MUEN 1139-030 AND 3139-030: Commercial Music Ensemble
Spring 2024
M/W 4:30-5:45

Instructor: James Taylor
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Office: GFA 132
Office Hours: TBA
Class Location: MCKB 424
Credit Hour: 1

Course Description:  
*Instructor Approval Required*

This course is open to all music majors including vocalists and all instrumentalists. This course will focus on influential, popular music of 20th and 21st century music. The students will become adept at participating as an ensemble member and be able to balance and blend individual parts within their groups. Additionally, students may transcribe, rehearse, arrange and perform in an ensemble setting. Optionally, some students may perform off-campus or participate in publicity for the group.

Learning Outcomes:
1. Students will further hone their ability to critically listen to recordings.
2. Students will develop an advanced understanding of recording/production work flows.
3. Students will further develop their understanding of mixing theory.
4. Students will thoroughly understand processing and effects chains.
5. Students will demonstrate their understanding of topics covered through recording/production projects.

SRT Concentration Learning Outcomes:
1. Students will demonstrate experience and expertise in music technology hardware and software for live sound reinforcement, recording, editing, mixing, producing, MIDI sequencing, and notation.
2. Students will demonstrate broad knowledge of the music industry.
3. Students will have developed and honed their skills as musicians and recording artists.
4. Students will demonstrate a working knowledge of various studio and live sound equipment operations.
5. Students will be prepared to pursue careers in the music industry and/or graduate studies in music and sound technology.

Program Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to hear, identify, and work conceptually with the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic elements of music, including sight-singing and analysis.
2. Students will develop and demonstrate comprehensive capabilities in rehearsing and preparing a high-level performance in ensembles.

3. Students will demonstrate proficiency in their applied area by completing projects, preparing performances, creating original content, and mastering skills as appropriate for their field.

4. Students will successfully complete both an academic and area of study capstone project. The academic project will demonstrate written language skills, citations, analysis, musical examples, and organization. The area of study capstone project will demonstrate the applied skills commensurate with the degree track requirements.

5. Students will demonstrate a working knowledge of music history and literature from the Western art tradition, with supporting related studies in non-western traditions, practices, and cultures.

6. Students will demonstrate functional keyboard proficiency including scales, techniques, basic accompanying, and sight reading.

**Required Text and Materials:**

There is no required text for this class, but students must use the sheet music and other materials provided for the class, and bring them to each rehearsal. Aside from amplifiers and a drum set, students are responsible for bringing their own instruments, which must be in good working order. Students must put new strings, reeds, etc. on their instruments one to two weeks prior to the performance. Students must have some form of hearing protection. Foam plugs are not ideal. Either Etymotics or full “Musician’s” custom-molded ear plugs are highly recommended.

**Course Requirements:**

1. In class rehearsals: Rehearsal attendance and participation - as well as preparation for rehearsals - is crucial to the progress of each group leading to a successful performance. Students should learn their respective parts as soon as possible. Students are welcome to see the instructor for additional help during office hours. Students must be tuned up and ready to go, with scores or tabs with them, and a pencil for each rehearsal. Students are expected to also have hearing protection at each rehearsal. If a student is ill, please contact the instructor with as much notice as possible; this will allow the instructor and other students an opportunity to reschedule. A missed Mid-Term or Dress Rehearsal cannot be made up. If a student misses the Dress Rehearsal, the student may either earn a zero or be excluded from the performance and fail the course. **Students who do not participate in the final performance will fail the course.**
2. Outside of class rehearsals: Every student will rehearse outside of class at least twice; once mid-semester and once within 10 days of the performance. Also, every group must rehearse mid-semester and once within 10 days of the performance. If any group does not meet, each of the members will lose credit. Since it may be difficult to get every member together, to receive credit, only most of the members must be present; but not all. Students are encouraged to contact the instructor for approval if a significant number of members are not able to be present. Be sure to notify the TA’s of what students and groups are rehearsing when signing up.

3. Time requirement: Per SFA policy, you are expected to spend at least 2 hours per week, outside of class time, practicing and working on assignments for this course. There will be weeks throughout the semester in which you will need to put slightly more time into your projects for this course. As SRT coursework in the SOM are a hybrid of artistic and technological studies, you will not only be working on projects and assignments but also regularly practicing. You are expected to practice at least 30 minutes every day in addition to the time you devote to course work.

4. Summary: At the end of the semester, students will summarize their experiences over the semester. Students may include their individual parts, the group(s) they were in, the rehearsals and performances, and whatever else was a significant aspect of their experience in this course.

5. Extra opportunities: At the instructor’s discretion, extra opportunities related to this course may take the place of the written assignments or earn extra credit. These may include off-campus performances, publicity, and other opportunities that will be announced throughout the semester. If a student already wishes to participate in those activities, notify the instructor.

**Grading Policy:**
Late Assignments will not be accepted and thus receive a zero barring extenuating circumstances accepted by the university.

**Grade Weighting:**
40% In-class rehearsals  
20% Participation  
30% Main Performance  
10% Performance Assessment

**Grading Scale:**
A: 90-100  
B: 80-89  
C: 70-79  
D: 60-69  
F: 59 & Below

**Course Calendar (Subject to change at the discretion of instruction):**
Per SFA policy, you are expected to spend at least 4 hours per week, outside of class time, practicing and working on assignments for this course. There will be weeks throughout the semester in which you will need to put more time into your projects for this course. You are expected to practice critical listening, techniques, and work on your productions every day.

**Weekly Lessons:**
Topics covered in each lesson will vary from student to student. Below is a tentative calendar of milestones that establishes the standards required for all students enrolled.

Week 1: Syllabus. Introduction to the course and facilities. Auditions
Week 2: Introduction of works. Technical needs
Week 3: Rehearsals
Week 4: Listening Assignment Due. Rehearsals
Week 5: Rehearsals
Week 6: Rehearsals
Week 7: Rehearsals
Week 8: Midterm Performance
Week 9: Rehearsals
Week 10: Rehearsals
Week 11: Rehearsals
Week 12: Rehearsals
Week 13: Dress Rehearsal
Week 14: Tech setup. Sound Check. Performance,
Week 15: Video
Finals Week: TBD
* All dates subject to change by the instructor’s discretion.

**Course Evaluations:**
Your participation in the evaluations of this course are very important and helpful to this class, program, and the university. Near the conclusion of each semester, students in the College of Fine Arts electronically evaluate courses taken with the college. The evaluation is used for a variety of important purposes including:
1. Course and program improvement, planning and accreditation;
2. Instruction evaluation purposes; and
3. Making decisions on faculty tenure, promotion, and retention.

As you evaluate this course, please be thoughtful, thorough, and accurate in completing the evaluation. Please know that the College of Fine Arts is committed to excellence in teaching and continued improvement. Therefore, your participation is crucial.

The course evaluation process has been simplified and is completed electronically through MySFA. Although the instructor will be able to view the names of students who complete the survey, all rating and comments are confidential and anonymous, and will not be available to the instructor until after final grades are posted.

**Attendance Policy:**
Class will begin promptly and on time. Role will be taken at the beginning of class.
Due to the nature of this course, and the SRT field of study, attendance to class, sessions, and labs are crucial to your learning and are thus required. Experience, class interaction, and hands-on activities are just as important to your training and understanding of concepts as is the academic study components of the program. With that being said, you are expected to arrive to class, lab times, and scheduled meetings, prepared and on time. If you arrive late without a valid, University approved excuse, or you did not make prior arrangements with your instructor, you will be marked absent. Additionally, sleeping in class is not acceptable. If you are found to be sleeping in class, you will be marked absent and ask to leave. If you arrive to class and proceed to go to sleep, it is not considered that you attended the class.

You are allotted 1 unexcused absence. Upon receiving a second unexcused absence your grade will be reduced by a full letter grade. Upon receiving a third unexcused absence, your grade will be reduced by another full letter grade in addition to the previous reduction received for the second unexcused absence. Should you accrue 4 unexcused absences, you will automatically fail the course.

Lab Time:
Hands on experience and practice are crucial to your learning and development in music technology and the recording arts. The SRT area has dedicated lab and studio facilities equipped with professional and industry standard technologies that you will very likely not have access to at home. To further your learning and growth, you must continually practice, experiment, and work with these special technologies. In support of this: all SRT majors enrolled in MUT 210-360 are required to attend lab hours for at least two hours per week. Lab hours will be logged and tracked for each student. A lab schedule will be posted on the SRT lab door by the second week of classes. Lab time requirements do not take effect until the 3rd week of the semester.

Should you fail to meet the required lab times more than twice, aka two weeks, each following lab miss will result in you receiving an unexcused absence in your 3-credit hour SRT course. You will always have assignments, projects, and needed practice with the various technologies in our facilities. Naturally, should you have a situation arise that will prevent you from participating in lab times and activities, please contact your instructor.

Personal Electronic Devices:

Cellphones, tablets, and personal electronic communication devices are to be turned off or set to silent while in class. You are here because you wish to pursue studies and/or a career in Sound Recording Technology, the Music Industry, etc. A ringing cellphone can ruin a recording session, distract an artist, interrupt a meeting or disrupt a learning environment. You must learn to be aware of the audible status of your devices. Should you be an individual who continually disrupts class because your device(s) beep, ringing, or otherwise distract this learning environment, you will lose participation points and if the offenses continue, you will be asked to leave the class and will have to meet with the director of the SRT program before being allowed back into class.

Obtaining Help:
If you ever have questions regarding course content, assignments, test, etc., or feel that you require some additional help, please contact me immediately. Please make note of my office hours. If for some reason you are unable to attend my office hours, see me before or after class, or send me an email, to schedule an appointment. My line of communication is always
open to you and I urge you to communicate any issues you may be having that may hinder your progress in this class, program, or university.

**Email and Correspondence:**

Any email correspondences regarding this course, homework, meetings, advisement, etc., should be sent from your SFASU email account. Additionally, the subject title should begin with **MUP 339**. If you have a sensitive matter to discuss with me, please make arrangements to meet with me in person. Although I will make every effort to answer your emails as soon as possible, you should never expect an immediate response to your email. If you ever have an emergency, sensitive topic that needs immediate attention, or a time sensitive matter to be addressed, call my or the school of music office.

**Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Policy 6.1 and 6.6**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 936-468-3004 as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

**Student Academic Dishonesty: Policy 4.1**

Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:  
- using or attempting to use unauthorized materials on any class assignment or exam;  
- falsifying or inventing of any information, including citations, on an assignment; and/or;  
- helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:
- submitting an assignment as one’s own work when it is at least partly the work of another person;  
- submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source; and/or,  
- incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper or presentation without giving the author credit.

**Penalties for Academic Dishonesty**

Penalties may include, but are not limited to reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, re-submission of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university.

**Student Appeals**

A student who wishes to appeal decisions related to academic dishonesty should follow procedures outlined in Academic Appeals by Students (6.3).
Withheld Grades: Policy 5.5

At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic unit head, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F, except as allowed through policy [i.e., Active Military Service (6.14)]. If students register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Student Code of Conduct: Policy 10.4

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program. Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This policy applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the iCare: Early Alert Program at SFA. Information regarding the iCare program is found at [https://www.sfasu.edu/judicial/earlyalert.asp](https://www.sfasu.edu/judicial/earlyalert.asp) or call the office at 936-468-2703.

Classroom Policies:

Our field of study, Sound Recording Technology, is a special field of study and we are fortunate to have such a program here at SFASU. We get to work and learn with specialized, and sometimes very, fragile and expensive equipment. Thus, the SRT program and associated classes have some specialized classroom rules that you may not be accustomed to in other university classes.

1. Wash your hands before entering class. In addition to helping to not spread germs and illness, we will be working on shared computer systems, mixers, and other equipment. Much of the equipment is hard to thoroughly clean and oil build up from your hands can also degrade the equipment. Washing your hands before class is a win-win for everyone and the university’s equipment.

2. Good Hygiene: Unlike a large format lecture class, where your professor is far away from you and only a few students may be in close proximity to you, we will all be working close together. At times, you and I will be side by side learning about materials, components, tools, and techniques used in SRT. For your health and the sake of your colleagues and I, please practice good hygiene.

3. Respect: You should know how to appropriately conduct yourself as a respectful and thoughtful adult. With that being said, demonstrating disrespect toward your colleagues, your instructor, equipment, or this institution will not be tolerated.
   a. Special note: if you ever have hopes of working in the music industry, you will need to know how to get along with all sorts of people(s).

No texting in class.

Respect the equipment: you will be fortunate enough to work with some really special and expensive equipment. Please handle this equipment with the utmost care. Never drop a
microphone. Always be aware of yourself, surroundings, and others while handling the recording equipment.

**SRT Lab Policies:**

1. Only SRT students are allowed in the lab. School of music students are welcome if permission has been given by the director of the SRT program. Non-school of music students are never allowed in the lab without special permission, arrangement, or the presence of an SRT faculty member.
2. Adhere to your schedule times. Show up on time and leave on time. Our space is limited and we must be courteous to one another. Additionally, this is great practice for the real world or sharing studio and artistic spaces.
3. Never load or install programs on the SRT workstations...EVER.
4. Always bring your own headphones to the lab. You will do most of your lab work on headphones however, if no one else is in the lab, you are welcome to use the loudspeakers.
5. Back up your work on your personal thumb drive. Never expect your session to live on the SRT lab machines.
6. Safety! Never touch exposed wires! Some of our equipment is high powered and if it becomes damaged and unnoticed, exposed wires can pose a hazard to you and others. Report any exposed power wires to your instructor immediately. Do not attempt to deal with it yourself. Safety! Your hearing is extremely important. Do not listen to music or recordings at high levels for extended periods of time.

**Mental Health**

SFA values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**
SFASU Counseling Services • [www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices](http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices)
Health and Wellness Hub (corner of E. College and Raguet) • 936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic • [www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp)
Human Services Room 202 • 936-468-1041

**Crisis Resources:**
Burke 24-hour crisis line 1(800) 392-8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741