Syllabus
Composition 1 (MUS 240)

Fall 2006
CRN 15759
Meetings: Fridays 12:00-1:50 pm
Location: 203 Music
Web: http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~tmcq/comp1.html

Instructor: Dr. Terry McQuilkin
Office: 77 MUSIC
Office Hour: Fridays 2:00-3:00 pm
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Prerequisites. MUS 133 (Music Theory), MUS 136 (Aural Skills). Please see me immediately if you have not passed both of these courses.

Course description. This course is the first term of a three-year sequence leading to the B.Mus. degree in composition. It is designed for students who are interested in pursuing careers as composers, as well as those who wish to explore such an option. Through composing, listening and writing assignments, students will develop skill and acquire knowledge in the concepts and techniques of composition, principles of music notation, understanding of stylistic characteristics of contemporary music, and scoring for specified performance media.

Composition assignments. Learning the technique and art of music composition is the primary goal of this course; thus compositional exercises and assignments will demand a significant time commitment on your part. Assignments must be ready to turn in at the beginning of class on the date they are due. Late assignments will not be accepted, unless arrangements have been made at least three days before the due date.

Listening quizzes. You will be receiving a list of works that you will be able to listen to in the Douglass Listening Room, on the third floor of Knight Library. We will focus on pieces that illustrate some of the compositional techniques we will be studying.

Analytic listening assignment. You will complete one assignment designed to focus some of your assigned listening on specific musical characteristics and compositional techniques. I will provide a written handout for this assignment to guide your comments. Completion of this assignment will help you identify and apply relevant principles of composition to your own work.

Concert reports. In addition to being familiar with the literature of Western art music, a composer should regularly attend live concerts, particularly those including music of our own time. You will be asked to attend three concerts, drawn from a list that you will be receiving, and write following each concert a succinct account of your observations.

Term project. Your major project will be a theme and variations for solo piano. It must be carefully edited and formatted to conform to standard notational practice, and should be written neatly in ink or printed using acceptable computer notation software. Specific guidelines for the project will be handed out by the third or fourth week of the term. The project will be due on Friday, December 1. Set aside Thursday, December 7, from 10:15 am to 12:15 pm, the final examination time reserved for this course. Your project will be given a reading at that time.
Grading:

To receive a grade of "A" you must:
(1) Attend class regularly, with no more than one unexcused absence*, and
(2) Achieve an "A" grade average on the assignments described above.

To receive a grade of "B" you must:
(1) Attend class regularly, with no more than two unexcused absences*, and
(2) Achieve a "B" grade average on the assignments described above.

To receive a grade of "C" you must:
(1) Attend class regularly, with no more than three unexcused absences*, and
(2) Achieve a "C" grade average on the assignments described above.

*See section on attendance below

Calculation of grade averages on assignments:
30% Short composition assignments and exercises
15% Listening quizzes
15% Analytic listening assignment
10% Written reports of live concerts (list of concerts will be provided)
30% Term project

Attendance. Attendance at all class meetings and small-group appointments is required. Should a required university event conflict with a class meeting, you must make arrangements with me at least one week in advance. In the event of illness or emergency, you must e-mail me, at temcq@mac.com, before 8:30 am the day of the class or appointment. While you won't be penalized for absences that have been excused, unexcused absences will affect your grade.

Small-group meetings. Plan to meet with me in a small group several times during the term to review your progress and discuss your final project.

A word about notation. It is critically important that all composition assignments are legible and conform to standard practices of musical orthography and score preparation. Indeed, knowledge of such practices is a vital part of a composer's set of professional skills, and how carefully you apply these notation standards will be reflected in your grade. All composition assignments must be neat and clearly legible and conform to the principles of standard notation. They should be written in ink or dark pencil or prepared using a computer notation program. (Note: It is not acceptable to "blame the program" for any errors or deviations in notation or score preparation.) To aid you in the preparation of your scores, please consult UO Guidelines for Music Notation by David Crumb.

Disability. If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in the course, please make arrangements to see me soon. Please request that the Counselor of Students with Disabilities send me a letter verifying your disability.

E-mail communication. Students are encouraged to communicate frequently by electronic mail; I will attempt to reply to messages within 24 hours.