

**POINT LOMA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY**  
**Music Department**  
**Private Composition**  
**MUC 252, 352, 452**  
**Spring 2014**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Welcome to composition lessons. I look forward to the opportunity of working together with you as you develop your writing skills. You are unique and have the capacity to communicate through your music in ways that can deeply affect those who hear and perform your music. I look forward to walking alongside you as you learn techniques and explore different methods of writing.**

1. TITLE: Private Composition
2. CATALOG DESCRIPTION  
**MUC252** - Introductory lessons in music composition. Develops basic concepts of melodic writing and the manipulation of diverse harmonic, textural and rhythmic materials. May be repeated.  
**MUC352** - Continued study of compositional processes through the exploration of nontraditional tonal materials in varied media. Includes introductory compositional experiences that utilize electronic media. May be repeated.  
**MUC452** - Development of compositional skills through handling extended forms and larger performance forces, such as choir, band or orchestra. May be repeated.
3. PREREQUISITE: None for MUC252. MUC352 and 452 are taken only by students who have been raised to one of these levels in a composition jury.
4. INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Victor Labenske  
Office: CMC 214  
Cell phone (texting is great): 619-602-1690 (up to 10:00 PM)  
Office phone number: 619-849-2303  
E-mail address: vlabensk@pointloma.edu  
Office hours: M 1-1:30, 2:30-3  
T 10:30-11:30, 1:30-2  
W 10:30-11, 12:30-1:30, 2:30-3  
R 10:30-11:30, 1:30-2,  
F 10:30-11, 12:30-1:30, 2:30-3  

I am also free to meet during lunch in the cafeteria  
on TRF.
5. UNITS: 1-2
6. MEETING TIME AND PLACE: Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: Cooper 214
7. TEXTBOOK(S): You won't need a textbook, but there may be event fees for those entering

- competitions.
8. OTHER MATERIALS NEEDED FOR CLASS: Manuscript paper. Finale notation software is strongly recommended.
  9. POSITION OF COURSE IN COLLEGE CURRICULUM: Private Composition is required of all composition majors, and is an elective for all other students.
  10. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:  
You will synthesize the following musical grammar and technical components with your own original thought as evidenced in your compositions; At a minimum for each area below, MUC252 first semester students should demonstrate preliminary skills; MUC252 second semester students should demonstrate basic skills, MUC352 students should demonstrate proficient skills. MUC452 students should demonstrate advanced skills in at least 3 areas as evidenced by the rubric completed by each faculty member at the jury.
    - phrasing
    - direction and climax
    - harmonic process
    - formal process
    - notational accuracy
    - expressive markings
    - cohesive musical language
    - philosophical/extra-musical connection
    - idiomatic knowledge of instruments and voices
  11. METHODS USED IN THE COURSE: In consultation with you, we will agree upon assignments for various compositional exercises and complete compositions. I'll offer help at each class period with musical/technical issues. You are encouraged to ask questions and to discuss any and all aspects of the compositional process.
  12. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:
    - **Weekly Grade** – I'll average the 2 components listed below to determine a grade for each lesson after lesson #1.
      - ***Practice hours and days***
        - You'll record the number of hours and the number of days you practice on the **assignment sheet** (available on eclass). ***Upper division students may choose to individualize this requirement by adjusting or eliminating number of days.***
        - The days practiced (6 days/week = 100%) will be averaged with the practice hours.
        - If you are registered for 1-unit, you need to practice a minimum of 4 hours per week, 6 days per week.

- If you are registered for two units of credit, you need to practice a minimum of 8 hours per week, 6 days per week.
- Your recorded practice time should be on assigned composition work only.
- Practice rooms are available by checking out a key at the music office.
- **Assignment sheet** - Together, we will create an assignment sheet at each lesson; in consultation with you, I'll assign a grade for your progress on the previous week's assignments (bringing a hard copy and emailing a copy of your composition(s) in progress is required and will be part of your grade). You'll earn points based on when you choose to bring me the assignment sheet.
  - You'll receive the assigned score if you bring it to your lesson;
  - if it's a day late, you'll receive 80% of the assigned score;
  - 2 days late = 60%
  - 3 days late = you will not earn any credit
  - **additional grace: your practice hours will not be counted as late since you did them!**
- **Completing Compositions**
  - If you are studying for **1 unit**, you will complete **2 pieces (or 6 min. of music)** during the semester:
    - The **first piece (or first 3 min.)** by **week 8**.
    - The **second piece (or last 3 min.)** by **our last lesson (before finals week)**
  - If you are studying for **2 units**, you will complete **3 pieces (or 10 minutes of music)** during the semester:
    - The **first piece (or first 3 min.)** by **week 5**.
    - The **second piece (or next 3 min.)** by **week 10**.
    - The **third piece (or last 4 min.)** by **our last lesson (before finals week)**.
  - You will receive 100% of the earned score for the weekly grade if you choose to complete the composition requirement by the due date. If you choose not to meet the requirement, the grade for that week will be 50% of the weekly grade earned that week. Subsequent weekly grades will be 50% until you have chosen to complete the composition requirement.
  - If you would like me to, I will complete a grading rubric for each piece after you complete it, in order to show you the kind of feedback you will receive at the jury. Just ask me to do this.
- **Composition forum** – Forum enables you to hear each other's work.
  - Forum is held on the following Wednesdays from 8:30-9:30 PM in

Cooper 116: *9/17, 10/22, 11/12 (we may try to schedule a trip to UCSD for a recital which can count for a forum as well)*

- Attendance at the ENTIRE CLASS is required!
  - If you are registered for two-units, you will attend at least 3 forums.
  - If you are registered for one-unit, you will attend at least 2 forums.
  - Each missed forum will count as a missed lesson.
  - Music majors must perform on at least one forum.
- **Performances** - Having your works performed prepare you for your recital and your future work as a professional composer.
    - Student Recitals - Each composition major must have an original work performed on a student recital once per semester. Failure to do so will count as two missed lessons. Please choose your performance dates at the first lesson. **Student Recital dates are 10/6, 11/3, 11/24, 12/8**
    - Rehearsals – Students must arrange at least one rehearsal before the performance. A rehearsal must be videotaped and brought to the following lesson for review with the instructor.
  - **Competitions/Connecting with the Professional Community** – We are sent to represent God’s kingdom and PLNU in our world. Competitions also provide assessment by experts outside of our community.
    - If you are a composition major at the 352 or 452 level you need to participate in a competition this semester (unless this is your first semester in this studio). Other composers may elect to participate. You may also choose to write a piece for a “call for scores” opportunity. An outstanding opportunities where our students have done well in the past is:
      - **MTNA Young Artists Competition**
      - **Piano Guild Composition Competition**
    - If this is a requirement for you and you choose not to participate, it will count as a missed lesson.
  - **Peer Review** – This assignment develops your critical thinking and analytical skills.
    - Each composer will complete a peer review of another student’s composition using the form provided on eclass.
    - The peer review will count as 10% of the assigned studio grade.
    - Peer review is due November 21. You will submit an electronic copy to Dr. Labenske and also discuss the review with both your reviewer and reveiwee.
  - **Attendance** – Attendance, as is obvious by the grading criteria above, is very important in private composition. According to the *Catalog*, whenever the number of accumulated absences in a class, for any cause, exceeds ten percent of the total number of class meetings, the faculty member has the option of filing a written report

to the Vice Provost for Academic Administration which may result in de-enrollment, pending any resolution of the excessive absences between the faculty member and the student. If more than 20 percent of the total number of class meetings is reported as missed (three weeks or longer in a semester-long course), the faculty member or Vice Provost for Academic Administration may initiate the student's de-enrollment from the course without advance notice to the student. For full details, see:

[http://catalog.pointloma.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=864#Class\\_Attendance](http://catalog.pointloma.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=864#Class_Attendance)

- Based on information above, here is a summary of what counts as absences?
    - 3 tardies = 1 absence
    - missing composition forum
    - missing your competition
    - missing a required student recital performance
  - Here's grace: You will **not** be penalized for the first absence; this allows for a sick day or personal day (I suggest saving this absence just in case you do get sick).
  - If you are absent twice (two weeks of lessons) or have the equivalent of 2 absences (see forum, competition and performance guidelines above), you'll lose one letter grade
  - If you are absent 3 times (3 weeks of lessons or the equivalent), you'll lose 2 letter grades.
  - I don't make up any lessons. But, you may change lesson times with someone else on a week you need to be absent.
- **Jury exam**
    - The jury is usually Wednesday or Thursday of finals week.
    - Composition majors are required to take a jury at the end of each term according to the requirements in the catalog.
    - Failure to take a required jury will result in course failure.
    - The final grade I assign must be no more than one grade higher or lower than the jury grade.
    - The composition jury will consist of a submitting all three compositions completed this semester (two compositions for students studying for 1 unit).
  - **Grading scale** - The following percentage scale will be used in figuring grades:
    - 93-100% = A
    - 90-92% = A-
    - 87-89% = B+
    - 83-86% = B
    - 80-82% = B-
    - 77-79% = C+
    - 73-76% = C
    - 70-72% = C-
    - 67-69% = D+

63-66% = D  
60-62% = D-  
0-59% = F

**Academic dishonesty may result in course failure.**

**Expected work at each level is indicated below:**

- 252 (first semester/unit) – exercises in phrasing, form, progression, introduction to 12-tone; projects including a piano piece and an art song
- 252 (2nd semester/unit) –movements around 5 min. in length; small ensembles including string quartet, woodwind quintet; brass quintet; vocal music
- 352 – continuation of small ensembles not used in 252. Exploring non-tonal and non-traditional writing; electronic media; mixed (“Pierrot”) ensemble; longer movements, with a final 352 project approx. 10 minutes in length.
- 452 – longer works and larger forces (orchestra, concert band); continued exploration of non-tonal and non-traditional writing.

13. **CLASSROOM ATTIRE:** Thank you for trying to help those around you focus on their work by dressing in a way that you believe would be pleasing to Christ.
14. **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS.** All students are expected to meet the standards for this course as set by the instructor. However, students with learning disabilities who may need accommodations should discuss options with the instructor during the first two weeks of class and provide approved documentation and verification of need. The Academic Support Center is available to students for a variety of tutorial needs.
15. **FERPA POLICY:** In compliance with federal law, neither PLNU student ID nor social security number should be used in publically posted grades or returned sets of assignments without student written permission. This class will meet the federal requirements by (each faculty member choose one strategy to use: distributing all grades and papers individually; requesting and filing written student permission; or assigning each student a unique class ID number not identifiable on the alphabetic roster.). Also in compliance with FERPA, you will be the only person given information about your progress in this class unless you have designated others to receive it in the “Information Release” section of the student portal. See Policy Statements in the undergraduate student catalog.
16. **INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY:** The instructor will be available during the office hours listed on page 1. Making an appointment when possible will be appreciated. Other times are available as needed.
17. **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Dallin, Leon. *Techniques of Twentieth Century Composition; A Guide to the Materials of Modern*

- Music*. Dubuque, IA: W. C. Brown Co, 1974.
- Davison, Archibald T. *The Technique of Choral Composition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1945.
- Dwyer, Terence. *Composing with Tape Records: Musique Concrète for Beginners*. London: Oxford UP, 1976.
- Graf, Max. *From Beethoven to Shostakovich: The Psychology of the Composing Process*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1947.
- Hindemith, Paul. *The Craft of Musical Composition*. New York: Associated Music Publishers, 1942
- Kohs, Ellis B. *Musical Composition: Projects in Ways and Means*. Metuchen, N.J. : Scarecrow Press, 1980.
- Rahn, John. *Basic Atonal Theory*. New York: Longman, 1980.
- Rufer, Joseph. *Composition with Twelve Tones Related Only with One Another*. London, Barrie and Rockliff, 1965.