

COUNTERPOINT SYLLABUS

website: hansenmedia.net

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Laptop or other device with the capacity to participate in audio/video remote meetings;
Smart phone or scanner to create an Acrobat file (pdf); Access to a printer.
Course content at <https://hansenmedia.net/courses/counterpoint/>

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will develop an understanding of the principles of polyphony as applied by composers from the 16th through the 21st centuries. Students will develop skills in writing counterpoint in various styles. Through analysis and writing, students will gain a deeper appreciation of the art of counterpoint, and the ability to demonstrate their understanding in performance.

COURSE ACTIVITIES

We will have participatory class sessions discussing and analyzing contrapuntal techniques, distinguishing the unique features of each style, including modal counterpoint in the various species (Fux). Some pieces will be assigned for analysis outside of class, but most compositions will be analyzed as a group. Students will compose brief examples of contrapuntal music from various stylistic periods and share their work with the class.

ATTENDANCE AND GRADING POLICIES

Attendance is required at every class. Participation is evaluated by attendance and engaged discussion in class. The final grade will be computed by averaging these four components, including daily participation in class:

In-class Analysis and Participation:	20%
Assignments:	40%
Invention (10%)	
Canon (10%)	
Quartal Counterpoint (10%)	
Blues Bass lines(10%)	
Tests and Projects	20%
Final Exam:	20%

COURSE OUTLINE (Weekly Topics)

UNIT I: MODAL POLYPHONY IN THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES

- Week 1: Overview of Polyphony and Modes
First Species Counterpoint
- Week 2: Second Species Guidelines
Third Species Guidelines
- Week 3: Fourth Species Guidelines
Two Part Motets and Secular Instrumental Counterpoint
Counterpoint in 3 and 4 Parts
- Week 4: Dance Variations, Motets, Madrigals
Basso Continuo, Figured Bass, Tonality, Chromaticism
Exam 1: Modal Counterpoint

UNIT II: TONAL POLYPHONY IN THE 18 AND 19TH CENTURIES

- Week 5: Continuous Variations: Ground Bass, Chaconne, Passacaglia
18th Century Polyphony, Non-Chord Tones
Chorale Prelude
- Week 6: Bach Two-Part and Three-Part Inventions - Composition 1: Two-Part Invention
Overview of the Fugue, Subjects and Developmental Techniques
Fugue Analysis
- Week 7: The Canon - Composition 2: Two-Part Canon at the Octave
Classical and Romantic Period Polyphony

UNIT III: POLYPHONY IN THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURIES

- Week 8: 20th Century Polyphony
Hindemith, Bartok
Composition 3: Quartal Counterpoint Assignment
- Week 9: 20th Century Popular Styles
Polyphony in Jazz and Blues
Composition 4: 12-Bar Blues Bass Lines
- Week 10: Recent Developments and Technologies
Minimalist Counterpoint
Review

Final Exam: Analysis

RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND REFERENCES

Owen, Harold. *Modal and Tonal Counterpoint*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1992.
ISBN: 0-02-872145-4

Mann, Alfred. *The Study of Counterpoint*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1965. Translation of *Gradus ad Parnassum* by Johann Joseph Fux. ISBN: 0-393-00277-2

Salzer, Felix and Schacter, Carl. *Counterpoint in Composition*. New York: McGraw-Hill), 1969.

Jeppesen, Knud. *Counterpoint: The Polyphonic Vocal Style of the Sixteenth Century*.
Translated by Glen Haydon. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1939.

Benjamin, Thomas. *The Craft of Modal Counterpoint: A Practical Approach*. New York:
Schirmer, 1979.

Morris, Reginald O. *Contrapuntal Technique in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: Oxford
University Press, 1922.