

Composition 1

- MUCO 137a | Fall 2020 -

Tuesday 12-1:50pm Pacific | Zoom

Syllabus Link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KZ6WBOsvAixgNgz7pM3G0Y0IFvpK1jxHAsG1EuUMA0o/edit?usp=sharing>

Instructor:

Dr. Nina C. Young

Office Hours: Fridays 9:30 - 10:45am Pacific, or by appointment with scheduling conflict

<https://usc.zoom.us/j/97384528432>

Zoom Meeting ID: 973 8452 8432

Email: ninayoun@usc.edu

Pronouns: she/her

Zoom Info:

Tuesday 12-1:50pm Pacific

<https://usc.zoom.us/j/94511018483?pwd=RjRSNDJjdENwTWxWVzRGaXE0V2RnUT09>

Meeting ID: 945 1101 8483

Passcode: oliveros

Course Description:

Welcome to composition at USC Thornton! This is the 1st of a 2-semester sequence class that is the combination of a weekly group creative composition seminar and 30-minute individual lab-session lessons. During the seminar, broken up into 8 modules across 2 semesters, we will investigate sound as a medium for artistic expression, focusing on fundamental concepts of unity, contrast, and form as methods of organizing musical works and performances, both fixed and improvised. Together, we will survey methods of creating advanced music/sound compositions that employ acoustic and/or electronic sound production techniques, and approaches to transmitting these ideas to interpreters and audiences through scores and other media. We will investigate different compositional concepts and methodologies through an exploration of readings, writings, score study and analysis, listening, group discussions, performances, guest artist visits, sonic experiments, and compositional prompts. Your private lessons will supplement these sessions with individualized instructions that can focus on the class projects and/or your other compositional projects.

Course Objectives:

- Become an active member of the USC Thornton Composition Community!

- Explore compositional concepts and methodologies outside of your existing practice through readings, score study, media explorations, performance, improvisation, and composition.
- Familiarize oneself with repertoire and trends across 20th and 21st century concert and experimental music practices.
- Better translate musical ideas from your imagination into written notation.
- Gain a deeper fluency in musical thought and a heightened sensitivity to sound.
- Create several new compositions each semester.
- Gain a deeper familiarity with standard orchestral instruments using both idiomatic and experimental notation practices.

Materials:

- Tools for zoom
- DAW for basic audio recording / editing. (Free / Open Source options include Ardour and Audacity)
- Video editing software for basic editing / recording.
- Tools for creating scores and writing down your ideas:
 - Pencils, erases, pens, and other writing implements and accessories for making scores.
 - Manuscript paper: My personal favorites are the spiral-bound Carta Manuscript Paper No.9 and the Archives Spiral-Bound Manuscript Book (12-x16"), both of which you can easily purchase on Amazon.
 - You are encouraged to use notation software (Finale / Sibelius / Lilypond, etc.) for assignments and compositions with more conventional notation. Please remember that these softwares can be limiting if used in a "lazy" way. If you wish to handwrite materials, they must be VERY legible. This is usually the easier way for sketching ideas, graphic scores, and scores with experimental notation. If you wish to digitize experimental and graphic scores I recommend getting familiar with Adobe Illustrator. Finale will be available on certain lab computers (WH118). I am a Finale user, but will not spend class time teaching engraving software (there are lots of tutorials on the web).
- *Audio Culture - Readings in Modern Music*, Revised Edition. Edited by Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner
- A creative and exploratory spirit

Supplemental Materials / Suggested Reading:

- Adler, Samuel. *The Study of Orchestration*, 4th edition. W.W. Norton & Company, 2016.
- Beer, Anna. *Sounds and Sweet Airs*. Oneworld Publications, 2016.
- Cage, John. *Silence: Lectures and Writings*. Wesleyan University Press, 1961.
- Copland, Aaron. *What to Listen for in Music*. Signet Classics, 2002.
- Cox, Christopher and Daniel Warner. *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
- Gould, Elaine. *Behind Bars - The Definitive Guide to Music Notation*, Faber Music
- Griffiths, Paul. *Modern Music and After*, 3rd edition. Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Lucier, Alvin. *Music 109: Notes on Experimental Music*. Wesleyan University Press, 2012.
- Oliveros, Pauline. *Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice*. iUniverse, Inc., 2005.
- Ross, Alex. *The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*. Macmillan, 2007.
- Solomon, Samuel Z. *How to Write for Percussion - a comprehensive guide to percussion composition*.

- Vogelín, Salomé. *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.
- Here is a sampling of softwares you may find useful: Ableton, Audacity, AudioSculpt / Spear, CataRT, LogicPro, Max, Open Music, SuperCollider.

Assessment Measures:

Class Participation (including comp forum)	10%
Weekly Listening / Reading Journals	10%
Curated Listening List Project	10%
Concert Reports (2x)	10%
Composition Project Modules (4x)	40%
Final Project and Streaming Concert	20%

Blackboard will be used to communicate all course information including calendar updates, notes and materials, assignment prompts, etc.. All assignments must be submitted on Blackboard unless otherwise noted. Students must come to class with assignments on their computers and be prepared to present them in class, using screen sharing. If your work is not created on a computer (which not all of it should be), document your work in progress through photos, videos, recordings, etc that can be shared.

Class Participation:

Attendance is mandatory and active participation is essential. Discussions provide a forum for sharing insights with your peers. This is a course about organizing sound: be prepared to share performance, process, and improvise in class. This doesn't mean you need to be a virtuoso, but you should be open to making lots of sounds, with and without other people.

Most weeks you will be working on your composition-in-progress. You are expected to come to class with work-in-progress that will be discussed with your peers. I will often give prompts or class-preparation tasks (score study, sound experiments, readings, etc.) that you will need to complete/bring to the following class. Failure to do so will result in a lowering of your class participation grade. It is your responsibility to check the course's Blackboard website frequently for updates.

You are required to attend and participate in Friday's weekly Composition Forum.

Listening / Reading Journal:

You will have frequent reading and listening assignments to supplement the discussions held in class. You will keep a listening journal as a Google Doc in which you will write a paragraph or two in response to each listening/reading/score selection. You should consider how these selections pertain to the topics addressed in class. This journal can and should be personal and creative. It can include other types of reactions to your experiences – such as sonic experiments, art, audio links, images, etc. Listening and reading assignments are posted at the beginning of the week, assignments are due at the beginning of the subsequent class meeting. You will re-paste the link of the Google Doc (with link sharing turned on) in the assignment prompt for each week.

Curated Listening List:

You will create a curated listening list of 10-12 compositions that follow a theme/thread of your choice, due on **October 23 11:59pm Pacific**. This project will contain A/V files (links to streaming services, legal downloads, or a zipfolder) and an accompanying text that guides the listening experience (think blog post, pitch fork review, etc.). You may format this as a shareable Google Doc or Website that will be accessible to everyone in the class. The text should comment on historical information, personal opinions about the music, and comments about its composition and production techniques. (Minimum of 1 paragraph per piece). All pieces must be listed with bibliographic information (composer, performers, title, date, label - if applicable, etc.). Make sure that your list contains a diverse set of artists and projects. Consider using a more playful, journalistic language, allowing you to share this as a resource both inside and outside of your immediate communities.

Concert reports:

You are required to attend/experience two publicly available music performances during the semester (please attend more!!). These can be live-streaming events, digital broadcasts, etc, at least one of which has to be put on by professional musicians outside of the USC community. You will write a 2-3 page concert reports for each event that describes the music and concert/listening experience. These reports must be submitted on Blackboard by November 4rd, 2017 11:59pm, and must include screenshots of the event, and the evidence of you leaving a public comment in the chat, etc.

When writing these reports, consider addressing some of the following questions: Who performed? Which pieces were performed, and why were the selected/curated as such? How was the concert broadcast? Where was the music performed? Did the space have an effect on the performance? What is a conventional way of performing these pieces? Is the music possible in a traditional live performance setting? How did it differ? What kind of recording and dissemination techniques were used? How did the musicians / producers allow the community to interact during the performance? Was it effective? How would you describe the music? What was the instrumentation of each piece? Did it include any other elements (multimedia, choreography, etc.)? If so, how did they enhance the experience (or not)? What was the general form of each piece? Can you give a description of the texture, rhythm, dynamics, registers, or harmonic language? Which moments were the most striking? Did you like/dislike any of the pieces? Why? Was this a familiar experience or a new one? How did the music make you feel? Did it incite an emotional reaction?

Composition Project Modules

You will create four composition etudes / pieces during the course of the semester, following composition prompts. Details on these assignments will be updated throughout the semester. You are expected to turn in beautiful, cared-for scores / materials / AV recordings for these composition assignments.

Final Project and Concert

The final composition project will be create some sort of mash-up / woven variation springing from the project modules. Together with your classmates you will be tasked to work together to curate and produce a 45-min streaming concert experience that incorporates a showcase of your compositions, and engaging MC-ing, etc. You will stream this concert on (a) platform(s) of your collective choosing, and you will invite your friends and family to attend! The concert should air on or before November 20th.

Course Calendar

All instructions, assignments, readings, and essential information will be on the Blackboard website. Check this site regularly to stay updated on the course schedule. Note: all due date times are listed in Pacific.

Class Schedule and Topics

*Subject to Change, Please check back often for schedule updates.

MODULE 01: Objects Lost & Found, Unpitched Percussion

Class 01: 08.18.2020: Intro and Welcome (sort of, although we have mostly already met). Sharing of "songs".

Class 02: 08.25.2020: Found Object Show and Tell.

Class 03: 09.01.2020: Discussion and Analysis. Work-in-progress.

Class 04: 09.08.2020: In-class group critique of Module 01 projects. Module 02 intro.

MODULE 02: Ephemera, Layers, Formation, and Disintegration

Class 05: 09.15.2020: Guest Artist Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti - presentation on Extended String Techniques and Wandelweiser.

Class 06: 09.23.2020: Discussion and Analysis. Work-in-progress.

Class 07: 09.30.2020: In-class group critique of Module 02 projects.

MODULE 03: Noise, Silence, and Erasure

Class 08: 10.07.2020: What is Silence? Types of Noise. Filtering.

Class 09: 10.14.2020: In-class group critique of Module 03 projects.

MODULE 04: Music Technologies and the art they inspire - ratios, pens, strads, pedals, synths, and smartphones

Class 10: 10.21.2020: Guest Artist: Ashley Jackson - harp clinic.

Class 11: 10.28.2020: Lecture, discussion, works-in-progress.

Class 12: 11.04.2020: Deadline for short harp pieces. Organization for final project and class streaming concert.

Class 13: 11.11.2020: Guest Artist Ashley Jackson reads short harp compositions

Private Lesson Schedule:

30-minute private lessons will be offered on Tuesdays. My virtual office will be open from 3:30-6:30pm. Please arrive 5-minutes before your prescribed time, and wait in the waiting room until admitted. All materials for the lessons MUST be submitted via email to me by 9am on Tuesday morning.

Course Policies:

Classroom expectations:

All students are expected to participate in class discussions, and are expected to respect the opinions and statements of their classmates during discussions and classroom activities.

Attendance and Zoom etiquette:

Since I do not rely on a single textbook, but instead draw from various sources (some of which are unpublished) and rely on in-class creations, it is essential that you attend class regularly. Excessive absences will be noted and will affect your final grade, both directly (class participation grade) and indirectly (you won't know what you're doing in the assignments and projects). This is a fun class, show up, learn stuff, and you'll do just fine!

We will be using Zoom for all of our classwork. I expect you to demonstrate your presence and participation by your being on camera in all Zoom sessions. If you will be unable to keep your camera on during the Zoom session, please contact me prior to the class session to discuss exceptions, otherwise you will be marked down for participation.

Please make sure your Zoom system is enabled for stereo Zoom.

Synchronous session recording notice

As required by USC, the synchronous sessions for classes will be recorded and provided to all students asynchronously. This is a useful way to review the materials in class, however, I will emphasize that you will get a better learning experience if you are present in the Zoom sessions to directly ask questions.

Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment

USC has a policy that prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment. Please do not share or otherwise distribute class materials, music scores or recordings produced by me or any students in the conduct of this course without expressed permission.

SCampus Section 11.12(B)

Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been

distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).

USC technology rental program

We realize that attending classes online and completing coursework remotely requires access to technology that not all students possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university's equipment rental program or other assistance. To apply, please [submit an application](#) on the Student Basic Needs portal.

USC Technology Support Links

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

Assignments:

All assignments must be submitted via Blackboard by the due date and time specified. PLEASE FOLLOW ALL ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS, including participation and forum prompts. All files related to your submission should be submitted, preferably as a zip folder. If something is missing, you will be notified and given the opportunity to resubmit, but with a late penalty. All grades are considered final and non-negotiable.

Lessons - materials for private lessons should be delivered by 9am the day of class to save time.

Late Assignments:

Treat the class with respect and do your work. Late assignment submission will be reflected in your grade. Just do the work, even if it isn't perfect - you will learn something! This is art, and you are expanding your compositional toolkit. Make mistakes, this is how you expand. Yay!

Email policy:

I will respond to emails within 72 hours of receipt during the academic semester. Plan accordingly. Do not email the night before about your assignment due date and expect an instant reply; understand that you are not guaranteed a response for three days.

Student Rights and Responsibilities:

- You have a right to a learning environment that supports mental and physical wellness. You have a right to respect.
- You have a right to be assessed and graded fairly.
- You have a right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- You have a right to privacy and confidentiality.
- You have a right to meaningful and equal participation, to self-organize groups to improve your learning environment.
- You have a right to learn in an environment that is welcoming to all people. No student shall be isolated, excluded or diminished in any way.

With these rights come responsibilities:

- You are responsible for taking care of yourself, managing your time, and communicating with the teaching team and with others if things start to feel out of control or overwhelming.
- You are responsible for acting in a way that is worthy of respect and always respectful of others.
- Your experience with this course is directly related to the quality of the energy that you bring to it, and your energy shapes the quality of your peers' experiences.
- You are responsible for creating an inclusive environment and for speaking up when someone is excluded.
- You are responsible for holding yourself accountable to these standards, holding each other to these standards, and holding the teaching team accountable as well.

Personal Pronoun Preference and Names:

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by a name different than what appears on the roster, and by the gender pronouns you use. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b.

Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu> or to the Department of Public Safety <http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety>. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 - 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1(800) 273-8255 - 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours - 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX - (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 - 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 - 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

