

BAIN MUSC 540/(737)
(Advanced) Projects in Computer Music

SYLLABUS

Instructor

Dr. Reginald Bain, Professor
Composition and Theory

Contact Information

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Office Hours: MW 1-2 p.m., or by appointment

Experimental Computer Music Studios (xMUSE)

Studio B (R011)
Studio A (R039)

Course Blackboard Page and Website

Blackboard page: <https://blackboard.sc.edu>
Course website: <http://in.music.sc.edu/fs/bain/vc/musc540/>
Quick access via: reginaldbain.com

Course Description

Directed study in computer music composition or research.

Prerequisites and Permission

MUSC 336 *Introduction to Computer Music* or equivalent music technology experience.
Permission of instructor is required.

Learning Outcomes

Students will typically learn how to:

- Develop an individualized program of creative activity/research in consultation with the instructor
- Work independently in a professional project-studio and/or hybrid home-studio environment
- Compose electronic music using tools like Max, Logic, Pd, Reason, ProTools, etc.
- Perform real-time interactive electro-acoustic music
- Program using specialized musical programming languages and communication protocols
- Program using text-based digital-signal processing and synthesis languages such as Csound, SuperCollider, Chuck, etc.
- Collaborate with other artists: e.g. choreographers, film makers, performers, recording engineers, etc.
- Prepare a composition for presentation in an electronic music concert
- Perform in an electronic music concert
- Produce an electronic music concept
- Produce an album of electronic music
- Develop instructional music software applications
- Create an electronic film score
- Execute a research project in areas of specialization such as algorithmic composition, computer-aided composition, real-time interactive composition/performance, sonification, tuning theory, etc.
- Prepare a research paper/talk for publication/presentation at a professional conference
- Etc.

COURSE MODULES

1. Project Planning
2. Research and Development
3. Project Execution
4. Presentation
5. Final Report

Required Texts, Hardware and Software

To be explored during the project proposal phase and determined at the initial project meeting.

Course Requirements

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Due: *Last day of classes, previous term*

During the previous semester's advisement/open registration period, the student must submit a project proposal to the instructor. The proposal should be submitted as an informal e-mail message (ca. 100-150 words). The instructor will evaluate the student's proposal and let the student know if he/she is a good match for the course. Project acceptance is based on considerations such as the student's major (MUSC 540 is a required course for the B.M. Composition degree), performance in MUSC 336, technical/artistic background, merit of the proposal, the project's appropriateness for execution in USC's computer music facilities or student's home studio, etc. If the project is acceptable the instructor will work with the student to refine the proposal via a brief e-mail exchange. The instructor will provide feedback regarding the feasibility of the project and suggest alternative avenues for exploration as appropriate. When the proposal is finished, the instructor will grant the student permission to register for the course via e-mail.

INITIAL MEETING: PROJECT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Due: *First 2 full weeks of the term*

The student must schedule an initial meeting with the instructor via e-mail. This meeting must take place during the first two full weeks of the term. At this initial meeting, the student and instructor will work together to draft a provisional **project plan** for the semester. The project plan will normally include items such as:

(1) a *research/creative activity statement*, (2) a *list of project goals*, (3) a description of the *project's significance and methodology*, and (4) a *time frame for completion* of the project's components, and (5) a list *deliverable items* that will be submitted at the end of the term (e.g., an audio or video file containing an original composition and/or live performance, a research paper, software, etc.). Over the course of the following week, the student should prepare a formal **project plan document** (typed, double spaced) that includes the 5 sections listed above and e-mail it as an attachment to the instructor. With permission of the instructor, the project plan document may be amended over the course of the term.

OTHER REQUIRED MEETINGS

All students must schedule, and attend, *at least* the following required meetings: (1) an initial project plan development meeting in Weeks 1-2; (2) a midterm project meeting in Weeks 6-9 where end-of-term deliverables are established; (3) a final project meeting where the student presents the finished work to the instructor (in Weeks 12-14). The student should *at least* maintain bi-weekly contact with the instructor via e-mail (e.g., asking questions, providing a brief report of how things are going, a status report re: pending action items, etc.). When the student is ready to share work in progress, or requires one-on-one assistance regarding any time of impasse, the student should request a meeting with the instructor via e-mail. Depending on the semester and project type, attendance at concerts, rehearsals, concerts, group meetings, on-campus lectures, etc. may also be required. So the student will have time during final exam week to fine-tune the project as directed by the instructor, the **final project meeting must take place on or before the last day of classes: Monday, April 24. All work for the course is due by Monday, May 1, at noon.**

*The instructor will remind the student (via e-mail) to schedule the required meetings above.
Once the reminder goes out, it is student's responsibility to setup up the appointment.*

Students must be prepared present completed work at the required meetings.

Failure to follow the guidelines above will be factored into the student's grade.

FINAL PAPER/PROJECT REPORT AND OTHER DELIVERABLES

Due: Monday, May 1, at noon

PROJECT REPORT

Whereas the first half of the term normally focuses on reading, compositional planning/sketching, composing, taking tutorials, programming, research, and the like, the second half of the term normally focuses on the preparation of the presentation phrase of the project. In lieu of a public performance, students composing an electroacoustic composition may submit the completed composition as an audio file along with printed track information and program notes. For all other project types deliverables, and appropriate submission formats for those deliverables, will be established at the midterm project meeting.

All students must submit a *final paper/project report*:

Undergraduate students: 5-8 typed, double-space pages

Graduate students: 7-10 typed, double-spaced pages

The project report should describe the final project in all matters of detail and document the student's creative/technical process over the course of the entire term. Up to 25% of the report may be dedicated to personal assessment and reflection on the learning and/or creative process. Specific criteria for the project report will be established at the midterm project meeting.

INFORMAL JOURNAL

In order to document the creative/technical processes employed in the project, students should keep an informal journal and record entries in it at every work session. The journal will be discussed at each project meeting.

Academic Integrity

All of the work you turn in for this course must be your own. For more information, read the university's Honor Code:

<http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf625.pdf>

It is expected that all students will follow these policies.

Learners with Special Needs

If you are registered with the **Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC)**, be sure I receive a copy of your accommodation letter during the first week of class so I may work with you, and with the SDRC as necessary, to make sure your accommodations are met. For more information, visit <http://www.sa.sc.edu/sds/>, e-mail: sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu; or call 777-6142.

Attendance

This is NOT a traditional class with a traditional number of regular class meetings or weekly lessons. Rather, you are expected to attend 100% of a limited number of scheduled meetings, demos, rehearsals, concerts, etc. As with any directed study, you will typically get as much out of the class as you put into it. Success begins with 100% participation in the required meetings. It is also important that you keep me regularly informed of your artistic and technical progress.

I am here to help you at every step along the way.

Health and Wellness

The School of Music cares about the health, safety and wellbeing of its students, faculty, and staff. This site provides information on a variety of wellness topics to encourage our Gamecock Music Community to embrace and promote self-care:

https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/music/spark_laboratory/music_wellness/index.php

Grading Scale

100-90	A	89-85	B+	84-80	B	79-75	C+	74-70	C	69-65	D+	64-60	D	59-0	F
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Grading Distribution

30%

Class participation and preparedness

- Timely attendance at required meetings
- Prepared for required meetings
- Timely submission of project plan, project plan updates, bi-weekly progress reports, project work, etc.
- Dutiful follow-up on instructor's suggestions
(e.g., recommended reading, listening, tutorials, programming, research, lecture attendance, etc.)

40 %

Final Project

- Goals set forth in the revised project plan are realized
- Quality, quantity, creativity, consistent work ethic, depth, etc. will be taken into account

30%

Project Report

- Meets the requirements for length, format and content described above
- Informal Journal entries were used to reliably recount the trajectory of the project
- Self-reflections document artistic/technical growth over the course of the term