

SYLLABUS

ANALYSIS & COMPOSITION OF COMMERCIAL MUSIC

COURSE TITLE: Analysis & Composition of Commercial Music (Part I)

COURSE NUMBER: MUCP_322_01

SEMESTER: Fall 2006

CREDITS: 1.5

MEETS: Tuesdays, 4:30-5:50, Room TBA

INSTRUCTOR: Chuck Butler

Phone 215-567-0400 (studio)

Phone 856-881-3810 (home)

Email compozr@verizon.net (preferred)

GRADING:

1. Attendance is mandatory for this course. Unexcused absences will lower the student's grade at the instructor's discretion. It is the student's responsibility to obtain class notes and assignment information from another student if a class is missed.
2. Class participation is required.
3. Students will present composition assignments in recorded form (CD) for review in-class. These assignments will be due on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, as determined by the instructor. Assignments are due on the date specified by the instructor; late assignments will be accepted until the end of the semester, but will be reduced in grade depending on the degree of lateness, again at the instructor's discretion.
4. There will be a written final exam, which will be a major factor in the student's grade.
5. There will be a final composition/recording project that will also be a major part of the student's final grade.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

There are no specific materials required for this course, however *students are required to produce audio recordings of their composition assignments*. They may use their own equipment or school facilities (within the guidelines set out by the department), but they must be prepared to create compositions in a DAW application like Digital Performer. Students should have a basic understanding of MIDI before taking this course.

COURSE SUMMARY:

For the purposes of this course, we are defining commercial music as any music created “for hire” as part of a broadcast advertising campaign (radio & TV commercials) or other commercial media (i.e. film, television, & video game soundtracks). Each class will take a “what’s it made of” approach, analyzing the key elements of a particular genre. There are several goals:

1. expose students to key examples of contemporary idioms, chosen for historical, commercial, musical, or technical importance
2. review the compositional and sonic elements that define each example
3. discuss the appeal of each genre to specific segments of the population
4. examine how examples may be applied in contemporary media

Students will participate in in-class aural and written analysis of selected examples. Most weeks, students will be required to compose timed examples in the genre(s) analyzed in class.

Covered genres:

Rock

R&B and Rap

Electronic: Dance, Techno, Sound Design

Country, Folk, and Reggae

New Age, World, Broadway

Novelty

Mainstream Pop

There will be a written final exam covering all material.

Final projects will be assigned as follows:

Students will be required to “pitch” an advertising account. Guidelines will be presented in class as to the type of account and other requirements. Students will compose :30 and :60 versions in of an original jingle in an effort to “win” the client’s business. Students will then “make their pitch” before the class in week 15.

Student’s grades will be calculated as follows: attendance/participation 25%, weekly assignments 25%, mid-term test score 25%, and final project score 25%.