

# **MUSIC 241: Tonal Harmony and Counterpoint**

Spring 2012, TTh 8:30+ (plus two 50-minute sections TBD)

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## **Course Description:**

Music 241 is designed for music majors or those with a serious interest in music. In addition to the two weekly lectures, it includes two 50-minute ear-training sections (or the equivalent) per week. All told, it is likely to be one of your most demanding classes. Proficiency in reading music is required and students are expected to have proficiency on either an instrument or voice. Piano skills are not a prerequisite, but they are extremely helpful. Acquiring some keyboard skills is one of the goals of the class.

Tonal Harmony and Counterpoint is one of the most important courses for the music major. In this class you will learn the technical side of the craft and art of writing and analyzing music according to the tradition of Western tonal music (from circa 1650 to circa 1900). The best way to become truly familiar with any musical tradition is to write music in that style. As a result, most assignments will require you to write music according to strict guidelines presented in class. Assignments will be due every class period.

## **Course Placement:**

You are eligible to take this course if you either:

- Completed Music 112.
- Completed the self-administered music theory placement exam and have been placed here.

Students who have yet to do either of these will need to take the placement exam as soon as possible and discuss their music theory options with me and Professor David Schneider (Music Dept. Chair). The exam is available at:

[www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/music/theoryexam](http://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/music/theoryexam)

## **Section**

In addition to the two class meetings per week, you will be assigned to two 50-minute sections per week taught by Graduate Assistant Julie Moorman. In section, you will primarily work on ear-training, keyboard skills, and singing. Your section grade will be based on attendance and personal improvement, as gauged by periodic quizzes and/or participation. Sections begin in week 2.

You will also meet with me twice during the semester for practicum exams, which will cover much of the material you work on in section.

## Required Course Materials:

**Music paper:** You are required to purchase a **nice stash of music paper**. You may want to purchase some of low quality for working out your assignments and some of high quality for turning them in. You may also copy your music with a computer program, but working with notation software is not an excuse for incorrectly notated music. I also recommend that you purchase a book of manuscript paper for class notes.

**No texts** are required for this course. Throughout the semester, you may wish to refer to the following books on reserve in the music library:

- Tonal Harmony, with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music by Stefan Kostka & Dorothy Payne, 5th edition (McGraw-Hill, 2004);
- Harmony and Voice Leading by Edward Aldwell and Carl Schachter, 3rd edition, (Thomson/Schirmer, 2003);
- Counterpoint in Composition by Felix Saltzer and Carl Schachter (Columbia University Press, 1989)

## Practice Rooms

As an enrolled student in this course, you may obtain a practice room key by visiting Suzette Farnham, Music Department Coordinator, between 9:30 am and 11:30 am during the first two weeks of classes. Obtaining a key requires a \$25 deposit. There are two practice rooms with pianos in Arms that are open and don't require keys, but you are strongly encouraged to obtain a key in order to have access to all rooms.

## Attendance, Late Assignment Policy

It is essential that you learn the material for the course incrementally as the semester progresses. Regular class attendance and punctuality is crucial, and unexcused absences or lateness will adversely affect your grade. If a situation (such as a religious holiday, family emergency, or serious sickness) arises and you will need to miss a class, please contact me as soon as possible so we can work out a reasonable solution; it is not acceptable to let me know after (or during) class.

If you are absent, it is your responsibility to get a copy of the assignment and the contents of the lecture from a classmate. I will be happy to answer specific questions about missed lectures, but not the question "what happened last class?"

You are responsible for turning in *all* assignments on time, even if you have to be absent. Because of the volume of homework in this class, *late assignments will not be accepted, and any assignment not submitted on time will automatically be assigned a 0.*

## Guidelines for Preparing Assignments

Although you may use a piano or another instrument to aid you while composing, do not rely on it to the extent that you are simply improvising your work, as this will make it difficult for you to gain intellectual control. After completing the assignment to the best of your ability, you must check it by playing it several times on the piano and/or singing it with a friend. You should then make adjustments according to your ear and check again. Please make a careful final copy of the assignment before handing it in.

## Laptop, Phone Policy

As notes will most effectively be taken by hand in a manuscript book, laptops and tablets are not permitted during class. Please also refrain from using cell phones for any purpose.

### Grading Breakdown:

Daily Assignments and Quizzes	60%
Final Project	15%
Section	15%
Practicum Exams	10%

NB: The two lowest grades of daily assignments will be dropped in the computation of your final grade.

### **Weekly Class Schedule** (subject to change)

<u>Week 1</u> (Jan 24, 26)	Diagnostic tests, Cantus Firmi, 1 <sup>st</sup> Species counterpoint.
<u>Week 2</u> (Jan 31, Feb 2)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Species. NB: Ear-training sections begin.
<u>Week 3</u> (Feb 7, 9)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Species, cont'd.; Chords and Cadences.
<u>Week 4</u> (Feb 14, 16)	Chords and Cadences, cont'd.; Third Species.
<u>Week 5</u> (Feb 21, 23)	Third Species, cont'd.
<u>Week 6</u> (Feb 28, Mar 1)	Fourth Species. <b>Practicum Exam I.</b>
<u>Week 7</u> (Mar 6, 8)	Four-part writing I.
<u>Week 8</u> (Mar 13, 15)	Four-part writing II (modulation).
<u>SPRING BREAK</u>	Beach.
<u>Week 9</u> (Mar 27, 29)	Four-part writing III (larger spans).
<u>Week 10</u> (Apr 3, 5)	Four-part writing IV (chromatic modulation).
<u>Week 11</u> (Apr 10, 12)	5 <sup>th</sup> species. <b>Practicum Exam II.</b>
<u>Week 12</u> (Apr 17, 19)	Other "4-part" textures. Loose ends.
<u>Week 13</u> (Apr 24, 26)	Final counterpoint project. Mainly individual meetings in place of lecture.
<u>Week 14</u> (May 1, 3)	Final chorale harmonization project. Mainly individual meetings in place of lecture.