



Electronic Music Composition – AMUS 3731

Midwestern State University, Fain Fine Arts Center #C117M

Rafael.Powell@msutexas.edu | (940)397-4294 (Office) | (501)786-0420 (Cell)

Office Hours Wednesday and Thursday 12pm | by Appointment

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to guide students in understanding recording techniques through learning Ableton Live and other Digital Audio Workstations via weekly lessons. Through completion of this course, students will learn how to record, mix, produce, write, and sample music of their desired genre. Students will have access to Ableton within our computer labs and will have the opportunity to record during their scheduled lesson time, if equipment is not available for home recording.

Lessons are once per week and required for all BA, BM, and BMA majors and minors. This course may be repeated for credit.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Satisfactory completion of the course will document that students have demonstrated:

1. An understanding of workflow in Ableton Live including how to record various instruments (midi & acoustic), import/export audio files, and stem management.
2. An understanding of mixing and mastering at a basic level.
3. The ability to produce original music through a mixture of acoustic, electronic, and midi instruments.
4. Skill in using sampling techniques in Ableton Live, Koala, and Moises.
5. An understanding of microphones, audio interfaces, and other technologies necessary for recording instruments and voices of various genres.

Required Materials: Students will need at least two flash drives (32 GB minimum); wired over-ear headphones for recording, mixing, and mastering (suggestions – Behringer Alpha, Audio-Technica ATH-M20x, or Sennheiser HD 280. Preferably closed back.); a Google Drive/OneDrive/Dropbox or other digital storage space to further backup and share music.

Required Text(s): Ableton Reference Manual: <https://www.ableton.com/en/manual/welcome-to-live/>

Equipment Checklist:

- USB Flash Drive (32GB)
- Over-ear Headphones (Closed-back)
- Microphone & XLR Cables*
- Audio Interface*
- Koala (app)
- Moises (app)
- Demo (app)
- Notebook

*This equipment is necessary for home recording, but you will not be held accountable if you do not have the means to access this equipment. While having it can greatly help, we will still be able to record within your lessons.

Student Assessment:

Students will be graded according to their lesson preparation and their development and improvement throughout the term.

- **A** – Student demonstrates a clear understanding and technical mastery of their Digital Audio Workspace. Furthermore, students use appropriate recording techniques based on the medium they are capturing. Students work diligently in the lab to bring improvements to their projects and come prepared with creative ideas.
- **B** – Student demonstrates moderate technical mastery and some understanding of their Digital Audio Workspace. Occasional technical shortcomings may impede progress and recording techniques lack clarity and consistency. Assignments are prepared, but student struggles with improving material week to week. Projects take several weeks to complete, but there are signs of growth.
- **C** – Student shows little to no preparation. They are often unable to achieve their desired sounds within the Digital Audio Workspace. Recording techniques lack greatly and student makes miniscule progress in projects from week to week.
- **D** – Student has not prepared in the slightest. Assignments show no effort, or care, usually incomplete, or significantly below student expectations. Projects show no improvement. Student will be advised as how to best continue.
- **F** – Student is unprepared, has no materials, does not prepare, and shows no interest in musical endeavors.

A - 100-90%

B - 89-80%

C - 79-70%

D - 69-60%

F - 59-0%

Students are required to attend weekly lessons and prepare to the best of their ability. Healthy practice habits are necessary for a prolonged career and students will be advised how to best maintain good habits.

Attendance in weekly single reed studio class is **optional** for Electronic Music Composition students. Electronic students will share our works in a community forum for feedback and collaboration.

Because of the newness of the Electronic Composition Course, students weekly lessons will range involving creation, mixing, producing, and learning Ableton. Songwriting, song construction, and other creative projects will be part of the overall Electronic Composition program.

Lesson Attendance Policies

Students enrolled in applied lessons are expected to attend all lessons. If a student wishes to cancel a lesson, the teacher may make up the lesson at his/her discretion. Students wishing to cancel a lesson should notify the teacher at least 24 hours in advance (with exceptions of death in the family or serious illness). Insufficiently prepared lessons will not be made up, and a student may be asked to leave. **Students are allowed ONE free absence. This lesson will not be made up and students are still required to notify the teacher.** This does not count as your one unexcused absence. Unexcused absences are incurred when the professor is not notified with 24 hours' notice. Students will be dropped one letter grade, per unexcused absence, after the first.

To avoid missing a lesson, students are allowed and encouraged to trade times with a colleague. This schedule change does not require prior approval from the instructor, but please notify the professor to inform them of the change. In the event the instructor needs to cancel, a make-up lesson will be scheduled.

To maximize lesson time, students must prepare prior to the lesson and knock on the studio door at their lesson time. Please do not knock early, as you may disrupt another student's lesson. Students are encouraged to express what they hope to cover in the lesson and show an eagerness to learn when they walk through the door. Students should bring all appropriate music, instruments and materials to lessons and classes, including their lesson notebook, which will be used to consolidate all lesson-related information and serve as a plan and record of study.

Communication:

I can most easily be reached via email: Rafael.Powell@msutexas.edu. You may email me at anytime and expect a response with in 24 hours, if not sooner. Please feel free to contact me regarding lesson assignments, practice questions, or anything that you might need help with. You may include audio, or video, as necessary. In case of an emergency, my cell phone may be used, but only as a last resort.

Other Information:

Inclement Weather Policy: In the event of school closure in response to inclement weather, lessons will be cancelled. In the event of a delay, lessons will be held virtually, to accommodate available students, while ensure the safety of those who commute.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to Disability Support Services.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: Campus Carry Rules and Policies

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit Campus Carry.

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit MSUReady – Active Shooter. Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: "Run. Hide. Fight."

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University MSU Catalog

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.