I. Course Information:

**Music 2629. Composition I.** An introductory course in composing for voices and instruments. The course will include analysis of pertinent repertoire and will be evaluated primarily on the basis of a number of short compositions.

Meeting Times:  
Mondays  1:30PM-2:20PM  MB140  
Wednesdays  1:30PM-3:20PM  MB140

*Please note that Music 2629 in 2020-21 is a blended course, with most materials and coursework done online. Attendance at required in-person or virtual sessions (using Zoom) will be limited to the times listed above. During most weeks, students will only be required to attend for up to 90 minutes (total) during these times, and in small groups, as assigned by the instructor. See attached schedule for details.*

Instructor: Dr. Troy Ducharme  
Office: TC231  
E-mail: tducharm@uwo.ca  
Phone: (519)661-2011 x. 87716  
Drop-in Office Hours (Virtual Only, using Zoom) will vary. An announcement will be sent out through OWL each week. Students may also send questions or make appointments by e-mail.

**This syllabus applies only to the first term of the course.** A separate document will be circulated with the details of the second half of the course.

II. Learning Outcomes:

1. Students in 2629 will develop facility with writing for small groups of instruments with and without voice. To this end, we will explore basic parameters (Texture, Melody, Rhythm and Harmony) both generally and as they are dealt with in a selection of 20th-century compositions. The student will come to understand the effects of particular features and of the application of new methods of organization in each of these parameters through the completion of online modules.

2. New materials and concepts will be practiced in short exercises and assignments. Students will perform each others' exercises either in-class or by making and sharing rough recordings so that the student will develop a familiarity with the new techniques as well as an ability to compose idiomatically for a variety of instruments and players alone and in combination.

3. Students will apply new ideas and develop their own compositional voice in the composition of one original piece, written for instruments played by, or the voice types represented in, the students in the course.

III. Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Modules, Quizzes, and Class Discussions</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments (5 x 5%)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (Term One):</strong></td>
<td><strong>50%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Term Two will be evaluated separately to complete the other 50% of the grade.
Details of Evaluation:

Online Modules, Quizzes, and Class Discussions:

1. This blended course will consist of content delivered through online lesson modules on OWL. Completion of each topic and the associated quizzes is required, as is attendance at one meeting per topic (see attached schedule) during which we will discuss the techniques as well as the repertoire encountered in the topic. Each online quiz and in-person meeting will count for an equal amount of this participation grade. The deadline for the completion of online learning activities (quizzes, primarily) for each topic is the first day of each new topic, that is:
   a. 01 Welcome to Composition, no later than Monday 14 September.
   b. 02 Texture, no later than Monday 21 September
   c. 03 Melody Writing, no later than Monday 5 October
   d. 04 Harmony, no later than Wednesday 21 October
   e. 05 Rhythm, no later than Wednesday 11 October
   f. 06 Repertoire (Bonus), no later than Monday 30 November.

Assignments

2. Assignments will include very short compositions or collections of sketches within loosely defined parameters. It is expected that all assignments, projects and portions thereof included detailed instructions regarding dynamics, tempo, articulation and instrumentation. You will also be required in most assignments to explain your work in a paragraph or two using technical terminology, with reference to the repertoire and techniques discussed in the online modules, as well as including some consideration of what was learned from the process of the readings and recordings (see below).

3. The relationship between your discussion, the assignment requirements, and the music you have composed will form the most significant portion of any grade. A portion of the grade, however, will be reserved for an admittedly and unavoidably subjective assessment of the musical quality of the work itself as well as for the clarity with which the ideas are presented (notated).

4. All assignments are to be completed by hand in pencil or ink and scanned for submission and for sharing with colleagues. Computer notated scores will not be accepted for assignments. Correctly formatted and tidy notation is essential and a portion of your grade on each assignment will be allotted to the appearance of your score. More specific formatting requirements will be discussed in the context of each assignment.

5. Performance of Colleagues’ Works. Assignments will be scored for instruments and voices available in the class. Most of our class times will be devoted to workshopping and recording assignment exercises, with recordings submitted as a part of each assignment. All students are required to participate as performers as well as composers and marks will be awarded accordingly as part of each assignment’s grade. Recordings of these readings will be submitted with each assignment.

Final Project.

6. A separate handout will specify the requirements for the project. You will compose a piece (5 minutes or less in duration) over the course of the term.
7. Integral to the successful completion of the projects will be feedback, and perhaps lessons, on work-in-progress. As part of each assignment over the course of the term, you will submit work-in-progress toward your final project. Evaluation of your composition will be, in part, based on its own musical merits as it stands when completed, but there will also be portions of the grade allotted for how the piece develops through consultation and for how your work responds to suggestions and criticism. That is to say, evidence of growth as a composer is important.

8. Performance and recording of the project during the reading sessions at the end of term (see schedule) is required, but may be replaced by a draft recording produced using whatever means are available to the student, especially in the case of a move to exclusively online teaching as a response to changed pandemic circumstances. The student will be assigned instrumentation according to the performers available in the class.

9. Use of notation software for the completion of the Final Project is permitted, but sketches - completed as part of assignments - should be completed by hand.

Grading Scale
10. Numerical grades will be provided for all graded work in the course. The following presents corresponding letter grades for any numerical grade:

A+=90-100%, A=80-89%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, D=50-59%, F=0-49%.

IV. Texts, Materials, and Technology:

1. No texts are required, but students will probably want to own or have easy access to a notation manual and an orchestration textbook for personal reference. Appropriate texts are suggested below.

Notation


Orchestration


2. Other materials:
   - Music manuscript paper
   - A good (sharp) pencil, a good quality eraser and/or Felt tipped pens in graded sizes, such as Staedler's Pigment Liner
   - Ruler
   - Optional: Notation software such as Avid Sibelius, MakeMusic Finale, Steinberg Dorico, or MuseScore.

3. A number of "handouts" on selected topics are included with each lesson module. These are provided in lieu of a textbook.

4. Technology is required for regular access to OWL, for scanning (or taking a photo) of completed work, as well as for recording and simple editing and combination of audio files. See Appendix 2.

V. Notes:

1. The prerequisites for this course are Music 1651A/B or the former Music 1650A/B with a minimum mark of 70%. Enrolment in the Bachelor of Music with Honors in Composition program or the Bachelor of Music with Honors in Music Theory program or permission of the department. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from the 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.

2. Assignments and Projects are due according to the attached schedule, unless instruction to the contrary is given in class or on the assignment itself, or an extension has been negotiated with the instructor, in advance of the due date and for compelling reasons. They will be submitted through the Assignments tool in OWL. Assignments that are submitted late, without accommodation, will receive a penalty of 5% per day (not including weekends) beginning immediately after the deadline for online submission has passed.

3. Academic Consideration for Student Absence.

   Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an online portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student’s final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

   • for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams) • absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
   • assessments worth more than 30% of the student’s final grade,
   • if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

   If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are not met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

   Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported
Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student’s Home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office. For the Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf, and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf


In cases where students are unable to submit work due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if an online self-reported absence is submitted, or if appropriate supporting documentation is submitted to the Associate Dean’s office, and the accommodation is granted, then the missed assessments may be rescheduled or discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course, at the discretion of the instructor. If neither a self-reported absence nor an appropriate supporting document is submitted to the appropriate office, then the missed assignments will receive a grade of zero.

Please note that, in the model of workshopping assignments and projects, that no student will be penalized for the missed work of another student (ie. partners failing to attend a reading session, whether accommodated or not). Should problems of this sort arise, we will work out an equitable solution on a case-by-case basis.

5. Submission of work with which you have received help from someone else (other than the course instructor or TA) is an example of plagiarism, which is considered a major academic offence. 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_undergrad.pdf

Please note, however, that the foregoing does not apply to the process of workshopping compositions and exercises that is a part and parcel of the course.

6. Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to the Health and Wellness at Western page (https://www.uwo.ca/health/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or to go to the Wellness Education Centre located in UCC room 76. Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in UC11 or to click on the green “I Need Help Now” button on the Health and Wellness page above.

7. See Appendix 1: Virtual Meeting Code of Conduct, for guidelines on attending online meetings.

8. See Appendix 2: Performance, Readings and Recordings, for guidelines on Assignment and Project procedures as well as more detail on technology.
   • Please note that when you are scheduled to attend in-class for readings, that you should make every effort to arrive on-time, allowing for delays that may occur in accessing and moving through the building because of infection-control and contact-tracing measures in place for COVID-19.
   • These sessions will be strictly limited to a 45-minute duration, after which the room will be emptied for 15 minutes.
   • Please also note that masks will be worn in the classroom, by the instructor and students, except when performance (singing, playing a wind instrument) requires otherwise and only then when strict physical distancing has been achieved.

9. In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, the grading scheme will not change. Assignments and Projects will retain their due dates, and in-person reading sessions will be replaced with virtual ones.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Work Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>W 9 Sept</td>
<td>01. Welcome to Composition 1.</td>
<td>Virtual Meeting (Small Group Discussion)</td>
<td>ASN 1 due Fri 11 Sept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M 14 Sept</td>
<td>02. Texture.</td>
<td>No Meeting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>W 16 Sept</td>
<td>Virtual Meeting (Discussion)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>M 21 Sept</td>
<td>03. Melody Writing.</td>
<td>In-class and virtual reading sessions - Asn 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>W 23 Sept</td>
<td>In-class and virtual reading sessions - Asn 2</td>
<td>No meeting. Individual Project Lessons optional.</td>
<td>ASN 2 due Fri 2 Oct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>M 28 Sept</td>
<td>Virtual Meeting (Discussion)</td>
<td>No meeting. Individual Project Lessons optional.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>W 30 Sept</td>
<td>ASN 2 due Fri 2 Oct</td>
<td>No Meeting. Individual Project Lessons optional.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>M 5 Oct</td>
<td>In-class and virtual reading sessions - Asn 3</td>
<td>No Meeting. Individual Project Lessons optional.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>W 7 Oct</td>
<td>In-class and virtual reading sessions - Asn 3</td>
<td>No Meeting. Thanksgiving Holiday.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>W 14 Oct</td>
<td>In-class and virtual reading sessions - Asn 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>M 19 Oct</td>
<td>Virtual Meeting (Discussion)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>M 26 Oct</td>
<td>05. Rhythm.</td>
<td>In-class and virtual reading sessions - Asn 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>W 28 Oct</td>
<td>In-class and virtual reading sessions - Asn 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>M 9</td>
<td>05. Rhythm (cont’d).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>W 11</td>
<td>Virtual Meeting (Discussion)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>M 16</td>
<td>No Meeting. Individual Project Lessons optional.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>W 18</td>
<td>In-class and virtual reading sessions - Asn 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>M 23</td>
<td>In-class and virtual reading sessions - Asn 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>W 25</td>
<td>Virtual Meeting (Discussion)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>M 30</td>
<td>No Meeting. Individual Project Lessons optional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>W 2</td>
<td>Asn 4 due Wed 11 Nov</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>M 7</td>
<td>Asn 5 due Wed 25 Nov</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>W 9</td>
<td>Final Projects Due</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1. This column refers specifically to lesson modules on the OWL site in order to provide, at a glance, an organization of your online study. You are not required to study these modules only during the class meeting times, and you need not limit yourself to study on the listed dates. The first 'day' of each new topic is the deadline for completing online modules and the associated quizzes.

2. The online calendar and announcements will specify your group membership for various activities. Note that your group membership will change over the course of the term.

3. Depending on how things progress during the term, I may add a sixth 'Topic' to specifically address particular pieces of repertoire that I feel might be helpful. These online modules will be considered "Bonus" modules for the purposes of grading.
Appendix 1: Virtual Meetings.

I. Online etiquette and responsibility

Some components of this course involve synchronous online interactions (Zoom meetings). To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honour the following rules of etiquette:

- Use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet)
- “Arrive” to class on time
- Ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of discussions in the event that a class discussion deals with sensitive or personal material
- To minimize background noise, kindly mute your microphone for the entire class until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise
- Unless invited by your instructor, do not share your screen in the meeting
- Be prepared to turn your video camera off at the instructor’s request if the internet connection becomes unstable

The course instructor will act as moderator for the class and will deal with any questions from participants. To participate please consider the following:

- If you wish to speak, select the blue “raise hand” function and wait for the instructor to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question.
- Kindly remember to unmute your microphone and turn on your video camera before speaking.
- Self-identify when speaking.
- Kindly remember to select the “raise hand” function again to lower your hand, mute your mic and turn off your video camera after speaking (unless directed otherwise).

General considerations of “netiquette”:

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.
- Be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and composers whose work you are discussing.
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment.

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of Zoom-bombing a class or of other serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

Also note that the expectations of and requirements for courteous and respectful online behaviour hold for meetings that will be arranged to collaborate on group work without the instructor’s presence. Please report any indiscretions or abuses to the instructor or, if necessary, to appropriate authorities.
II. Recording of Online Meetings.

The online meetings led by the instructor in this course are not for delivery of content and therefore will not be recorded. If this changes, the instructor will explicitly ask for each individual's consent before proceeding to record the meeting. *Students are not allowed to record online meetings.* If a student requires a recording as part of an approved accommodation, the instructor will provide the recording, after notifying all participants and providing them with options should they wish not to be recorded.

Virtual (and in-person) reading sessions, in small groups, may be recorded for the purpose of preparing portions of assignment submissions. Be sure that all participants agree to the recording of any meeting or portion thereof before proceeding.

Any recordings made are for course use only and may **not** be distributed through any public channel under any circumstances.
Appendix 2. Readings and Recordings.

The requirements listed below are not meant to create a barrier to participation for any student. Please contact the instructor if you are concerned about any of these requirements, and help will be provided and/or accommodations made.

1. Almost all assignments and projects in the course will require students to provide recordings in which they and their classmates participate as performers. This may take several forms:
   a. Recordings made in-class by the instructor during in-person reading sessions
   b. Recordings (of soloists) made during online meetings using Zoom or other online conference tools.
   c. Multi-tracked recordings using whatever tools are available to the student.

2. This course is not a course in recording technology or in performance, so the recording will not be judged for its qualities as a recording, but as a representation of the ideas in the compositions and composition exercises they represent. The requirement for a recording is merely to assess whether the student has engaged in the reading process for the purposes of completing the assignment or project.

To give you an idea, I would be entirely fine with a recording made with something like the Voice Memo function on an iPhone, or Google Keep, or Sony Audio Recorder, or other equivalents on other devices. I do not expect anyone to go out and buy devices that they do not already own.

3. Recordings in-class will be made by the instructor using classroom technology, and circulated to participating students using OWL’s Dropbox feature.

4. Please note that online conferencing tools (Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, etc.) may be used to organize recordings, but present latency issues for ensemble performance and are therefore only feasible for recordings of solo pieces, unless the ensemble parts are recorded separately and merged in a video editor.

5. Multi-track recordings for small ensemble pieces can be created using software (Digital Audio Workstation (DAW)) owned by the student, or downloaded for free (cp. Audacity), by creating a bed track including one part (with or without clicks) and then layering other parts on top of it.

6. Sharing of audio files can be achieved through Google Drive or OneDrive.

7. There are many free online options for converting audio files from one format to another to achieve compatibility if that becomes an issue.

8. Given the degree of file-sharing necessary for these activities, and that you may be testing out various kinds of software, it is crucial that you have good software for virus-scanning and firewall protections on your device. Backing up all of your files regularly is also advisable.

9. The recordings should not be excessively doctored through the addition of any digital effects for the purposes of this class. Again, this is not a course in digital music production or any other aspect of recording.

10. The instructor does not profess to be an expert in recording technology: This will be a learning opportunity for all of us, and I expect the results to be mixed and for students to learn procedures from one another. If you want courses that focus on recording techniques, there are several offered in the DWFOM.