

Western University Canada
Don Wright Faculty of Music
Department of Music Research and Composition
T. Ducharme. Fall 2017.

Music 9512A/9612A. Advanced Orchestration.

Time and Room TBA
Dr. Troy Ducharme, TC231
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Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30PM-2:30PM

Course Description:

Successful orchestral composers, particularly those who have flourished in the second half of the 20th century and into the 21st, establish unique approaches to their use of the orchestra that set them apart from their predecessors and their contemporaries. This course will provide insights into the techniques at work in contemporary orchestral compositions through the intensive study of a substantial selection of works from each of a small list of late 20th-century composers, as chosen by the students in the course. Study of works from the early 20th-century will also be included for the sake of context and for comparison of novel techniques with more 'normative' approaches.

Each student will:

1. Develop a list of parameters for analysis of orchestral work, to be applied for the sake of comparison and contrast with a variety of works;
2. Acquire detailed knowledge of orchestral techniques as used by his/her selected composers through both individual study and class discussion of each work.
3. Contextualize that understanding through comparison with other works, by other composers, as chosen by the other students in the course.
4. Demonstrate her/his understanding through the completion of an orchestral arrangement¹ in the style of one of the composers studied in class. The arrangement will be accompanied by explanatory text.

Composers who may be chosen for study in this course include, for the late 20th century: György Ligeti, Elliott Carter, Sofia Gubaidulina, Henri Dutilleux, Toru Takemitsu, John Adams, Henryk Górecki, Witold Lutoslawski, Alfred Schnittke, Magnus Lindberg, and Olivier Messiaen, among others. For the early 20th century, students may choose from Benjamin Britten, Dmitri Shostakovich, Igor Stravinsky, Jean Sibelius, Alban Berg, Gustav Mahler, Maurice Ravel, Anton Webern, Arnold Schoenberg, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Richard Strauss, among others. This list is only meant as a starting point for consideration, and includes composers whose orchestral works are well represented in the holdings of the Music Library or online. Other composers may certainly be chosen, and interlibrary loans may assist in the acquisition of the required scores.

¹ If and when the resources are available, student arrangements will be read. This reading will likely occur after the completion of the course, however, and will not impact on a student's grade.

Course Materials:

Scores, recordings, and readings will be left on reserve in the library and/or found online through OWL.

Evaluation:

Weekly Seminar Preparation and Participation:	50%
Final Project:	50%
Score	35%
Text	10%
Consultation	5%

Evaluation Details:

Weekly Seminar Preparation and Participation:

More details will follow once a schedule, including repertoire, is established from discussions with students. Essentially, students will be responsible for choosing and sharing representative works for study and providing summary handouts detailing features of those works in each class. They are also responsible for studying the excerpts chosen by other students and by the instructor in preparation for detailed class discussion. To this end, the student will need to budget a significant amount of time for listening and score study outside of class time.

Final Project:

Students will choose a piece, or excerpt thereof, of non-orchestral music (solo or chamber music) to arrange in the style of their chosen composer. Length, for the purpose of eventual readings, will be limited to a 5-minute maximum. Students may choose to arrange a longer work and then excerpt it accordingly for the readings.

A detailed process of development, consultation, and refinement of this work will be circulated on the first day of classes. The final Project will be due no later than 15 December.

Readings will occur during the Winter term and dates for the completion of bound/revised scores and complete sets of parts will be included in the project guidelines. These dates will be during the Winter Term. Although completion of these items is required in order to be included in the reading sessions, they are not part of the graded portion of this course.

Notes:

1. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic offence, as found at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf.
2. As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help students achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing a graduate degree. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone in whom they feel comfortable confiding, such as a faculty supervisor, a program advisor, or the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies). Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html.
3. In order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the office of the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies). Students with special learning needs or other circumstances are asked to inform the instructor as soon as possible so that necessary accommodations can be considered. The Policy on Accommodation for Illness is found at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Schedule

This schedule is a means of loosely organizing the class focus. Expectations, the kinds of analysis to be applied, and the issues at hand will change as our focus shifts from one section to another, and will be partially determined by the repertoire chosen by the students. Details will be circulated in separate handouts and discussed in class.

WEEK 1, 7 SEPTEMBER.
Preliminary discussions

N.B. There is no meeting on 12 October due to Fall Reading Week.

WEEK 2, 14 SEPTEMBER.
Student Presentations: Repertoire Choices;
Preparatory Discussion of Texture and
Orchestral Sections.

WEEKS 7 AND 8, 26 OCTOBER AND 2
NOVEMBER.
Student Presentations: Wind Writing.
Preparatory Discussions of Brass Writing.

WEEKS 3 AND 4, 21 AND 28 SEPTEMBER.
Student Presentations: Texture and Use of
Orchestral Sections.
Preparatory Discussion of String Writing

WEEKS 9 AND 10. 9 AND 16 NOVEMBER.
Student Presentations: Brass Writing.
Preparatory Discussions of Percussion
Writing.

WEEKS 5 AND 6, 5 AND 19 OCTOBER.
Student Presentations: String Writing
Preparatory Discussions of Wind Writing.

WEEKS 11 AND 12. 23 AND 30 NOVEMBER.
Student Presentations: Percussion Writing.

WEEK 13. 7 DECEMBER.
Summary Discussions.
Share Final Project Scores.