

MUS 349R: Composition - EcoMusic

Spring 2024

Course Details

Lessons: Weekly 75-minute paired lessons; Day/time TBD based on student and faculty schedules; Meet in BRB 330

Seminar: Tuesdays 2:30-3:45pm in BRB 307

Office Hours: Available by appointment

Your Instructor

Dr. Katherine Young

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Course Objectives

To develop students' compositional skills and practices, through applied creative projects, analysis, listening, discussion, and event production, in order to foster students' growth as musicians, creative and critical thinkers, and artist-citizens.

During this course, students will:

- Compose original work.
- Produce a professional score and/or audio-video materials of this work.
- Articulate and analyze compositional ideas in assigned writings and class discussion.
- Participate in production of end-of-the semester Composition Showcase.

Course Description

In this course, student composers create original works. Throughout the semester, you will work on at least one composition project designed in conversation with your instructor. Participation in the production of the end-of-the-semester Composition Showcase is also a significant aspect of this course.

This semester's theme is **Eco Music**. A broad term, Eco Music can encompass music from any style or genre, can use a wide range of processes, and can take many different forms. Many indigenous cultures hold deep relationship with the more-than-human world, and the musical expressions reflect this relationship. Some Eco Music is best listened to in [headphones](#); some Eco Music is [designed](#) for the [concert hall](#); and some Eco Music [happens outdoors](#). Some Eco Music is *about* ecological or environmental themes. Examples include Stevie Wonder's album [The Secret Life of Plants](#) (1979); Vivaldi's [The Four Seasons](#) ([pub. 1725](#)); and Annea Lockwood's [A Sound Map of the Hudson River](#) (1982-1989). Some Eco Music contends with our human relationship to the planet Earth through *how* the music is made. Such approaches include [hardware hacking](#) as a form of recycling / repurposing; [sonifying data from melting icebergs](#); using [electrical impulses from plants](#) to create sounds; or [sun-powered music and sounds](#). In fact, all instruments and sound-making tools, whether acoustic or electronic, use natural resources in their construction. This includes the wood from the maple tree used to make a bassoon, as well as the fossil fuels and metals of our speakers and phones. Furthermore, as humans, we are part of the so-called natural world. So, then, is all music Eco Music? How is your music Eco Music? What is your relationship to nature and ecosystemic thinking?

We will ask these other questions in relation to reading and listening assignments during the first four weeks of the semester. With these provocations and examples in mind, you will each design a piece of concert music, electronic music, or a sound installation. These works will be presented on the end-of-semester Composition Showcase.

In addition to weekly lessons, both sections of the course weekly for seminar discussions and presentations. We will welcome several guest artists during these sessions. One important anchor of the class will be the **CompFest 2024: Ecologies of Sound**, February 8-11, 2024. We will welcome Yarn/Wire and Annea Lockwood to campus for these concerts, lectures, workshops, and master classes.

Concert Attendance and Special Guests

Concerts and some other required class activities will take place outside of your lesson or our normal Tuesday 2:30-3:45pm seminar time. Experiencing live music and interacting with guest musicians is an enriching and significant aspect of this course and your creative development. Students will be required to attend four concerts / events (including Comp Showcase) during the semester that meet outside of regular class time. Additionally, to accommodate some out-of-town guests, we may shift seminar to Thursdays 2:30-3:45pm. See the Course Schedule for specific dates and details.

NOTE: All details are subject to change at faculty discretion. Please check Canvas site regularly for updates.

Accessibility & Resources

Your success in this class is important to me! We all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. All information will be held in the strictest confidence. Emory University complies with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and offers accommodations to students with disabilities.

For more information, contact the **Office of Accessibility Services** at (404) 727-9877 or accessibility@emory.edu. Additional information is available at the [OAS website](#). The **Writing Center, Tutoring Center, Academic Advising Center, and Office for Undergraduate Education (OUE)** are other on-campus resources.

Emory's Non-Discrimination Policy

Emory University's [non-discrimination policy states](#), "Pursuant to the University's commitment to a fair and open campus environment and in accordance with federal law, Emory cannot and will not tolerate discrimination against or harassment of any individual or group based upon race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, gender, genetic information, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran's status, or any factor that is a prohibited consideration under applicable law."

If students need resources, information, counsel, or mediation around the topic of discrimination, or if they would like to learn more about compliance training, they should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Inclusion Director, Carol Flowers: caflowe@emory.edu; tel: 404-727- 9867. To report concerns around the topic of diversity and bias, students should visit the following website:

http://www.emory.edu/CAMPUS_LIFE/sis/bias_incident_protocol/form.html.

Integrity & Respect

The responsibility for maintaining a standard of unimpeachable honor in all academic work falls upon every individual who is a part of Emory University. Students who violate the Honor Code may be subject to a written mark on their record, failure of the course, suspension, permanent exclusion, or a combination of these and other sanctions. The Honor Code may be reviewed online at:

<http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>

If we are going to trust each other enough to make music together, it is also very significant that all members of our class community demonstrate consistently respectful behavior and language in all class meetings and posted content.

Land Acknowledgement Practice

Emory's Officially Adopted Land Acknowledgement:

"Emory University acknowledges the Muscogee (Creek) people who lived, worked, produced knowledge on, and nurtured the land where Emory's Oxford and Atlanta campuses are now located. In 1821, fifteen years before Emory's founding, the Muscogee were forced to relinquish this land. We recognize the sustained oppression, land dispossession, and involuntary removals of the Muscogee and Cherokee peoples from Georgia and the Southeast. Emory seeks to honor the Muscogee Nation and other Indigenous caretakers of this land by humbly seeking knowledge of their histories and committing to respectful stewardship of the land."

It is always a meaningful act to reflect on the land on which we work and live. It is also crucial to acknowledge the complicated histories of why and how we are where we are. These are multiple and different for each of us, but as participants in this institution, we now share a history, too.

As we develop our personal musical practices this semester in relation to our course themes of EcoMusic, I encourage each of you to reflect on these histories and land acknowledgement practices and consider how you could participate.

<https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/nae/land-acknowledgement/>

Course Materials

- **Notation Software:** Composition majors will work with notation software during their studies. It may be worthwhile to purchase either Sibelius, Finale, or Dorico. Students also work with free software like MuseScore or LillyPond. If it is possible to purchase software early in your course work, you will have the opportunity to develop notation proficiency in at least one professional notation software.
- **Audio Editing Software:** Composition majors will utilize DAWs (Digital Audio Workstations) in various projects and classes. We work with students using a variety of software, including free options like Audacity (basic 2-track editing) or Reaper (advanced multitrack and powerful plugins), as well as commercial DAWs like ProTools, Logic, Ableton, Studio One, Audition, etc.
- **Recording Equipment:** Composition students will need to use a recording device from time to time. A phone may be acceptable, but handheld recorders (Zoom H4n/H5/H6 or others) are flexible and best for remote, field, and documentation recording. A microphone, audio interface, and laptop are excellent for studio / home recording. Please check with us before making any big purchases! The Music department and library have handheld recorders, microphones, and interfaces available for check out.

Expectations, Evaluation & Grading

- **Compose!** Dedicate time each week to your compositional work. Consistent and sustained writing / making is essential to developing your skills this semester.
- **Communicate.** If you have questions, technical difficulties, or any concerns related to the course, please contact me as soon as possible. Email is best, and I will respond promptly. If you would like to meet outside of lesson times, contact me for office hour options.
- **Participate.** Consistent attendance and engaged participation are the foundation of this course. Check the Canvas site regularly for announcements and updates. Come prepared to your lessons and seminar meetings and actively participate. Of course, life happens. Please communicate with us if you are struggling with your coursework; with timely and open communication, we can work with you to navigate unforeseen issues that might emerge.

EXPECTATIONS FOR EACH AREA OF COURSEWORK:

*This is a very self-directed course. Plan to spend about **4 hours each week outside** of class composing and do research related to this course.*

1. LESSONS

Expectations: (1) Attend all lesson meetings. If you get sick or have another excused absence it is up to you to reschedule in advance. (2) Bring new musical work or research to each lesson. (3) Maintain a Composition Journal throughout the semester and complete required entries. (4) Demonstrate willingness to take musical risks, try new strategies, and take ownership of your creative practice. You will be given a Complete / Incomplete grade after each lesson to let you know how you are doing.

2. SEMINAR

Expectations: (1) Consistently attend scheduled seminar meetings (0-2 excused absences). (2) Thoughtfully prepare assigned materials or presentations. (3) Participate meaningfully in discussions in class and on Canvas.

3. OTHER EVENTS

Expectations: (1) Attend 3 outside concert events throughout the semester (see Course Schedule on Canvas). (2) Participate meaningfully in related discussions and activities in class and on Canvas.

NOTE: If you are unable to attend an evening concert or workshop because of work or other coursework, you may identify a different concert or event to attend. It is up to you to propose a substitution event at least two weeks in advance of an event listed on the syllabus. Email me with information about your conflict and what concert you intend to attend instead.

4. SHOWCASE PRODUCTION

Expectations: (1) Participate in planning and production (assume and fulfill a concert production role). (2) Attend and participate in concert event on Wednesday, Nov. 29.

5. FINAL PROJECT

Expectations: (1) Compose and complete at least one new work or work of equivalent substance. (2) Produce relevant materials using proper notation and/or audio techniques (score, audio/video file). (3) Present or perform the work (if possible).

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Each of the four areas of coursework above will be evaluated as Excellent / Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory.

- Excellent = Meets ALL stated expectations.
- Satisfactory = Meets MOST stated expectations.
- Unsatisfactory = Consistently does NOT meet stated expectations.

GRADING SCHEME:

To earn an A, students will receive an Excellent evaluation in all 5 areas of coursework.

To earn an A-, students will receive Excellent evaluations in 4 of the 5 areas of coursework and Satisfactory in 1.

To earn a B+, students will receive Excellent evaluations in 3 of the 5 areas of coursework and Satisfactory in 2.

To earn a B, students will receive Excellent evaluations in 2 of the 5 areas of coursework and Satisfactory evaluation in 3.

To earn a B-, students will receive Excellent evaluations in 1 of the 5 areas of coursework and Satisfactory evaluation in 4.

To earn a C+, students will receive Satisfactory evaluations in all areas.

To earn a C, students will receive Satisfactory evaluations in 4 areas and Unsatisfactory in 1.

The pattern continues for grades C- and below.