

## **MUSC-1270-001 Introduction to Electronic Musicmaking**

meets Mondays / Wednesdays, 1:45 - 3:15 pm

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prospectus: revised April 9, 2022

### **Course description and level**

Exploration of composition, style, and technique in electronic music, with an emphasis on the creation of new works in a variety of popular and experimental genres, and an eye towards broader issues of creative practice. We'll study field recording, audio editing, rhythm/beatmaking, sampling, sound synthesis, and form/songwriting, making music that engages with technical and creative challenges relevant to each approach. We'll analyze related repertoire by contemporary artists, learn the acoustical, musical, and technological fundamentals underlying key techniques, share and discuss our compositional work, and reflect on principles of creative practice. There are no prerequisites for the course.

### **Class structure for Fall 2022**

- *In-person activities*
  - Class meetings will be used for group discussion of course repertoire and creative assignments, and for student-driven questions about asynchronously provided materials including readings and video demonstrations.
- *Out-of-class activities*
  - Instructional materials disseminated via Canvas
    - Short readings including analysis of musical repertoire, explanation of acoustical, musical, and compositional principles relevant to assigned creative projects, and discussions of creative strategy.
    - Brief videos demonstrating relevant electronic music compositional technique.
    - Audio files or online resources for all musical repertoire discussed in the course.
  - Asynchronous participation
    - Canvas discussion assignments will invite detailed consideration of musical repertoire; these assignments will typically be due immediately prior to a class meeting where we can continue and broaden the conversation in-person.
- *Schedule and workload*
  - The course will mostly run in cycles of two weeks. Topics for each cycle include field recording, composition with audio, rhythm and beatmaking, sampling, sound synthesis and timbre composition, and form and songwriting.
    - In the first week of each cycle, students will complete readings, screen demonstration videos, and listen to course repertoire in preparation for in-class discussion and Q&A, with discussion focused on the listening assignments. Canvas discussion assignments completed before each class meeting will serve as springboards for conversations during meeting times.
    - In the second week of each cycle, students complete a short creative project, then write a short reflection about their experiences. During class meetings, we'll listen to each student project, and engage in group discussion and critique.

## Outline of assignments and assessments

- *Types of assignments & assessments and grading valuation*
  - 6 composition projects, 70% of course grade (11.66% each)
    - short electronic music compositions exploring a variety of techniques and creative prompts
  - 6 reflection assignments, 12% of course grade (2% each)
    - 1-2 page, questionnaire-driven essays reflecting on the creative process for completed projects
  - 9 discussion assignments, 18% of course grade (2% each)
    - 1-2 paragraph posts to a Canvas discussion thread responding to specific prompts, oriented towards collaborative understanding of specific features of course repertoire and concepts
- *Summary schedule of meetings & assignments*
  - August 31: course introduction
  - September 7: acoustics and recording
  - September 12: digital audio
    - discussion assignment 1 due: on Hildegard Westerkamp *Kits Beach Soundwalk*
  - September 14: audio editing
    - discussion assignment 2 due: on Asha Tamirisa *CUT*
  - September 19: project 1 review
    - creative project 1 due
  - September 21: project 1 review continued
    - reflection assignment 1 due
  - September 26: audio composition
    - no assignment: Rosh Hashanah
  - September 28: audio composition continued
    - discussion assignment 3 due: on Annette Vande Gorne *Bois*
  - October 3: project 2 review
    - creative assignment 2 due: audio composition
  - October 5: project 2 review continued
    - no assignment: Yom Kippur
  - October 10: rhythmic composition
    - reflection assignment 2 due
  - October 12: rhythmic composition continued
    - discussion assignment 4 due: polyrhythm / nonmetric rhythm / microtiming examples
  - October 17: project 3 review
    - creative assignment 3 due: rhythmic composition
  - October 19: project 3 review continued
    - reflection assignment 3 due
  - October 24: sampling composition
    - discussion assignment 5 due: sampling and reinvention
  - October 26: sampling composition continued
    - discussion assignment 6 due: on Shiva Feshareki *Composition no. 3*
  - October 31: project 4 review
    - creative assignment 4 due: sampling composition
  - November 2: project 4 review continued
    - reflection assignment 4 due
  - November 7: timbre composition
    - discussion assignment 7: on FRKTL *Excision After Love Collapses*
  - November 9: timbre composition
    - discussion assignment 8: repertoire strategies for timbral focus and evolution
  - November 14: project 5 review

- creative assignment 5 due: timbre composition
- November 16: project 5 review continued
  - reflection assignment 5 due
- November 21: form & songwriting
  - no assignment
- November 28: form & songwriting continued
  - no assignment
- November 30: mastering
  - discussion assignment 9: repertoire strategies for form
- December 5: project 6 review
  - creative assignment 6 due: form
- December 7: project 6 review continued
  - reflection assignment 6 due
- December 12: reflections on creative practice
  - no assignment

### **Essential course policies**

- *Required books, equipment, or special items to engage in class*
  - All reading, listening, and screening materials will be supplied through Canvas. There are no required textbook or other media purchases for the course.
  - Students will need access to computers with Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) software in order to complete creative projects. Course demonstrations (asynchronously provided videos and synchronous examples presented through screen sharing) will use Apple Logic software. iMac workstations with Apple Logic installed are available for student use in Lerner Center 201, and in the Vitale Digital Media Lab in Van Pelt Library.