

Individual Instruction
Music Composition
MUS 3211
Spring 2026

Instructor: Prof. Clara Brill

Office: FAB 206A

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Lesson Time/Place: FAB 206A / FAB 202

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM or by appointment

MUS 3211: 1 hr. Weekly Lessons

Course Description: Individual instruction in music composition through a study of compositional techniques, musical analysis, cultural context, and acoustic properties. The student's creative process is explored and honed through guided composition assignments, readings, discussion, active listening, and critique, culminating in a final project of original material. See *About Individual Instruction* for further details.

Prerequisites: None

Required Materials

- Preferred compositional medium (Ex: Computer with DAW, sheet music, instrument)
- Binder or folder, blank notepaper

Student Learning Outcomes:

- SLO 1: All students will demonstrate the ability to integrate appropriate musical expression.
- SLO 2: All students will demonstrate the ability to research and prepare appropriate program notes for recitals and performance pieces.
- SLO 3: All students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate and critique a musical performance.

Marketable Skills:

The music student graduating with a BM in music (instrumental or vocal performance; instrumental or vocal education; music business; or music composition) should have the following Marketable Skills:

1. Ability to collaborate and network with others to achieve a shared goal, utilizing problem solving, flexibility and improvisation, and consideration of others' thoughts and creative processes.*
2. Proficiency in public speaking and writing about music, especially in teaching basic musical concepts to all ages and incorporating technology for presentation and production.
3. Ability to prepare and perform a program of age-appropriate, relevant, and diverse repertoire, as an individual or part of an ensemble, to an audience, advocating for the arts through engaging with and serving the community.*
4. Experience using problem solving skills and abstract thinking to analyze compositions and examine their aesthetic through musical and extra-musical concepts, such as historical context and text setting.
5. Ability to create and disseminate basic marketing and public relations materials, resumes, websites, and digital portfolios.

Marketable Skills specifically addressed by this course indicated with *

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to demonstrate academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaboration on a course assignment, examination, or quiz that is assigned for individuals.

Attendance, Tardiness & Cell Phone Policies:

Adherence to the following guidelines will be reflected in the participation portion of student's grade: Attendance is mandatory. Extenuating circumstances should be communicated to the instructor prior to an absence if the absence is anticipated, and as soon as possible if unanticipated. Written authorization or documentation may be required for an absence or tardiness to be excused. Please do not interact with cell phones during the class period.

ADA Statement:

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartz Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartz@sulross.edu or ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

Student Responsibilities Statement:

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the [Student Handbook](#) and the [Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog](#) and for abiding by the [University rules and regulations](#). Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

Counseling:

Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/365 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](#). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

Libraries:

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offer FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu/. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123).

No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/ or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu.

Mike Fernandez, SRSU Librarian, is based in Eagle Pass (Building D-129) to offer specialized library services to students, faculty, and staff. Utilize free services such as InterLibrary Loan (ILL), ScanIt, and Direct Mail to get materials delivered to you at home or via email.

Supportive Statement:

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports various perspectives and experiences. I understand that the recent pandemic, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events may impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create a supportive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

About Individual Instruction

Assessment

- 45% of the semester grade: Weekly lesson attendance
- 45% of the semester grade: Completion of assigned readings, compositional exercises, listening activities, and technical analyses
- 10% of the semester grade: Final Project

Course Schedule

- Week 1 - Intro: Course expectations, assessment of student's current level of experience
- Week 2 - Topics: Musical vocabulary, active listening, and creative ideation
- Week 3 - Topics: Acoustics, synthesis, and timbre
- Week 4 - Review: Listening journal, sound bank, and reading assignments
- Week 5 - Review: Compositional assignment - Rhythm / Texture
- Week 6 - Topics: Keys and harmonic analysis
- Week 7 - Topics: Rhythm, tempo and time signatures
- Week 8 - Review: Compositional assignment - Scoring / Soundtrack
- Week 9 - Topics: Arrangement and orchestration
- Week 10 - Topics: Form and structural analysis
- Week 11 - Review: Final Project - First draft due
- Week 12 - Topics: Stylistic trends and cultural movements
- Week 13 - Review: Cultural movement presentation and reading assignments
- Week 14 - Final Project: Presentation and program notes