Western University
Don Wright Faculty of Music

MU9533b/9633b Electroacoustic Composition and Performance, 2020

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: Mondays 10:30 am – 12:30 pm; Wednesday 10:30-11:30 am
Tutorials: Jeff Lupker, the CEARP TA, will be available for weekly tutorials, Time TBA
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 enrol 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
Phone: 661-2111 ext. 85335
Email: pfrehner@uwo.ca
Office hours: Mon., Wed.
12:30-1:30 or by appt.

Studio Assistant: Jeff Lupker, jplupker@uwo.ca
Learning Outcomes
Upon completion of the course students can expect to have:

• Further developed their compositional and improvisational skills through writing works and structured improvisations 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 music studio.
• 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 performance of musical compositions and collaborative improvisations while incorporating the hardware and software resources of CEARP Studio C. In the first half of the semester technical studies and creative sketches will be assigned on a weekly basis. Following this period students will work on larger projects, as described below.

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 through discussion during class time. 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:

• Presentations and discussions of creative work in a group composition lesson setting.
• Live performance and improvisation
• Discussion of any assigned readings or listenings
• listening to, analyzing and discussing recent electro-acoustic compositions by established composers as well as other types of audio artwork such as installations, sonic sculptures, etc…
• Composer Study Presentation: see below
• demonstrations by both the instructor and students on the use of various audio hardware devices and software applications
• Occasional private composition lessons. These would replace regular class time.
Composer Study Presentation
Each student will prepare one Composer Study oral presentation. This presentation will focus on the 1-3 works by a single composer who has worked extensively in the electroacoustic genre. These presentations should last approximately 40-45 minutes in duration. Further details about these presentations will be given in class.

Composition Project
The final project will be a composition scored for 1+ performer(s) and electronics with duration of between 6-8 minutes. Exact details regarding this project will be established through in-class discussion. This composition will be performed in the year-end concert.

Collaborative Structured Improvisation
Students will work together on a collaborative structured improvisation. This improvisation will be presented in class. Following this, it will be determined whether this improvisation will also be presented in the final concert.

Studio Time
Each student will be able to reserve 5 hours studio time per week through the online CEARP calendar on the OWL site. Students may have extra studio time on a first-come, first-serve basis, provided that the studio was previously unreserved. Studio time may be reserved no more than 1 week ahead of time.

Year-End Concert
The final concert will take place on Tuesday, March 31, 2020 at 6:00 pm in Paul Davenport Theatre. Students will perform/present their compositions during this concert. Students will be responsible for promoting this event. In addition, each student is expected to assist in the setup, sound check, dress rehearsal and striking the stage after the concert. These activities will take up the entire day from 8:00 am until approximately 10 pm.

Evaluation

Assignments, Preparation: Due dates TBA 20%
Composer Study Presentation: Feb. 24, 26 25%
Collaborative Improvisation: due March 11, 2020 15%
Final Composition Project: due March 18*, ** 33%
Participation: completing any assigned listenings and readings, practical exercises, in-class discussion 7%
N.B. Students will prepare their Final Composition Project for a premiere performance in the year-end concert on March 31, 2020. This performance will comprise part of the grade for the Final Composition Project.

**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**

**Suggested Texts**


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

ChucK tutorials: http://chuck.cs.princeton.edu/doc/


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.
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.

Statement on Accommodation for Medical Illness
The Graduate Program in Music recognizes that a student’s ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by physical or mental illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The Graduate Program in Music further recognizes that physical or mental illness situations are deeply personal, and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. 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), not to the course instructor.

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.

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 https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.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 Health and Wellness**
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 [https://www.uwo.ca/health/crisis.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/crisis.html).