

**Western University  
Don Wright Faculty of Music**

**MU9533y Electroacoustic Composition and Performance 2015-2016**

**Course Description**

A graduate level course in electroacoustic musical composition utilizing the resources of the CEARP Studio. Students will compose music employing techniques of digital synthesis, sampling and data manipulation. Live performance and real-time digital sound processing (DSP) will be integral elements in their compositional work. Other genres of electroacoustic artwork may also be explored.

**Lecture Hours:** Tuesdays 3:30 – 5:00 pm

**Room:** CEARP Facility, TC 344c

**Prerequisites**

*“Please note that prerequisites are no longer automatically checked prior to course registration. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that he or she has the specified prerequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”*

**Instructor Information**

Instructor:

Dr. Paul Frehner

Rm. TC 339

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Office hours: Mondays 10:30-12:30 or by appointment

Studio Manager & Media Specialist

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**Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of the course students can expect to have:

- Developed their compositional skills through writing works for instruments and/or voices combined with electronics and/or live electronics.
- Achieved a significant level of technical fluency in utilizing audio hardware equipment and software applications in an electroacoustic studio environment.
- Gained a broader knowledge of current composers and trends in various electroacoustic genres
- Gained hands-on experience in all aspects of staging a concert of electroacoustic music.

## **Course Activities**

This primary focus of this course will be on the creation and realization of compositions and creative projects involving an intensive research component in electroacoustics. The nature of these projects can vary significantly as can the manner in which they are disseminated.

It is understood that students are expected to engage in technical research for their creative work. The possibilities for this research are wide ranging and the exact nature of the research will be narrowed down in class. Students are expected to be self-directed and exploratory in their technical research with the goal that they will have stretched their limits through this technical and creative process.

In-class activities may consist of:

- Weekly presentations/discussions of student creative work in a group composition lesson setting.
- Live performance and improvisation
- Discussing any assigned readings or listenings
- listening to and analyzing recent electro-acoustic compositions by established composers as well as other types of audio artwork such as installations, sonic sculptures, etc...
- Composer Studies Presentations: see below
- demonstrations by both the instructor and students on the use of various audio hardware devices and software applications

### Composer Studies

Each student will prepare two Composer Study oral presentations. Each presentation will focus on the body of works of either a single composer or a group of composers who share a common approach. These presentations should last approximately 30-40 minutes in duration. Further details about these presentations will be given in class.

### Compositions, Creative Project(s)

Students will complete at least two composition/creative projects over the course of the academic year. One project will be a composition for one or more performers with electronics, which will be presented in the year-end concert. The other project may take various forms and will be determined through in-class discussions. Collaborative work between composers as well as interdisciplinary collaboration is both permissible and encouraged.

Solo/Chamber Composition with Electronics: approximately 5-8 minutes

Creative Project/Composition 2: tbd

### Studio Time

Each student will be able to reserve at least 8 hours/week of studio time. Studio time signup sheets will be provided on a weekly basis. Other studio time can be had on a first come first serve basis.

### Year-End Concert

The final concert will take place on Tuesday, April 5, 2016 at 6:00 pm in Paul Davenport Theatre. Students will perform their solo/chamber composition with electronics during this concert. The other creative project may be presented in this concert as well, however, other means of dissemination may also be explored. Students will be responsible for promoting this event. In addition, each student is expected to assist in the setup, sound checks, dress rehearsals and striking of the stage after the concert. These activities will take up the entire day from 8:00 am until approximately 10 pm.

### **Evaluation**

<u>Composition/Creative Projects*</u>		60%
# 1: due December 8, 2015**	30%	
# 2: due March 22, 2016	30%	
<u>Composer Studies</u>		30%
<u>Preparation, participation</u>		10%

\*N.B. In order to pass the course students must both complete the Composition/Creative Projects and participate in the year-end concert on April 5, 2016.

\*\*Note that along with both composition/creative projects students will also submit a bound performance or listening score that contains technical details regarding the signal processing and data manipulation employed.

The following elements will be considered when grading the composition project(s).  
Effective technical use of the electroacoustic facilities of the CEARP Studio and any other technology employed.

The overall success of the completed works with regard to compositional considerations such as creativity and originality, form, dynamic shape, sonority etc...

### **Course Materials**

#### **Texts**

Samuel Pellman, *An introduction to the Creation of Electroacoustic Music*, Wadsworth Publishing Company ISBN 0-534-21450-9.

Scott Wilson, David Cottle, Nick Collins, *The SuperCollider book*, Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, c2011.

Max/MSP/Jitter Tutorials: found in the help files with Max/MSP 7

ChuckK tutorials: <http://chuck.cs.princeton.edu/doc/>

David Miles Huber, Miles E. Runstein, *Modern Recording Techniques*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Boston, Focal Press, c1997.

The above texts are on reserve in the library.

Other hardware and software user manuals are available on the Mac Pro in the CEARP studio. They are mostly all available for download from their respective manufacturer's website. Hardcopies of some of these manuals are kept in the studio.

### Software

Students are encouraged to purchase their own licenses of the Max/MSP software application from Cycling74 as well as licenses for other software applications they intend to employ.

### **Listening Materials**

Recordings of the works assigned for the listening test will mostly be available on the studio's computer or on recorded media found in the library. Some recordings may be available only from online sources.

### **Recording Media and Storage**

Students are expected to make frequent backup copies of any work stored on the studio computer. The University and the instructor will not be responsible for loss of data and student work.

### **Logbook**

The studio has a logbook. Students are expected to sign in to the logbook whenever using the studio. If there is a software or hardware malfunction they should describe the issue in general terms in the logbook and then notify the studio's Graduate Assistant.

### **Electronic Devices**

The use of mobile phones or other electronic communications device in class is prohibited. Please turn off your communications devices before entering the classroom.

### **Accommodation for Medical Illness**

As of May 2008, the University has a new policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness, [www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf), which states that "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 appropriate Dean's office..."

This policy can be found at [www.studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm](http://www.studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm). Accommodation for documented medical absences will be considered for work worth less than 10% of the final mark. This work must be completed before the last day of classes in the Winter 2015 term.

### **Statement on Academic Offences**

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 [www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf).

### **Statement on Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory for this course. If a student's attendance is considered inadequate by the instructor, the decision to bar the student from taking a written or oral examination or submitting an equivalent final project for grade assessment rests with the Dean, on the recommendation of the Department.

### **Statement on Mental Health**

Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.