

Applied Composition – AMUS 1691

Midwestern State University

Spring 2025 Syllabus

General Information

Instructor: Professor Ross Cleveland
Course Number: AMUS 1691
Class Location: Fain Fine Arts C117A
Class Time: By appointment
Email: ross.cleveland@msutexas.edu
Phone: (940) 397-4267
Office: Fain Fine Arts C117E (Office Hours by Appointment Only)

Course Description

This course allows a student to become more proficient in composition by exploring a varied array of compositional styles, works, and genres. The student is expected to compose and notate a work(s) with a degree of complexity with proper score preparation and an idiomatic use of instrumentation.

Applied Composition is a once-per-week meeting between the student and the teacher. The course is open to BM Teaching Certification majors, BA majors and music minors and may be repeated for credit.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

1. The student will be able to notate music in score form
2. The student will understand transpositions of instruments
3. The student will understand formal structures and how to work within them.
4. The student will develop their harmonic language.
5. The student will develop melodic and rhythmic writing skills.
6. Student will produce a completed work
7. The student will do a variety of listening assignments
8. The student will do a variety of short composition assignments from week to week, aimed at improving specific compositional skills.

Student Assessment

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

Weekly Preparation – 70%

Quality of preparation, consistency of preparation, consistency in progress, literature and technical material covered. Students will receive a letter grade for each scheduled lesson. Grades will be assigned as follows:

- A – Work is representative of flawless attendance and mastery of all assigned materials from week to week. The student demonstrates the capacity to take additional assignments and progresses at an accelerated pace through the various levels of ability.
- B – Work is representative of flawless attendance and mastery of most assigned materials from week to week. The student completes the assignments with occasional mistakes but does not demonstrate the capacity to go beyond the normal pace of assignments. Occasionally assignments must be repeated. Steady progress through the various ability levels is evident in all areas.
- C – Work represents below average progress in moving through the materials. Assignments are frequently repeated because of the lack of mastery.
- D – Work represents consistent poorly prepared lessons. This performance may result in a recommendation to drop the course before the end of the semester.
- F – Work represents no effort or interest in studying composition.

Preparation is critical to success in applied lessons. Most of the learning that takes place occurs by oneself by continuing to write and compose. I am here to guide you towards situations where you can successfully make progress toward your goals. The importance of improving yourself as a musician is paramount, as it will translate directly to your success as a teacher, composer, arranger, or industry worker.

Recital Performance – 15%

All students are required to have one work performed at least once each semester at Student Recital (Mondays 4:00-4:50pm). The student is not permitted to perform their own work and must produce a competent piece of music that another musician is willing to perform. The performance will be graded on musicianship, professionalism, and idiomatic implementation of instruments and/or voices used in their composed piece. Students in their first semester of Applied Composition are exempt from this requirement.

Final Work – 15%

All students are required to produce a final completed work at the end of the semester. The composition must be a new work started the semester of lessons. Previously composed works cannot be submitted for their final project. The specifics of the project will vary from student to student. Compositions that are for ensembles that would require individual parts for each player must be submitted with the completed score and parts.

Grading of the final completed work will be based on a rubric provided to the student.

Attendance

You must attend each of the weekly scheduled lessons throughout the semester. Absences will be excused for the following reasons: Illness, death in the family, or an approved and school-sponsored trip. Any other reasons will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In order for any of these absences to be excused, the instructor must be notified in advance.

Students that have three unexcused absences from scheduled lessons in a semester will be dropped from lessons.

Curriculum and Materials

The curriculum for this course will be determined collaboratively by the teacher and the student in order to address the specific goals of each individual student. You may be required to purchase a wide variety of scores, recordings, software, and books relating to specific methods of study.

Students are required to come to each lesson with a writing utensil and staff paper, either physical or digital. Plan for this every semester as there are no "textbooks" required for this course. All of these materials will be available for you to use or reference when you leave MSU.

Communication

I am typically very quick at responding to questions and concerns during the hours of 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday through Friday. Please feel free to contact me by email (ross.cleveland@msutexas.edu) at any time. Do not wait until your next lesson to tell me that you did not understand an assignment or could not retrieve the required materials. If you let me know ahead of time, I will be more likely to be able to help resolve the situation. If I contact you, a response is expected within 24 hours.

Other Information:

Disability and Accommodations

If a student (1) needs class accommodation(s) because of a documented disability, (2) has an emergency medical condition that may interfere with class performance, or (3) requires special handling in case the building must be evacuated, he/she is encouraged to contact the office of Disability Support Services in room 168 Clark Student Center (940) 397-4140 and make an appointment with the professor as soon as possible.

Student Conduct

Behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the instruction will result in the instructor removing the disruptive student(s) from the class, either temporarily or permanently (instructor drop), and assigning a final lower grade, up to and including an F. In addition, and depending on the nature of the behavior or conduct, the student(s) may be subject to further disciplinary actions as per MSU policies.

Privacy Statement

Federal privacy law prohibits the instructor from releasing information about students to certain parties outside of the university without the signed consent of the student. Thus, in almost all cases the professor will not discuss a students' academic progress or other matters with his/her parents. Please do not have them call. Regardless of these important legal considerations, the professors' general policy is to communicate with the

students, not their parents, even when a student has signed a consent form. College students are adults and are expected to behave accordingly.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty including plagiarism and giving or receiving unauthorized assistance is prohibited. Plagiarism is (1) the use of source material of other persons (either published or unpublished, including the Internet) without following the accepted techniques of giving credit or (2) the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given. If a student in the class plagiarizes material, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. The Student Honor Creed developed and adopted by the MSU Student Government reinforces the discouragement of plagiarism and other unethical behaviors. The first statement of the creed reads, "As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so." Plagiarism is lying, cheating, and stealing.

Campus Carry

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at MSU Campus Carry Rules/Policies.

Inclement Weather Policy

This course will follow the university's inclement weather policy. Key decision-makers will monitor weather projections and communicate with local news agencies and WFISD leadership to make a delay or cancellation decision. Notification occurs through local news networks and official campus channels, such as MSU Alert, MSU Safety app, Postmaster, website headers, etc. The university will announce by 6:15 a.m. any campus closures or delays. If inclement weather occurs during a regular work/class day, the university will announce by 3:30 p.m. whether classes and events after 5 p.m. will be cancelled. The Department of Music will make every attempt to reschedule recitals cancelled due to inclement weather.

Commented [JA1]: This is the inclement weather policy from my syllabus. Feel free to adjust to your own. See the new inclement weather policy posted in department meeting folder from last week.

Hearing Loss and Health

As a musician, your hearing is one of your most valuable assets. Unfortunately, high exposure to sound-producing activities can lead to noise-induced hearing loss. While this can be temporary, it can lead to tinnitus (ringing in the ears), permanent loss of hearing (particularly in the higher frequencies), and deafness. In addition to affecting a student's enjoyment of music, it also may render them incapable of continuing as a professional musician or music educator.

Commented [JA2]: We now have to include this statement per NASM

Musicians are also susceptible to musculoskeletal and vocal injury, particularly overuse injury. Failure to take adequate precautions can greatly shorten a student's performing career.

Means to minimize risks associated with hearing loss and performance-related injuries will be discussed during applied lessons and/or masterclasses. Faculty members can

only present information to students and offer resources and assistance in seeking professional medical help when needed. The student has the final responsibility to take proper precautions.