



# **MOUNTAIN TOP UNIVERSITY**

## **E-Courseware**

**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES,  
MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**Mountain Top University**

Kilometer 12, Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, MFM Prayer City, Ogun State.

PHONE: (+234)8053457707, (+234)7039395024, (+234) 8039505596 EMAIL:

[support@mtu.edu.ng](mailto:support@mtu.edu.ng)

Website: [www.mtu.edu.ng](http://www.mtu.edu.ng).

**Published By:**

**Mountain Top University**



---

# COURSE GUIDE

---



**COURSE TITLE:** **Composition Workshop I**

**COURSE TITLE:** **MUS 309**

**LECTURER:** **Ayo Oluranti (PhD)**



MUS 309 - Composition Workshop by Ayo Oluranti (PhD) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).



---

# COURSE OBJECTIVES

---



## General Introduction

The module introduces composition as both science and art, exploring a range of compositional techniques and procedures that will help the student, as an aspiring composer, evolve his/her creative/compositional voice. While adherence to a musical style or compositional voice is not prescribed, different modern approaches and techniques viz-a-viz generating, transforming, developing and organizing music materials will be introduced. The class approach will therefore explore the gamut of compositional approaches available to the modern composer from tonal to atonal, traditional to experimental, popular to art, repetitive to discontinuous, rhythmic to arrhythmic, etc.

Based on enrollment, students will write for instruments and players in their sub-groups thus, having the opportunity to have their composition projects performed for critical feedback. Students will be assigned compositional exercises and expected to present their works fortnightly. The teaching component of the class includes the basic compositional elements (rhythm, pitch, counterpoint, harmony, timbre et al), musical form, analysis, as well as guided listening, drawing from a broad range of repertoire.

## Course Aims

- Enable students develop creative skills in musical composition
- Expose students to traditional and modern compositional techniques and approaches
- Inculcate in students the different advanced approaches to thinking about composition as science and art.

## Learning Outcome

On completion of the module, student-composers will be able to compose well-structured and coherent works and have a critical understanding of important aesthetic matters relating to music composition.

**CONTENT**

Lecture 1	Introduction and Overview	6
Lecture 2	Components of Composition - Phrases & Periods	7
Lecture 3	Components of Composition - Shape, Form and Structure	8
Lecture 4	Creating Musical Materials - Compositional Process	9
Lecture 5	Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback	10
Lecture 6	Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback	11
Lecture 7	Creating Musical Materials – Repetition & Variation Principles	12
Lecture 8	Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback	13
Lecture 9	Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback	14
Lecture 10	Creating Musical Materials – Expansion by Contrasting Materials	15
Lecture 11	Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback	16
Lecture 12	Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback	17
Lecture 13	Creating Musical Materials – Expansion by Composing with Constraints	18
Lecture 14	Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback	19
Lecture 15	Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback	20



## LECTURE 1 Introduction and Overview

### INTRODUCTION

The lecture starts with an over-arching overview of the module and then introduces music composition as art and science.

### OBJECTIVE

By the end of the class, the student will have a firm understanding of the course content, the expectations for the course and the overall course outcome. The student will be plunged into the arena of thinking of composition as a both an art and a science.

- CLASS DISCUSSION

1. How is music both an art and science?
2. Music composition is described as a mathematical exercise. How so?
3. Where is the intersection of theory and intuition in the music creation process?

- IN-CLASS LISTENING

1. Phil Glass, listen to *Koyaanisqatsi* (youtube)
2. Fryderyk Chopin, listen to Mazurka Opus 6 No. 1 in F# minor
3. Charles Ives, *Unanswered Question*
4. Steve Reich, Clapping Music

- ANALYSIS & IN-CLASS ACTIVITY

Discuss the formal sections of ALL the music played above.

- ASSIGNMENT

Commit to more analytical listening of the music played in class.

## LECTURE 2 Components of Composition - Phrases & Periods

- INTRODUCTION

The lecture introduces the elements of basic musical construction, focusing on phrases and periods as the crucial basis of formal analysis in music.

- CLASS DISCUSSION

Proceeding from the listening list of the previous class - How do sub-phrases combine to form larger phrases, having larger impact as periods? Discuss this in each of the music previously listened to.

- CLASS LISTENING

1. Richard Wagner, Mastersingers – Overture
2. Wolfgang Mozart, *Das Kinderspiel*, KV 598

- ANALYSIS & CLASS ACTIVITY

1. Study the Wagner's Overture to Mastersinger (score to be distributed)
2. Identify and discuss the major sections, outlining the defining phrases and periods.
3. What's the role of text in the Mozart music? How does it account for the phrasal structure?
4. What's the relationship between the music and text in the Mozart?

- ASSIGNMENT

Revise the different structural forms in the art music idiom:

Binary Form, Ternary Form, Rondo, Fugue, Sonata form etc.



## LECTURE 3 Components of Composition - Shape, Form & Structure

- INTRODUCTION

The lecture builds on the previous class, reviews elements of form and structure in music composition, having established the foundation with the phrases and periods as they combine to form larger structures in music.

- OBJECTIVE

At the end of this lecture, students will be able to handle formal analysis, identifying the elements of musical structure.

- CLASS ACTIVITY

1. Listen to Fryderyk Chopin *Mazurka Opus 6 No. 1* in F# minor
2. Study the Chopin's Mazurka (score to be handed out) and analyze: only identify the melodies, sections that repeat, and summarize the structure of the piece.
3. Describe the overall form of the music.
4. Identify the bass, and other motives in Phil Glass, *Koyaanisqatsi*.
5. Write a short melody.

- ASSIGNMENT

1. Revise the following concepts:  
Harmony & Texture, Harmony & Line, Variation & Expansion.
2. Study a short tonal work of your choice:
  - Identify how the themes/materials are developed.
  - Comment on the attendant compositional procedures
3. Study Anton Webern's String Quartet Op. 28:
  - Identify how the serial structure.
  - Comment on the attendant compositional procedures
  - How are the materials developed?

## LECTURE 4 Creating Musical Materials - Compositional Process

- INTRODUCTION

The lecture introduces the concept of composition as a combination of mechanical and intuitional procedures.

- OBJECTIVE

At the end of this lecture, students will be able to apply mechanical procedures in writing a line of music while subjecting the creative process to intuition.

- CLASS DISCUSSION & PRESENTATION

Students are to present briefly the tonal and atonal studied for assignment.

- CLASS ACTIVITY & DISCUSSION

1. Listen to J.S. Bach's Gigue in G (G major Fugue)
2. Listen to Beethoven's Pathetique Sonata Mvt 1
3. Listen Webern's String Quartet, Op.28
4. For each of the music above, do the following:
  - a. What is the overall form? Identify the major sections
  - b. Which parts of the work can be attributed to a mechanical procedure?
  - c. Which parts of the work is a product of the composer's intuition?

- ASSIGNMENT

**Project 1** - Write a tonal 8-bar melody in which you can identify the components that are mechanical realizations and those that are based on intuition.

This is to be completed ready for presentation in the next class.

**Project 2** – Start an atonal 8-bar melody in which you can identify the components that are mechanical realizations and those that are based on intuition.



## LECTURE 5 Project 1 - Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback

- INTRODUCTION

The concept of composition as a combination of mechanical and intuitional procedures is reappraised and re-visited.

- OBJECTIVE

At the end of this lecture, students would have received a critical feedback on their compositional projects through performance and class comments.

- CLASS ACTIVITY

Students compositional assignments are presented, performed and appraised.

- ASSIGNMENT

Complete **Project 2** – Write an atonal 8-bar melody in which you can identify the components that are mechanical realizations and those that are based on intuition. This is to be presented in the next class.

## LECTURE 6 Project 2 - Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback

- INTRODUCTION

The concept of composition as a combination of mechanical and intuitional procedures is reappraised and re-visited in the atonal language.

- OBJECTIVE

At the end of this lecture, students would have received a critical feedback on their compositional projects through performance and class comments.

- CLASS ACTIVITY

Students compositional assignments are presented, performed and appraised.

- ASSIGNMENT

1. Revise Projects 1 & 2
2. Find examples of music based on theme and variation.



MUS 309 - Composition Workshop by Ayo Oluranti (PhD) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

## LECTURE 7 Creating Musical Materials – Expansion by Repetition & Variation Principles

- INTRODUCTION

The lecture introduces the concept of material expansion via the technique of repetition and variations.

- OBJECTIVE

At the end of this lecture, students will be able to employ the technique of repetition, and variation to attain expansion as part of their creative procedure.

- CLASS ACTIVITY

1. Discussion and Analysis:

- a. Phil Glass *Koyaanisqatsi*.
- b. Fryderyk Chopin Mazurka Opus 6 No. 1 in F# minor
- c. William Byrd Sellinger's Round
- d. Mozart 12 Variations on "Ah, vous dirai-je maman", K.265,

2. Building a 4-measure melody in any language and write a 4-measure variation on it.

- ASSIGNMENT

**Project 3:** Expand the class-work into a 16-measure music comprising of a theme and variation. This should be completed and ready for presentation for the next class.

**Project 4:** Write 7 measures of atonal music for any instrument or a combination of instruments using the principle of repetition and variation to bring about expansion.

## LECTURE 8 Project 3 - Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback

- INTRODUCTION

The concept of repetition and variation is rehashed as student projects are performed and evaluated.

- OBJECTIVE

At the end of this lecture, students would have received a critical feedback on their compositional projects through performance and class comments.

- CLASS ACTIVITY

Students compositional assignments are presented, performed and appraised.

- ASSIGNMENT

1. Revise Projects 1, 2 & 3

2. Bring **Project 4**: to completion and ready for presentation in the next class

(Write 7 measures of atonal music for any instrument or a combination of instruments using the principle of repetition and variation to bring about expansion.)



MUS 309 - Composition Workshop by Ayo Oluranti (PhD) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

## LECTURE

### Lecture 9 - Project 4 - Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback

- INTRODUCTION

The concept of repetition and variation is rehashed as student projects are performed and evaluated.

- OBJECTIVE

At the end of this lecture, students would have received a critical feedback on their compositional projects through performance and class comments.

- CLASS ACTIVITY

Students compositional assignments are presented, performed and appraised.

- ASSIGNMENT

1. Revise Projects 1, 2, 3 & 4 based on critical feedback received so far.
2. Listen to a tonal music in which there are sections that are heavily contrasted. Be ready to present your findings in class.

## LECTURE

### Lecture 10 - Creating Musical Materials – Expansion by Contrasting Materials

- INTRODUCTION

The lecture introduces how to create linear expansion or continuity in a composition by using contrasting elements.

- OBJECTIVE

At the end of this lecture, students will have a full comprehension of the technique of linear expansion by the way of contrasting material manipulation.

- CLASS REPORT

Presentation of individual assignment on music with contrasting sections.

- LISTENING & ANALYSIS

The following music shall be played for analysis and discussion

- 1.) György Ligeti, Six Bagatelles
- 2.) Igor Stravinsky, Petrushka

For each music, do the following:

- Identify the main materials
- Identify the contrasting materials

- ASSIGNMENT

**Project 5:** Write a short tonal piece with 3 to 5 distinct sections. Incorporate the use of contrasting materials without compromising coherence. This should be completed and ready for presentation in the next class.

Start **Project 6:** Write an atonal piece that incorporates the principle of repetition and variation, as well as material contrast to bring about expansion.

## LECTURE

### **Lecture 11 - Project 5 - Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback**

- INTRODUCTION

The concept of material contrast is rehashed as student projects are performed and evaluated.

- OBJECTIVE

At the end of this lecture, students would have received a critical feedback on their compositional projects through performance and class comments.

- CLASS ACTIVITY

Students compositional assignments are presented, performed and appraised.

- ASSIGNMENT

Bring **Project 6** to completion and ready for presentation in the next class.

## LECTURE

### **Lecture 12 - Project 6 - Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback**

- INTRODUCTION

The concept of material contrast is rehashed as student projects are performed and evaluated.

- OBJECTIVE

At the end of this lecture, students would have received a critical feedback on their compositional projects through performance and class comments.

- CLASS ACTIVITY

Students compositional assignments are presented, performed and appraised.

- ASSIGNMENT

Revise Projects 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 based on critical feedback received so far.

## Lecture 13 - Creating Musical Materials – Expansion by Composing with Constraints

- INTRODUCTION

The lecture introduces the use of 'compositional rules' as a theoretical part of creating compositional frameworks.

- OBJECTIVE

By the end of the class, the creative palette of the student would have been expanded to accommodate the use of artistic constraints to develop compositional idea.

- CLASS STUDY

The following pieces are to be critically studied in class:

- Akin Euba, Themes from *Chaka*
- Joshua Uzoigwe, *Ukom*
- Ayo Oluranti, Process I
- György Ligeti, Fanfares

For these pieces, do the following:

- 1.) Follow, by analysis, possible compositional rules set up from the onset of the pieces.
- 2.) Establish, through analysis, how these rules were either broken or redefined.

- ASSIGNMENT

**Project 7:** Write a multi-sectional **tonal** piece with 6 to 8 distinct sections. Define creative rules from the beginning of the piece. Endeavour to either break or redefine the rules as the piece evolves. This should be completed and ready for presentation in the next class.

Start **Project 8:** Write an **atonal** piece that incorporates ALL the principles introduced in this course.

## LECTURE 14 Project 7 - Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback

- INTRODUCTION

The establishment of 'compositional rules' that can be subjected to redefinition or eliminated as part of a creative process is rehashed as student projects are performed and evaluated.

- OBJECTIVE

At the end of this lecture, students would be well grounded in applying 'compositional rules' in their creative process. Students will have received a critical feedback on their compositional projects through performance and class comments.

- CLASS ACTIVITY

Students compositional assignments are presented, performed and appraised.

- ASSIGNMENT

Bring **Project 7** to completion and ready for presentation in the next class.

## **LECTURE 15 Project 7 - Presentation, Performance & Critical Feedback**

- INTRODUCTION

The concept articulated in the course are ALL revisited in students' final projects.

- OBJECTIVE

At the end of this lecture, students would have received a critical feedback on their compositional projects through performance and class comments.

- CLASS ACTIVITY

Students compositional assignments are presented, performed and appraised.