unexcused absences = C. 3 unexcused absences = D. 4 unexcused absences = F.**

Grading will be negotiated by professor and student (i.e., contract) at the beginning of the semester or summer term. Grades will generally be based on projects and assignments, but will also include attitude, industry, creativity, weekly exercises and readings if applicable, as well as other subjective factors. Please leave no doubt as to your willingness to learn. Grading will be assessed as follows:

**Sketchbook 25% examined each week for content and creativity in doing assigned exercises**

**Idea development 25% including melodic, harmonic, rhythmic development**

**Final composition project 25% examined each week for content and creativity**

For students pursuing a major in music education, the following standards of the Texas State Board for Educator Certification apply:

Standard III. The music teacher has a comprehensive knowledge of music notation.

Standard IV. The music teacher creates and arranges music.