

Sam Houston State University

Graduate Percussion Literature – MUSI 5388

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Objectives:

1. To gain a critical perspective on the development of Western percussion instruments in orchestral, chamber, jazz (drumset and vibraphone), and solo percussion idioms.
2. To delineate the history of compositional styles in percussion solo and ensemble repertoires.
3. To gain a perspective and appreciation of important historical figures (performers and/or ensembles).
4. To gain the ability to critically evaluate the intrinsic value of percussion solo/chamber composition.
5. To gain exposure of world music through research (reading/writing/listening) and performance.

Projects and Writing Assignments:

The instructor, considering the student's interest and knowledge base, will choose topics for one major research paper and one creative project. Both will be based on topics of percussion history/literature covered in the course materials.

There will be various weekly reading, score study, listening, and writing assignments on historical topics, creative endeavors, and composite projects on topics of interest to percussion literature.

A diagnostic assessment will be administered at the beginning of semester. After which, a course of study—including specific assignments—will be established in writing and provided to the student.

Notebook: It is highly recommended that the student compile a notebook with handouts, outlines, and class notes.

Books/Materials (readings selected from the following)

Otte/Lane literature guide — *A Guide to the Development of Percussion in Western Art Music* (to be distributed)

John Lane – Guides to Orchestral Percussion History (to be distributed)

James Blades: *Percussion Instruments and Their History*

Peter Garland: *In Search of Silvestre Revueltas and Americas*

Steven Schick: *The Percussionist's Art*

Percussive Notes (selected articles)

Neuhaus: "Zyklus" – 3.1, 1965, p.6

Michael Rosen: "Survey of Compositions Written for Percussion Ensemble" – 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 1967.

Kyle Gann: *American Music in the Twentieth Century*

NOTE: There may be a variety of supplemental readings selected as the semester progresses, depending on interests/current topics.

Attendance and Grading:

The student will meet with the instructor once per week, or at times appointed at the discretion of the instructor, for discussions and evaluation of assignments. Letter grades will be given for each meeting and will be based on the quality of the work and preparation for discussion. All written assignments will be given a letter grade and averaged with the weekly grade.

The overall final grade is based on the instructor's assessment of the quality of the discussions, written assignments, creative projects, and other materials presented and, ultimately, on the student's mastery of the material.

Class Topics:

History of Percussion in the Orchestra

Objective: To trace the development of percussion in orchestral repertoire from the Baroque through the 20th-Century, citing significant and specific works for each instrument.

Week 1– 2: General Instrumental History and Repertoire from the Baroque through the Romantic Eras

Topics: Timpani, Snare Drum, Accessories, and Keyboard

Reading: Blades p. 188–347

Week 3–4: 20th Century Orchestral Repertoire

Topics: Modern percussion writing beginning with Mahler through the 20th Century.

Reading: Blades p. 412–42

Week 5–6: History of Solo/Chamber Repertoire for Percussion

Objective: To trace the development of percussion in chamber music and the unique development of a percussion-only music in the 20th-Century, citing specific works and composers.

Week 7: First Experimenters

Topics: To trace first experimenters with percussion – futurism, Avant Garde in Europe, WWI (Stravinsky), Chamber Music, Jazz (Green, ragtime, etc.), Early Ethnomusicology, etc...

Week 8: Varese

Week 9: Depression Years

Topics: Early percussion ensemble, American Experimental Tradition: Cage, Cowell, Harrison, Roldan, Varese, Antheil

Week 10: 1940's - Lou Harrison

Topics: Explore the repertoires of the Pacific Coast composers Cage and Harrison.

Week 11-12: John Cage

Week 13: The 1960's/Harry Partch

Week 14: 1970s-Current - Professional Percussion Chamber Groups/Various Movements

Americans with Disabilities Act

Student requests for accommodation must be initiated by the student. A student seeking accommodations should go to the Counseling Center and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in a timely manner.

LINKS TO OTHER SHSU ACADEMIC/UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Academic Dishonesty:

<http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty>

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days:

http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf

Students with Disabilities: http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.pdf