Computer Music II – DIGA 462-01

Spring 2017 – Stetson University – Creative Arts Department

Class Meetings

Monday & Wednesday 12:00 - 1:15pm

Professor's Contact Info

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Office Hours

Monday 1:30 - 3:00pm / Tuesday & Thursday 12:00 - 1:30pm

About the Course

Course Description

From the catalog - A continuation of DIGA 461. Students complete advanced programming and composition projects, while examining important topics in electronic music and sound design. Readings and discussion cover both technical innovations and aesthetic thought related to contemporary research and creative practice in computer music. Prerequisite: DIGA 461.

Professor's notes - As I noted at the beginning of the Fall 2016 term, this course sequence is undergoing a redesign to include more emphasis on electronic music production and hardware. For this second semester in the sequence, you will be given the opportunity and responsibility to design and complete two large projects. We will build on the knowledge we gained in DIGA 461, but the specifics of where we go from here will be largely determined by your interests. The class should function like a learning community, with my role shifting to more of an experienced guide and mentor. This syllabus is designed to provide us with the freedom to explore, but ensure that we set goals and then hold each other accountable for achieving them.

Semester Objectives

Students complete two advanced projects using a variety of software and hardware tools. This course explores topics such as immersive audio, gestural controllers, live performance practices, instrument design, sound installations, and software programming.

Learning Outcomes

By the conclusion of this course, students will enhance their knowledge of multiple software and hardware tools employed by electronic musicians and sound designers.

Students will broaden and deepen their knowledge of common sound synthesis and audio processing techniques used in electronic music and sound design.

Students will also continue to develop their ability to communicate with experts and non-experts about sound synthesis and audio processing techniques.

Students will improve their ability to evaluate their own work and the work of others.

Methods of Learning

Class Meetings

Class meetings will be run primarily like "production meetings". Students will bring work that they have completed since the last meeting, present it for review and critique, and the class will work together to outline goals that must be completed before future class meetings. Although some time during class meetings may be used to accomplish project-related tasks, students should expect to spend significant hours outside of class working on tasks they have been assigned for the group project.

Activities will include: Presentations by students and professor on relevant topics. Professor-directed discussion of overall project goals. In-class conceptual and brainstorming exercises. Peer critiques of in-progress and completed tasks.

Attendance Expectations

Class attendance is mandatory and punctuality is expected. Absences and tardies will be recorded by the professor. ABSENCES ARE CONSIDERED UNEXCUSED BY DEFAULT. Each unexcused absence will impact the student's final course grade in accordance with the grading section that follows.

Students may excuse up to 2 absences for the entire semester by completing a makeup assignment WITHIN ONE WEEK OF THE ABSENCE. If you miss a meeting and the class was recorded or notes were taken, you may excuse the absence by reviewing these materials and submitting a 300-word written response (i.e., not just a summary) to the professor via email. If no recording or notes are available, students must contact the professor within 48 hours to request an alternative assignment.

Major Project Options

You will each be responsible for selecting and pursuing two different large projects from the following list. The specifics of the individual projects will be designed by the student in consultation with the professor and input from peers. You may choose to collaborate on projects with the permission of the professor.

1. *Immersive audio* - Create a 10-minute sound design for presentation as an immersive online video.
2. *Live performance* - Perform a 30-minute live set of original music. Your technical setup must rely heavily (although not exclusively) on Ableton Live and/or Cycling74 Max.
3. *Plug-in design & development* - Design and distribute an original plug-in for Ableton Live or a package for Cycling74 Max.
4. *Music production* - Produce a 4-track EP of original music. Your technical setup must rely heavily (although not exclusively) on Ableton Live and/or Cycling74 Max.
5. *Multi-channel audio* - Create a 10-minute sound design or composition for presentation on four or more speakers.
6. *Gestural controllers* - Analyze the current MPE controller options and draft a white paper advocating for Stetson to purchase one.
7. *Instrument design* - Create your own physical MIDI controller using Arduino and demonstrate its development and use through an online video (or video series).
8. *Data Sonification* - Develop a system for sonifying a specific set of scientific data using Cycling74 Max and other appropriate tools.

Additional Requirements

Public presentation - All projects must have a public presentation before they can be designated complete. For the purposes of these projects, customers, users, listens and views may not come from people enrolled in the class or the professor. You can meet the presentation requirement by choosing one of the following methods:
- Collect written testimonials from 5 users that each exceed 300 words
- Present to 10 paying customers (online or in person)
- Present to 25 non-paying persons in person
- Present to 50 non-paying persons online

Class Participation & Engagement - You will be given an evaluation at the midterm and the final to account for your level of participation during class meetings and engagement with the work we are doing as a class. The midterm grade will serve as a progress report so that you can make improvements. Only the professor's evaluation at the final will be factored into your course grade.

Grading

This course will use a holistic grade agreement, with a rubric that describes your overall contributions. For the purposes of grading, the professor will be the sole judge of whether your project is ready for public presentation or displays adequate progress. Note that "adequate progress" will likely (and necessarily) be different at the midterm and final.

Midterm grades for **project progress** will be based on the following rubric:

- A - Student has made adequate progress on two projects, Reliably met in progress checkpoints
- B - Student has made adequate progress on one project and minimal progress on a second, Reliably met in progress checkpoints
- C - Student has made minimal progress on two projects, Missed minor in progress checkpoints
- D - Student has not identified a second project for this term
- F - Student has not identified any projects they are pursuing this term

Midterm grades for **class participation & engagement** will be based on the following rubric:

- A - Pays attention and makes quality contributions, Synthesized feedback from others
- B - Pays attention and makes general contributions, Responded positively to feedback from others
- C - Pays attention but rarely contributes, Ignored feedback from others, 1 unexcused absence
- D - Rarely pays attention, Responded negatively to feedback from others, 2 unexcused absences
- F - Conduct disturbs or distracts others, 3 unexcused absences

Final grades for the **course** will be based on the following rubric:

- A - Student completed two project presentations, Reliably met in progress checkpoints, Positive contributions to class meetings, Synthesized feedback from peers and professor
- B - Student completed one project presentation and made significant progress on second project, Reliably met in progress checkpoints, General contributions to class meetings, Responded positively to feedback from peers and professor
- C - Student made adequate progress on two projects, Missed minor in progress checkpoints, Minimal contributions to class meetings, Ignored feedback from peers and professor, 3 unexcused absences
- D - Student made adequate progress on only one project, Missed significant in progress checkpoints, Negative contributions to class meetings, Responded negatively to feedback from peers and professor, 4 unexcused absences
- F - Student did not make adequate progress on any projects, Handed in final version without checkpoints, 5 unexcused absences

Important Dates

Participation in the following events is expected as part of your participation in the course. Failure to participate will be handled like an absence, with the same penalties applying. Make up assignments will be impossible in most cases and will be developed at the sole discretion of the professor.

- [Rhinoceros](#) / February 23rd-26th (pick one) in Second Stage
- Senior Exhibition Opening Reception / March 24th @ 6pm in Hand Art Center
- Senior Media Festival / April 27 @ 8pm in Second Stage
- Deiter-Pizzo Concert / April 29th @ 1pm in Feasel Hall

Additional Disclaimers

Academic Honesty

It is expected that each student will read and abide by Stetson University's honor pledge. This means not only that you are expected to abide by the statement yourself, but also that you will not tolerate in others actions that are contrary to the statement. Your presence here means that you are an integral part of the Stetson community that has agreed to be a community of integrity in all matters. Please note that the penalties for breaching this trust can be severe.

Special Needs

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of a course, you should meet with the course instructor to discuss ways to ensure full participation. If disability-related accommodations are necessary, you must register with Academic Success through the Accessibility Services Center located at 209 E. Bert Fish Dr. (386-822-7127; http://www.stetson.edu/administration/academic-success/) and notify the course instructor of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. The student, course instructor and Academic Success will plan how best to coordinate accommodations.

Department Facilities

Students will abide by all current studio and lab policies. Failure to do so may result in the loss of privileges at the discretion of the responsible party. Loss of privileges will not be accepted by the professor as an excuse for incomplete assignments.

Recording

The professor will make frequent use of audio and video recording equipment during class meetings, and deliver those recordings through online methods. These recordings are intended solely to facilitate the pedagogical outcomes of the course. If you are attending class meetings, you will likely be recorded at some point in the semester. By remaining enrolled in this course, you are consenting to this recording. If you are at all concerned, it is your right and responsibility to voice those concerns to the professor so that adaptations can be made.

Sensitivity to Content

While addressing the subject of art (particularly contemporary art) in an academic setting, the professor may occasionally present examples that are deemed offensive by some students. The professor will make every effort to warn students immediately prior to sharing such content. Students that wish to be excused may request alternative assignments without fear of any grade penalty.

Revisions

This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline for the layout of this course. The instructor reserves the right to revise this syllabus should circumstances dictate a need. In the event of such revision, students will be informed of any changes in writing.