

MUS 212, Graduate Composition, Winter 2008

Michael Dessen, University of California, Irvine

Note: The course schedule (dates for projects) will be worked out in the first class and posted on the listserv.

Course meets: Tuesdays, 1-3:15pm, 105 Music and Media Building

Course syllabus: <http://music.arts.uci.edu/mdessen/mus212>

My office: 105 Music and Media

Phone: (949) 824-0386

Office hours: Thursday 11am-1pm, and by **appointment**

Email: mdessen@uci.edu

Course description

This is the second quarter in a year-long sequence of group composition lessons for first-year MFA students in Jazz Studies and Composition and Technology. Because of the small size of the class, we will work out the project deadlines in the first class session, and organize most emerging details of the course over the listserv rather than on a course website. This syllabus provides the course framework and grading criteria.

My expectation is that you will do at least 10 hours per week of work on your projects (outside of class time).

Assignments

Each student will complete three projects during this course:

1. A solo piece for you alone to perform
2. A movement or short piece for 2 or 3 acoustic instruments which we'll decide on in the first couple weeks of the quarter, depending on availability (using undergrad and grad performance majors)
3. A piece, most likely involving some sort of improvisation, made specifically for all members of the class to perform, including you

Each of these may use any combination you wish of notation (any kind), technology, or improvisation. I will help each of you establish some individual guidelines for your projects before you start working, to help make sure it is realistic within our time limitations. You should consider each a pilot project to explore a particular approach or idea, not a magnum opus, but in each case you should also finish a complete piece (or movement) with careful attention to detail and clarity of presentation.

Other activities

The main focus of this course is your projects, but several class meetings will involve listening to and discussing music by others. Listening or reading assignments related to these meetings, or emerging from other discussions, will be either very minimal or optional.

Grading

Attendance and participation: 25%

Projects: $25\% \times 3 = 75\%$

Deadlines for the projects will be set in the first class session. Because we won't be able to have presentations from everyone in a single class session, deadlines will be different for each of you. Please note that once we set those dates, projects will be graded down significantly if they are not ready on time. For the course to work, it is crucial that everyone meet their deadlines.

Late/makeup/absence policy

Extensions and absences will affect your grade, except in cases of severe illness or emergency.

Special needs

If you have a disability that affects your ability to complete the assignments or tests on time, you must come see me at the beginning of the semester to make advance arrangements.

Office hours and getting help

If you have any trouble with the course, it is important to seek help early rather than wait until the end of the quarter. If you want to meet but cannot make my office hours, please **email me** some times you are free.