

## Module Descriptor

<b>Module Code</b>	EEMT12
<b>Module Name</b>	Contemporary Composition 2: Practice
<b>ECTS Weighting<sup>1</sup></b>	5 ECTS
<b>Semester taught</b>	Semester 2
<b>Module Coordinator/s</b>	DR. ANN CLEARE
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>This module is intended for those wishing to concentrate on original composition - writing for conventional instruments, newly-invented instruments, their potential combination with electronics, and creating performance contexts for this work.</p>
<b>Module Aims</b>	<p><b>AIMS</b></p> <p>The module examines advanced techniques in instrumental composition and composition that combines traditional and newer media. Emphasis is placed on critically analysing pitch, harmonic, timbral, rhythmic, and notational techniques current today to enable the student to write critically informed, original music of a high standard.</p> <p>Students are also introduced to the principles of writing for orchestral instruments and practical and aesthetic considerations within ensemble/orchestral contexts.</p>
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p><b>On successful completion of the module, students will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• have developed an understanding of compositional techniques and formal approaches as demonstrated in some key works by twentieth and twenty-first century composers,</li><li>• have an ability to integrate, adapt, and utilise the above techniques into their own musical language</li><li>• be able to notate harmonic, rhythmic, and textural progressions and patterns to a high standard in engraving software</li><li>• have gained orchestration skills which allow them to develop their own approach to timbre/instrumental colour</li><li>• create critically informed, original music combining acoustic instrumentation and electronics;</li></ul>

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- have been encouraged to discover and develop the potential of their own creative voice by applying these principles and techniques in their compositions

## Module Content

### MODULE CONTENT

#### **Week 1: Introduction to Composition**

performance contexts/instrumentation; principles across styles, such as pre-composition, process, structure, form; methods of scoring

#### **Week 2: Parameters Overview & Introduction to Orchestration**

melody; harmony; rhythm; dynamics; timbre; texture; introduction to orchestration

#### **Week 3: Melody/Line & Woodwind Writing**

creating a motif (musical idea); analysing contours: introduction to Melodyne; register; phrasing; articulation; introduction to woodwind writing

#### **Week 4: Harmony & String Writing**

approaches to building chords and homophony; consonance and dissonance; analysing harmonic and inharmonic spectrums: introduction to Spear; voice-leading; introduction to string writing

#### **Week 5: Rhythm & Percussion Writing**

Composing a core rhythmic cell and counter-rhythmic cell; pattern processes; additive rhythm; introduction to percussion writing

#### **Week 6: Texture & Brass Writing**

preparation for half-semester assignment: polyphony; micropolyphony; orchestration techniques related to density, register, dynamics, and timbre; creating electronic textures; combining acoustic & electronic textures; introduction to brass writing

Reading Week, March 8th: NO CLASS

#### **Week 7: Form 1 & Ensemble Writing**

introduction to non-traditional forms; composing a theme; process & techniques for developing material; strophic form; composing for mixed ensemble; circulate details of Portfolio Exercise 4

#### **Week 8: Form 2 & Orchestral Writing**

counterpoint in contemporary music; creating contrasting themes/material; techniques for variation and contrast; sectional forms; introduction to vocal writing and text-setting; circulate details of Portfolio Exercise 5

#### **Week 9: Individual Tutorials**

Feedback on Portfolio Exercises and Half-Semester Assignment

#### **Week 10: The Extending Field of Music & Instruments**

composing for unconventional/newly-invented instruments and environments; developing new performance practices; creating notational systems;

composing with electronics; notating electronic sound; drafting advice for final piece; guidelines on presenting scores & parts; how to create parts in Sibelius

### **Week 11: Individual Tutorials**

preparation for final piece

### **INSTRUMENTAL/ORCHESTRATION RESOURCES**

*Study of Orchestration*, Samuel Adler - an introduction to all orchestral instruments

#### **Woodwind Playing:**

- *The Techniques of Flute Playing*, Carin Levine: <https://www.baerenreiter.com/en/shop/product/details/BVK1595/>
- *The Techniques of Oboe Playing*, Peter Veale
- Heather Roche's clarinet blog: <https://heatherroche.net>
- *The Techniques of Saxophone Playing*, Marcus Weiss
- *The Techniques of Bassoon Playing*, Pascal Gallois

#### **Brass Playing:**

Sadly, there are not any publications for brass playing that I know of, but if you google "extended techniques/timbral playing for brass instruments", you should find some scattered blog entries and video tutorials on various development that musicians have done with this

#### **Percussion:**

*How to write for percussion: a comprehensive guide to percussion composition.*  
Samuel Solomon

#### **Piano:**

Again, there is not any main guide to contemporary piano playing that I know of, but there are plenty of scattered resources on the internet for this if you google it.

Piano Harmonics: <http://www.pianoharmonics.com/techniques-and-notation/>

#### **Guitar:**

*The Techniques of Guitar Playing*, Josel, Seth F. / Tsao, Ming

<https://www.baerenreiter.com/en/shop/product/details/BVK2243/>

**Harp:** [http://composingforharp.com/?page\\_id=214](http://composingforharp.com/?page_id=214)

#### **String Playing:**

An introduction to string harmonics here:

<http://www.musicalobservations.com/publications/harmonics.html>

Violin playing: *The Techniques of Violin Playing = Die Spieltechnik der Violine*, Irvine Arditti

Double Bass Multiphonics:

<http://haakonthelein.com/multiphonics/uploads/files/4%20Multiphonics/Multiphonics%20on%20the%20Double%20Bass.pdf>

**Voice:**

*The 21st-century voice : contemporary and traditional extra-normal voice*, [Michael Edward Edgerton](#): LM 4.92 EDG

## Teaching and Learning Methods

### METHODS OF TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

There are taught lectures where repertoire will be analysed, discussed, and put into practice in class. Critical assessment and feedback on weekly work will be provided on a continuous basis. There is also an individual tutorial in preparation for composing a new work.

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussion and activities, prepare weekly assignments and a half-semester assignment, and compose a final piece which engages with ideas introduced during the module

## Assessment Details

### METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

- Enthusiastic Class Participation (10%)
- Half-Semester Assignment: Orchestration (track provided) for a choice of woodwind/brass/strings/percussion/keyboards (acoustic) ensemble, demonstrating the application of orchestrational and instrumentation ideas introduced in the module so far. Due: tbc (20%)
- Short Compositional Exercises, submitted weekly, to be compiled and submitted as a portfolio. Due: tbc (20%)
- A Composition of approximately 5-6 minutes in duration, for three instruments (to be decided) with pre-recorded electronics. This piece must demonstrate compositional techniques and approaches introduced during the module. The composition will be workshopped and recorded

by professional musicians on Friday, May 3rd. Preliminary score and parts due at 1pm, Friday April 26th. Final score, parts, and recording (including revisions from rehearsals/recording process). Due: tbc (50%)

### Contact Hours

### Contact hours:

22 hours: lectures/workshops (Fridays 2-4pm)  
8 hours: optional refresher theory tutorials (Fridays, 4.15-5pm)  
2 short feedback tutorials during the semester  
Drop in Office hours on Thursdays  
Self-study: approximately 70 hours

### Recommended Reading List

### INDICATIVE RESOURCES

Listening and reading materials will be assigned on a weekly basis. As preparation for the module, students should listen to as much contemporary music as possible. The following are good starting points and examples of works we will analyse in class:

- Mark André, *...auf... III* for orchestra
- Luciano Berio, *Sequenza III* for female voice
- Pierluigi Billone, *Legno. Edre* for solo bassoon
- Rick Burkhardt, *Great Hymn of Thanksgiving* for three speaking percussionists
- Gloria Coates, *String Quartet no. 9*
- Chaya Czernowin, *The Quiet* for orchestra
- Natasha Diels, *Bahnhof* for voice and electronics
- Ashley Fure, *something to hunt* for septet
- Gérard Grisey, *Partiels* for large ensemble
- Andrew Hamilton, *Everything is Ridiculous* for Chamber Choir
- Cat Hope, *Cruel and Usual* for String Quartet and bass amplifiers
- Clara Iannotta, *Intent on resurrection.. spring or some such thing* for large ensemble
- Kristian Ireland, *Clearing* for string quartet
- Helmut Lachenmann, *Guero* for solo piano and *Got Lost* for voice and piano
- Liza Lim, *Invisibility* for solo cello

- György Ligeti, *Lux Aeterna* for chamber choir
- Catherine Lamb, *tone/noise (emergence patterns)* for viola ensemble
- Michelle Lou, *HoneyDripper* for trombone and hard-wired electronics
- Alvin Lucier, *I am sitting in a room* for voice and electromagnetic tape
- Michael Maierhof, *Splitting 4, (16 readymades)* for percussion and CD-Player
- Luigi Nono, *post-praeludium-per-donau* for tuba and electronics
- Jessie Marino, *Rot Blau* for two performers
- Timothy McCormack, *Body Matter* for bassoon
- Marianthi Papalexandri-Alexandri, *Untitled VI* for vocal ensemble and sound objects
- Mauricio Pauly, *Sky Destroys Dog* for electric guitar
- Éliane Radigue, *Trilogie de la Mort* for fixed media
- Steve Reich, *Pendulum Music* for suspended microphones
- Kaija Saariaho, *Io* for ensemble and electronics
- Rebecca Saunders, *Vermillion* for trio
- Salvatore Sciarrino, *Let me die before I wake* for solo Bb clarinet
- Giacinto Scelsi, *Four pieces for orchestra*
- Mathias Spahlinger, *Furioso* for large ensemble
- James Tenney, *Having Never Written A Note For Percussion*
- Anna Thorvaldsdottir, *In the Light of Air* for ensemble and fixed media
- Galina Ustvolskaya, *Composition No. 2 Dies Irae* for eight double basses, piano and wooden cube
- Iannis Xenakis, *Metastasis* for orchestra

#### Module Pre-requisite

#### PREREQUISITE MUSICIANSHIP LEVEL

Grade 4 theory standard of musicianship or equivalent knowledge. Tutorials are provided as part of Semester 1's module to enable all students to reach the required theory level for Semester 2's module.

## Module Evaluation

## EVALUATION

The CAPSL survey is used but feedback is usually also freely given by students