Required Text: none

Other materials: Notebook, music paper, pens/pencils and frequent note taking are required. Some printing/photocopying of scores and parts, including binding may be required. (The Composition area resources are available to assist with this, but some projects that exceed our equipment's capability may need to be provided by students at their cost). Storage device: Ideally, an external, reliable, high speed hard drive (USB 3.0 preferred) of 1 TB capacity and 7200 rpm minimum is going to be needed. These can be found for less than $100. Flash/thumb USB storage devices (32 GB or larger recommended) may also be useful for fast, quick data transfer. Laptop computers with music software will be extremely useful and are strongly recommended. The studio now has means of connecting laptops for sharing of screens and playback of audio using HDMI, Displayport, and 1/8" Stereo output jacks. See the instructor asap if your computer uses other connections. The lab computer has Finale and Sibelius (newest versions); Digital Performer 9; Protools 12; Band-in-a-Box; East-West Orchestral Gold library sounds; East-West Composer Cloud; Sibelius Sounds; Garritan Instant Orchestra; iZotope oZone8; and numerous free applications. Many Students may wish to purchase some/all of these.

Prerequisites:
MUTH 6310, MUAS 3200 or permission of instructor. Basic Understanding of the Macintosh Operating System.

Rationale:
The fastest growing compositional field is in the digital media arts. Film music is what first comes to mind for many, but digital gaming, multimedia, and other visual artforms all make frequent use of original music. Composing for visual media requires different approaches, standards, proficiencies, and a far greater flexibility in style and substance than stand- alone concert works. In multimedia works, the musical medium is not always or even frequently, the focus: rather, it must support the visual imagery; expand the emotional and artistic meaning; never overshadow, nor become irrelevant; but in all cases, the goal is that of making the outcome of the media greater than the sum of its parts. Digital music has become, for many reasons, the primary starting - and often final - musical medium in these works, and requires special skills that go beyond those taught in other courses.

This course meets the upper division MUTH requirement for music majors.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Students enrolled in this course will, through readings, viewing and listening assignments, in-class presentations and discussions, and assigned projects accomplish the following learning outcomes:
  • Learn, share, and acquire skill using basic tools of the trade, including Digital Audio Workstations, MIDI, Software Instrument Libraries, Audio Mastering Software, Music Notation Software, and best methods of combining all of the above.
  • Study, discuss, and expand perceptions of how music functions in relation to visual media.
  • Create, listen and critique projects in a seminar setting.

- Improve acoustic and electronic orchestrational skills and improve the sound and quality of MIDI realizations.
- Gain proficiency in writing for, recording, and mixing, live instruments with MIDI.
- Improve ability to compose more quickly and functionally to a specification.
- Study best practices and standards of the profession.
- Complete a series of projects that forms the basis of a professional entry-level portfolio/demo reel suitable for beginning film work, entry into film scoring workshops and programs, and to inspire further original works.

Course Requirements, Expectations, and Policies:
Because of the smaller enrollment of this specialized course, and with the wide range of backgrounds and experiences of students enrolled, the course will take on a seminar-like structure, with students both sharing with, and learning from, each other, the instructor, and guest speakers. It is hoped and expected that each of you will be eager and willing to share your expertise with the class, and all sharing will be respected, appreciated, and valued. Guest speakers are being arranged, and since their schedules are not solidified, no day-by-day class plan will be available. The instructor will share as much information on topics and plans as possible on Canvas. Students will be expected to have an incoming working knowledge of computer operation, file management, and backup procedures for data files. Those without a thorough knowledge of the Macintosh operating system will be expected to self-remedy and learn this within the first week or two. Although file storage is allocated on the lab computer, on which most if not all work will be done, students are required and responsible for making frequent and functional backups of data and projects. It is not a matter of if you will experience data loss, but when. Students assume all and complete responsibility for the data they produce.
Attendance will be taken. Students are responsible for all materials covered and all assignments made during all absences, excused or unexcused, and are responsible for taking the initiative and making the arrangements to do so on their own accord. It is hoped that all of you will help each other out, and that you will all feel free to contact me and set up times as you feel needed. I am very willing to make every effort to provide you all the help reasonably and feasibly possible. Students will be required to sign up for, and use, a minimum of 3-6 hours of studio time per week (more is recommended and usually desired!) It is understood by all that some people may require more studio time than others, based on the widely varying backgrounds and personal software of each student, and so additional lab time may be needed, and students should plan on this if applicable. Students agree to all studio policies as posted on the door. Violation of studio policies may lead to actions as severe as being dropped from the course with no appeal and/or further SMU action, depending on the severity. All settings and equipment must be returned to "studio normal" as defined in class at the end of each session, and students are responsible for keeping the studio clean, sanitary, and orderly. If any equipment or software is not working or missing, please report it immediately to the instructor. We will make every effort to ensure that everything is in working order, but understanding the nature of technology, everyone accepts that if something does go wrong, no liability or recourse is guaranteed by SMU or the instructor.
All project assignments are to be completed at least one hour before the beginning of class on the day they are due, and all students should take notes and be prepared to discuss in detail the materials assigned. For projects, it is understood that sometimes confusion or technical issues may not allow you to complete a project, but evidence of starting and exerting a sincere effort will be strongly considered and counted in grading at the discretion of the instructor. Late assignments (not due to technical issues) will receive a 10% deduction if completed by the following class period and will not be accepted after a week. Although you are encouraged to help each other out in learning the materials, all work is expected to be completed by the individual and all SMU honor code policies apply.

Grading:
This is a lab/project-based course. There are no "exams." Projects will demonstrate proficiency, as will a mock-audition, where each student will compose/create a short demo cue in front of the class as though the class were the director/visual artist in a spotting session. As the successful creation of a demo portfolio and a useful final project (appropriate to each student's specialization) is the primary goal of this course, these will be the primary means of evaluation.
Every attempt will be made to be as clear as possible as to the requirements of each assignment as it is made, but students should ask for clarification if there is any question. Students may at any time meet with the instructor to find out their current grading status. Graduate Students are required to complete projects of a greater scope and depth, as per SMU requirements for dual-listed courses.

Final Grade calculation:
Class Participation, discussion, presentation, demonstrations.. 10%
Exploratory/Lab Projects & Fixed Image Cues.. 25%
Film cues (3) 30%
In-Class Composing Mock Audition 5%
Final Project (Due by Final Exam time 30%

Final Grade Scale: A 95 – 100% A - 90 - 94% B+ 87 – 89% B 84 – 86% B- 80 – 83% C+ 77 – 79% C 74 – 76% C - 70 – 73% D+ 67 – 69% D 64 – 66% D - 60 – 63% < 59% - fail

Because of the goal to gain expertise in applying the studied techniques and topics, all exploratory/technique projects will be graded on a "pass/fail" (full credit or none) based on effort, progress, and mastery as determined by the instructor. If a non-passing grade for a project is given, students will be given specific feedback on what elements were lacking and have one week to redo/revise the project to bring it up to a passing status and full credit will be given. Please work with the instructor in these cases to be sure you are clear about what needs to be done and how you can earn full credit and do not be discouraged if a project does require reworking: this is to be expected in a course of this nature and there is no penalty to your grade if you do successfully complete the work in the given time. Although creativity is encouraged and expected, grading will be based on accomplishing the technical requirements of the assignment (eg. - if you assigned to create 3 digital panning effects, but instead you come up with 4 really cool digital reverb effects, that is really nice, but it doesn't meet the requirements of the assignment.)

SMU Policies:
Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit http://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible, present a DASS Accommodation Letter, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement.

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See "Religious Holidays" under University Policy No. 7.22)

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (See 2018-2019 University Undergraduate Catalogue)

Music Department Policies: All policies included in the Division of Music Handbook and Graduate Supplement apply.