

Conrad Grebel University College
University of Waterloo
Music 376: Composition Seminar
Fall 2019

I acknowledge that I live and work on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River.

I am a member of the Métis Nation of Manitoba and I grew up in Treaty 1 Territory, the original lands of the Anishinaabe, Ininiwak, Anishininiwak, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.

Class Time: Wednesdays 7pm-9:50pm

Location: Room 1302

Instructor: Dr Karen Sunabacka

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:30-4:30. Other times available by Appointment.

Office Location: Room 1108

Phone: 519-885-0220 x24245

Email: karen.sunabacka@uwaterloo.ca

Course Description:

An exploration of music composition and arranging through regular listening, discussion and music creation. The course will give students tools for composing in various styles while maintaining their unique voice. Emphasis will be placed on compositional expression, notation, score preparation and live performance. In-class performances of all student compositions is an essential component of the learning experience in this course.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of the course students will be able to:

1. Recognize and evaluate various compositional styles and techniques.
2. Discuss the different approaches to notation and score preparation.
3. Identify and apply different techniques to create various timbres and textures in music.
4. Examine and prepare compositional sketches.
5. Recognize and compose with the instruments of the orchestra.
6. Prepare and produce a concert of music with peers.
7. Compose original music and present in score format with proper music notation.

Prerequisite: Music 271 or permission from the instructor

Required Materials

- Pencil
- Manuscript Paper
- Small book for journaling (Can be a music book or a regular journal or papers stapled together!)
- Reading and listening materials will be available on reserve in the library and on LEARN.

Optional Texts (required readings will be posted in LEARN):

Cope, David. *Techniques of the Contemporary Composer*. USA: Schirmer: 1997

Gottschalk, Jennie. *Experimental music since 1970*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic: 2016

Oliveros, Pauline. *Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice*. New York: iUniverse: 2005

Web Page: This course will make use of a WATERLOO LEARN website. This site will provide general information for the course, study guides and grades for term tests. Important announcements such as the cancellation of class due to illness will also be posted there, so please try to check the site before each class, just in case.

Evaluations:

Assignment	Weighting
Bi-Weekly Compositions (5 x 10%)	50%
Written Assignments (2)	10%
Final Concert – Edited piece, Program Notes, and Concert Preparation & Production	20%
Composition Journal	10%
Attendance/Participation	10%

Course Requirements:

Bi-Weekly Compositions (50% of grade or 10% per assignment). There will be a composition due approximately once every two weeks. Each of these compositions are explorations of a new concept or aspect of music composition. We will spend one or two weeks before the piece is due, exploring the concepts and looking at what other composers have done, and then you will compose a piece that can be performed (at least in part) during class. At the beginning of the class in which the assignment is due, the student will present their piece and then as a class we will perform it.

Written Assignments (10% or 5% per assignment). There will be two concert reports due over the course of the semester. A major part of exploring composition is experiencing live professional performances of new music. It would be a good idea for you to purchase a student subscription to NUMUS! But you can also purchase tickets at the door. The student prices are VERY reasonable! For each concert report I will expect you to attend at least 2 concerts. More information will be given in class.

Final Concert – Edited piece, Program Notes, and Concert Preparation & Production (20%). There will be a final concert that takes places at the scheduled exam time. For this concert the class will work together to produce this concert. You will learn what it takes to put together the program, write program notes and bios, find performers, advertise...etc. You will choose one of your pieces from the term that you wish to present in this concert. You will edit the piece after hearing it first performed in class, and then prepare it for the musicians who will be performing it (the musicians can be fellow classmates). I will divide the class into groups and each group will take care of different aspects of the concert (advertising, program, production).

Composition Journal (10%). Over the course of the semester and during class time, you will be journaling regularly. I will be checking the journal during the "READING" assignment weeks, to be sure you completed the reading before class. I will also be asking you to use the journal in class, as a way for you to engage with the music and ideas we explore. You will submit your journal at the end of the semester and I will expect to see at least one journal entry per week.

Attendance/Participation. This is a course that requires regular participation, whether it be through the presentation of your compositions, group work, or discussions. Great learning happens when all people participate. If you struggle with this please come and talk to me.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS will not be accepted, however I will give each student two days over the course of the term in which a late assignment will be accepted, although this may mean that a composition will not be performed in class. For example, student A has something come up and they can't get their assignment in on time, they can hand it in the day after it is due. Student A then has one more day to use and can hand-in one more assignment one-day late. Student B may have something major come up and decide on one occasion to hand in an assignment 2 days late. Student B now has no more days in which to hand in a late assignment.

A NOTE about composing, student life and mental health

Composing can be frustrating, difficult, life-giving, healing and exhilarating (I still experience all of this regularly during my own creative work). Everyone's experiences of composing are unique, and a process that can bring us to deep reflections of ourselves. Some may find the assignments easy or fun, while others may find the process difficult. These are all healthy experiences of being a creative person. The process may also bring up difficult memories, experiences and trauma. I have composed works about mental illness, deep disappointment in my life, and transcendent life-giving experience. I have also composed about puppies, golf games and prairie landscapes. There is no "correct" way to compose and no "correct" topic on which to focus. If you are struggling, or if you are getting triggered in any way, please let me know (email, phone call, or come to my office!) I am willing to help you seek out the help you may need. Music can be a way to heal, but we want to approach this in a healthy way, and not in a way that sinks us deeper into our despair.

UW Policies

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Arts: [Academic Integrity website](#) University of Waterloo: [Academic Integrity Office](#)

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - [Student Petitions and Grievances](#), Section 4.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals.

Other sources of information for students:

Note for students with learning differences: The [AccessAbility Services \(AAS\)](#) office, located in Needles Hall Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic

accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the ASS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Counselling Services: Counselling Services provides free confidential counselling, in both individual and group sessions, with qualified professionals to help registered students, faculty and staff with personal concerns, educational career decisions, and strategies to studies and exams: www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocs, ext. 33528, NH Room 2080.

Accommodation for Illness: A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the "University of Waterloo Verification of Illness" form or it will not be accepted. More information can be obtained from Health Services and the form is available in pdf: <https://uwaterloo.ca/health-services/student-medical-clinic/services/verification-illness>

The writing Centre: Writing Centre staff offer one-on-one support in planning assignments and presentations, using and documenting research, organizing and structuring papers, and revising for clarity and coherence. Make an appointment or drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit www.uwaterloo.ca/writing-centre

Course Schedule¹

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due:
1 Wed. Sept. 4	Introduction to Course – Syllabus Deep Listening, sound walk, Compositional Awareness – Inspiration, Rhythm & Graphic Scores	In Class – Oliveros & Sound Walk	<Keep a Journal>
2 Wed. Sept. 11	Compositional Awareness – Inspiration, Rhythm & Graphic Scores	READING 1: Oliveros pp xv-2 (ON LEARN)	Journal of READING 1
3 Wed. Sept. 18	1st half of class: Presentation of Composition 1 2nd half: NEW TOPIC: Compositional Awareness – Voice, Spoken Word. Text settings. Texture (Choir?)		Composition 1 – Alternative or Graphic score piece. To be performed in class. <Keep a Journal>
4 Sep 25	Compositional Awareness – Voice, Spoken Word. Text settings. Texture (Choir?)	READING 2: Gottschalk pp 164-188 (ON LEARN)	Journal of READING 2 Concert Report 1: (Attend at least 1 or both NUMUS concerts – Sept 19 & Sept 20)
5 Oct 2	1st half of class: Presentation of Composition 2 2nd half: NEW TOPIC: Compositional Awareness – Using Electronics.		Composition 2 – Graphic Score with vocal/spoken word pieces. <Keep a Journal>

¹ Subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due:
6 Oct 9	(KS AWAY) Visitor: Dr Matthew Borland Performing/Improvising with electronics	READING 3: Cope, pp161-191 - Ch. 14-16. (ON LEARN)	Journal of READING 3
Wed. Oct. 16	NO CLASS Reading Break		
7 Wed. Oct 23	1st half of class: Presentation of Composition 3 2nd half: NEW TOPIC: Compositional Awareness – Melody		Composition 3 – Composition using electronics and found sounds! <Keep a Journal>
8 Wed. Oct 30	Compositional Awareness – Melody	READING 4: Cope, pp 26-37, Ch 3.	Journal of READING 4
9 Wed. Nov 6	1st half of class: Presentation of Composition 4 2nd half: NEW TOPIC: Compositional Awareness - Harmony		Composition 4 – Composition for viola d'amore & Percussion or solo Percussion, solo viola d'amore or other solo instrument. <Keep a Journal>
10 Wed. Nov 13	Park Sounds visiting class: Jen Thiessen – Viola d'Amore; Ben Reimer – Percussion.	READING 5: Gottschalk: Harmonic Relations, pp45-54	Journal of READING 5
11 Wed. Nov 20	Compositional Awareness – Harmony		Concert Report 2: Report on two new music concerts.
12 Wed. Nov 27	1st half of class: Presentation of Composition 5 2nd half: NEW TOPIC: Discussion and logistics of Class Concert		Composition 5 – for two instruments (one can be piano) or piano solo – or an instrument that can play harmonies. <Keep a Journal>
DURING EXAM PERIOD TIME: TBA	Concert of Compositions - Chapel		