



“Do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the wise; seek what they sought.” – Matsuo Bashō

**College of Arts and Humanities, School of Performing Arts, Department of Music**  
**Counterpoint: MUT5445, 3 Credit Hours**

Instructor: Dr. William Ayers, [william.ayers@ucf.edu](mailto:william.ayers@ucf.edu), 407.823.5350

Instructor Office: Building 119, M222

Instructor Office Hours: Posted on office door. Available by appointment.

Classroom: Building 119, M261

Class Hours: TR, 4:30 PM–5:45 PM

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

**Required Materials**

Staff paper and pencils

**Course Description**

In this course we will study sixteenth-century modal counterpoint (as found in the sacred vocal polyphony of Palestrina, Lassus, and Victoria) and its function in the eighteenth century as a technical study (for composers such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Haydn). We will also examine nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-century approaches to counterpoint and fugue and apply our knowledge of these practices in analyses and technical exercises.

**Course Objectives**

Outcomes include the ability to produce basic counterpoint in the sixteenth-century style, to analyze contrapuntal music written in the eighteenth century, and to produce modern compositions based on newer contrapuntal methods from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.

**Course Prerequisites**

Students must complete the undergraduate Music Theory and Musicianship sequence before taking Counterpoint. Any student who is enrolled in both Music Theory and Musicianship and Counterpoint should come talk to me immediately to determine a course of action.



## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### **Assignments/Quizzes**

Written assignments will be given over the course of the semester and must be submitted at the beginning of the following class meeting unless otherwise specified. Late assignments will not be accepted without appropriate documentation for illness listed under the descriptions for excused absences. Failure to attend class does not excuse late assignments. If a student does not attend class, they must submit the assignment to the instructor before the class in which it is due. Additionally, it is expected that all multi-page assignments be stapled or paper-clipped together. The instructor will not be held responsible for pages lost because they are separated from the rest of an assignment. Quizzes may also be given during class periods and will be counted as assignment grades.

### **Projects**

Two equally weighted projects will be assigned during the semester, one toward the middle of the course and the other during the final weeks of class. There will be no exams in this course, so the projects will serve as tests of contrapuntal facility. Projects will include a significant writing component.

### **Grading**

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Assignments/Quizzes: 60%

Projects: 40%

93–100	=	A
90–92	=	A–
87–89	=	B+
83–86	=	B
80–82	=	B–
77–79	=	C+
73–76	=	C
70–72	=	C–
67–69	=	D+
63–66	=	D
60–62	=	D–
00–59	=	F



## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Attendance**

Absences will be excused only if they are supported by proper documentation. Students are allowed unexcused absences without penalty up to the number of class periods in a standard week. For each subsequent absence, the student's final grade will drop one increment. (For example, a final grade of A- would become B+.) Late arrivals are also unacceptable, as they disturb the class environment. Three unexcused tardies will be equal to one unexcused absence. Tardiness is defined as more than five minutes late from the scheduled start time of class. In all cases, it is the student's responsibility to find out what was covered in class. Excused absences include: illness (documented by a letter from a doctor), religious observance (with arrangements made with the instructor prior to the absence), personal leave of absence (death or serious illness in the family), or professional leave of absence (professional gig or school-related trip with supporting documentation). Students who represent the university in an authorized event or activity and who are unable to meet a course deadline due to a conflict with that event must provide the instructor with documentation in advance to arrange a make-up. No penalty will be applied.

### **Academic Integrity**

All assignments and exams must be completed individually. Work submitted as your own should not be done in collaboration with any other person, neither should it use material borrowed from any other source unless the source is legitimately acknowledged. Any violation of the University of Central Florida Rules of Conduct (<http://osc.sdes.ucf.edu/process/roc>) will result in a record of the infraction and a zero grade for the work in question. Further violations may result in a failing grade for the course or expulsion. No materials created for any other course (or previous iteration of this course) may be submitted for credit. Students repeating the course are required to choose new paper topics that are different from those studied in previous attempts at the course.

### **Webcourses**

Messages and an updated list of assignments will be posted on Webcourses (<https://webcourses.ucf.edu/>). It is each student's responsibility to make sure that he or she is correctly registered for the class and that her or his e-mail address is correct in the system.

### **Technology**

The use of electronic devices is not permitted during class. Notes should be taken with pencil on staff paper. Electronic devices will only be allowed in the case of a special need or disability. Some assignments may require the use of a notation software (Sibelius/Finale). If the student needs assistance with this software, he or she should contact the instructor directly.



## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Disability Accommodation**

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss accessibility needs. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Accessibility Services (<https://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/>) before requesting accommodations from the professor.

### **Deployed Active Duty Military Students**

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

### **Campus Safety**

Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise during class, everyone needs to work together. Students should be aware of their surroundings and familiar with some basic safety and security concepts. In case of an emergency, dial 911 for assistance. Every UCF classroom contains an emergency procedure guide posted on a wall near the door. Students should make a note of the guide's physical location and review the online version ([http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency\\_guide.html](http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency_guide.html)). Students should know the evacuation routes from each of their classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency. If there is a medical emergency during class, students may need to access a first-aid kit or AED (Automated External Defibrillator). Note the locations given on the UCF website (<http://www.ehs.ucf.edu/workplacesafety.html>). To stay informed about emergency situations, students can sign up to receive UCF text alerts on the UCF website. Students with special needs related to emergency situations should speak with their instructors outside of class.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

<b>Date/Holidays</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Week 1: January 6–10	Melodic Writing
Week 2: January 13–17	Two-Voice First Species Counterpoint
<b>MLK Day: January 20</b> Week 3: January 21–24	Two-Voice Second Species Counterpoint
Week 4: January 27–31	Two-Voice Third Species Counterpoint
Week 5: February 3–7	Two-Voice Fourth Species Counterpoint
Week 6: February 10–14	Bach Inventions
Week 7: February 17–21	Eighteenth-Century Fugues
Week 8: February 24–28	Bach Fugue Analysis
Week 9: March 2–6	Bach Fugue Analysis
<b>Spring Break: March 9–13</b>	
Week 10: March 16–20	Nineteenth-Century Fugues
Week 11: March 23–27	Twentieth-Century Fugues
Week 12: March 30–April 3	Modern Fugal Composition
Week 13: April 6–10	Modern Fugal Composition
Week 14: April 13–17	Individual Project
<b>Final Project Due: Tuesday, April 21</b>	

\*Syllabus content and schedule are subject to change.