



# MUC 1101C: Music Composition I Syllabus

University of Central Florida  
School of Performing Arts

**Updated 22 Sep to reflect  
Hurricane Irma schedule  
changes**

Instructor: Dr. David MacDonald  
Email: David.MacDonald@ucf.edu  
Class Meetings: M/W, 10:30–11:20am  
Office: PAC M230  
Office Hours: By Appointment  
Term: Fall 2017

## Description

The course explores some of the most fundamental concepts in composing original and creative concert music. Students will listen to contemporary concert music, practice writing short études, and present three short, original compositions over the course of the semester.

## Objectives

- develop analytical listening skills
- define the basic motivic elements of a composition
- produce high-quality printed scores and parts
- practice skills associated with arranging and presenting performances of one's music, including speaking and writing about it
- begin building a portfolio of original compositions

## Course Prerequisites

- MUT 1121 - Music Theory and Musicianship I
- MUT 1122 - Music Theory and Musicianship II

Students must carry at least a B average through these two core theory courses.

## Course Meeting Format and Schedule

This course is divided into three units.

- Unit 1: Tonality
  - Class Meetings: Aug. 21, 23, 28, 30
  - Lessons: Sept. 5–19
  - *Project due: Sept. 21 by 5pm*
  - Project readings (**PAC M120**): Sept. 25, 27
- Unit 2: Motivic Development
  - Class Meetings: Oct. 2, 4, 9, 11
  - Lessons: Oct. 16–19
  - *Project due: Oct. 20 by 5pm*
  - Project readings (**PAC M120**): Oct. 23, 25
- Unit 3: Rhythm and Meter
  - Class Meetings: Oct. 30, Nov. 1, 6, 8
  - Lessons: Nov. 13–22
  - *Project due: Nov. 26 by noon* - Note: This is the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend!
  - Project readings (**PAC M120**): Nov. 27, 29
- Listening Exam (Final examination period)
  - Monday, 4 Dec., 10:00am

During the periods marked “lessons”, we will not meet as a full class. Instead, students will schedule individual 30-minute lessons with the instructor. Project readings will be rough sight-reading sessions of student compositions. Students *must* be in attendance to *listen to* and *perform* one another’s works.

## Required Course Materials

### Text

- individual reading and listening assignments, posted or linked in Webcourses

### Other materials

- **Notebook of blank staff paper and pencil:** Do not use staff paper that includes pre-printed clefs, barlines, instrument names, tablature lines, etc. Do not use a pen.
- **USB flash drive:** We will sometimes be working on the computers in the classroom. You will need to save your work to your own storage.

### Supplementary materials

The following are not required, but may prove useful:

- **An orchestration text:** We will not be dealing directly with orchestration in the class, but a basic understanding of instruments and voice types will prove useful. If you intend to study orchestration at UCF, the current textbook is Samuel Adler’s *The Study of Orchestration*, but smaller references would also be acceptable for our purposes.
- New music listening and information sources:
  - [NewMusicBox](#): Features interviews, essays, and news about new music.
  - [Meet the Composer](#): Podcast featuring interviews with living composers about their music. There are some great playlists here

as well.

## Grading

In general, subjective assessments will be made by the instructor regarding preparation, performance competency, class participation, and attendance. The semester grade will be weighted by points.

Grades	
50	attendance and participation
5 each	études, exercises, discussions, and lessons
15	listening exam
10 each	concerts
50	Composition 1
50	Composition 2
50	Composition 3

- **Attendance and participation:** Attendance and class participation is expected, and will be taken by sign-in sheet. The attendance grade will be proportional to the number of class meetings and reading sessions the student attends, allowing **two** unexcused absences only. Students will not be excused from lessons. Because members of the class will rely on one another, reading sessions will only be excused for university sanctioned travel or documented medical or family emergency, and only if the instructor is notified as soon as possible of the conflict.
- **Études, exercises, discussions, and lessons:** Small composition assignments, written/in-class discussions, and other exercises will be assigned at various points in the term. Each student will meet for an individual lesson with the instructor one to two times in preparation for each composition assignment. Some particularly large assignments may be double the usual weight. These will be clearly indicated in the assignment specification or rubric.
- **Listening Exam:** Various listening activities will be assigned throughout the semester. Some will have discussion boards attached, others will be presented in class. All of these may be included on a listening identification exam at the end of the semester.
- **Concerts:** Students must attend at least two concerts featuring new music and write a brief summary of their experience.

## Communication

Please be sure to check Webcourses notifications as well as your UCF email address on a regular basis for information and announcements about the course.

## Important Message for students receiving financial aid! Please read!

All faculty members are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the discussion assignment on Webcourses by the end of the day (11:59pm) on Friday of week 1. Failure to do so will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

## Course Accessibility Statement

It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning in this class. If anyone believes the design of this course poses barriers to effectively participating and/or demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me (with or without a Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation letter) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. During our discussion, I may suggest the possibility/necessity of your contacting SAS (Ferrell Commons 185; 407-823-2371; sas@ucf.edu) to talk about academic accommodations. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk at least one week prior to the need for any modifications.

## UCF Creed

UCF faculty support the UCF Creed. Integrity - practicing and defending academic and personal honesty - is the first tenet of the UCF Creed. This is in part a reflection of the second tenet, Scholarship: - I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of membership in the UCF community. - Course assignments and tests are designed to have educational value; the process of preparing for and completing these exercises will help improve your skills and knowledge. Material presented to satisfy course requirements is therefore expected to be the result of your own original scholarly efforts.

Plagiarism and cheating - presenting another's ideas, arguments, words or images as your own, using unauthorized material, or giving or accepting unauthorized help on assignments or tests - contradict the educational value of these exercises. Students who attempt to obtain unearned academic credentials that do not reflect their skills and knowledge can also undermine the value of the UCF degrees earned by their more honest peers.

## Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Central Florida considers the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff to be a strength and critical to its educational mission. UCF expects every member of the university community to contribute to an inclusive and respectful culture for all in its classrooms, work environments, and at campus events. Dimensions of diversity can include sex, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, intellectual and physical ability, sexual orientation, income, faith and non-faith perspectives, socio-economic class, political ideology, education, primary language, family status, military experience, cognitive style, and communication style. The individual intersection of these experiences and characteristics must be valued in our community.

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at [www.shield.ucf.edu](http://www.shield.ucf.edu) and <http://cares.sdes.ucf.edu/>.

If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement, please notify the instructor as soon as possible and/or contact Student Accessibility Services.

Grade Scale	
A	93 - 100
A-	90 - 92
B+	87 - 89
B	83 - 86
B-	80 - 82
C+	77 - 79
C	73 - 76
C-	70 - 72
D	60 - 69
F	0 - 59

**This syllabus is subject to change. All students will be notified promptly when a change is made.**