Electives in Composition, Business, and Music Theory

Advanced Composition and Arranging for Large Ensembles - Bill Kirchner. For advanced students, this course is oriented to developing a personal style of composition and arranging that goes beyond the usual song forms. It includes sophisticated compositional techniques, writing assignments, an in-class writing project played by the students, and an end-of-semester writing project that is performed by top New York professionals. Also included is analysis of recordings and scores. The focus is on larger ensembles, including analysis of works by Gil Evans, Thad Jones, Bob Brookmeyer, and George Russell. Prerequisite: Theory 2B and Arranging Fundamentals, or equivalent and permission of the instructor. 2 credits

Advanced Ear-Training - Armen Donelian. The focus will be on the harmonic and melodic vocabulary and the Jazz repertoire of the ‘60s and later, including Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea. Topics may include: advanced transcriptions of John Coltrane, Clifford Brown and Bill Evans; composition and dictation of harmonic progressions using Arnold Schoenberg’s Theory of Harmony; atonal sight-singing using Lars Edlund’s Modus Novus; analysis and dictation of the chord voicings of Scriabin, Debussy, Ravel and Bartok. Prerequisite: Completion of Ear Training 2B with a grade of B+ or higher; or placement out of required Ear Training. 2 credits

Audio Engineering Internship - Chris Hoffman. It is beneficial for musicians to have at least a basic understanding of electronics and recording in order to take full advantage of new technology. Students will learn the basic fundamentals of various electronic devices commonly found in today’s recording studios. In the first eight weeks, we will explore cables, microphones, mixing consoles, recording devices, recording media, outboard processing (equalizers, compressors, reverb, etc.), and learn how to connect everything for optimal performance. After this preliminary portion of the class, actual recording sessions and live performances will take place where students will have the opportunity to get real hands-on experience with studio setups, microphone selection and placement, mixing, tracking, and live sound reinforcement. Each student will be required to complete a minimum of three recording sessions and three live performances. 2 credits

Bebop Harmony - Dave Glasser. This class explores Barry Harris’ approach to improvisation through an in-depth understanding of dominant chords and their importance. Through Mr. Harris’ simple but profound approach students discover the many choices available to them within and moving through different tonalities. Material covered includes dominant seventh scales, tri-tone relationships, diminished chords, whole tone scales, augmented chords, and chromaticisms as they occur in moving between major and minor tonalities. Emphasis is on the practical application of these concepts to common Jazz standards. Students are required to bring their instruments for class participation. Prerequisite: Theory 2B or equivalent. 2 credits
Composers’ Forum – Kirk Nurock. This will be a composition seminar in which students work on style-specific compositions from a number of historical periods. Through the 15-week semester students will study and write a fugue, a 19th-century lied (with text), a twelve-tone composition, a composition in the style of Wayne Shorter, and a "minimalist" composition. Representative pieces in each style will be examined closely, as will the compositional techniques, strategies, and syntax that each involves. Since this is a writing-specific course, students will be encouraged to compose for their own ensembles, although there will be opportunities to get some works played in class. Prerequisite: Theory 2B or equivalent. 2 credits

Eyes of the Masters - Philip Ballman (coordinator). Ten guest artists will be invited. This course is a master class concept with each artist presenting his/her viewpoints. All students are invited to attend all sessions. 1 credit

Film Scoring - George Fontenette. Weekly assignments give students experience composing (or using pre-existing music) for short professional clips from feature films, documentaries, and commercials. Prior to writing, the class discusses the video structure of the film first without music, followed by a variety of musical solutions as examples to compare and contrast. Functional ability is required on at least one of the following software programs: Garageband, Logic Pro, ProTools, MIDI, Digital Performer, Sibelius, Finale or comparable programs. Students must be able to import a QuickTime video, add music (can be original or from pre-existing sources), and export both into a single QuickTime file for presentation in class. 2 credits

Independent Study – Analysis, Meaning, and Expression – Chris Stover. What takes place in core music theory courses could more accurately be called "pre-theory" - the acquisition and development of toolsets and methodological frames that can then be used to dig deeply into musical structure and process. There are many reasons for wanting to do this, which range from compositionally-inspired (how can I write more music like this?) to performance-inspired (what is this music communicating to me, and how can I better know it in order to perform it in a more informed, ethical manner?) to more abstract hermeneutic inspirations. This course is designed to provide a frame for independent investigation of musical compositions, genres, or theoretical methodologies that are of particular interest to individual students. As a managed independent study, it will be comprised of independent work, individual meetings with the instructor for guidance and critique, and three seminar-style sessions spread across the semester, the latter of which will involve reading and discussion projects to provide context and a shared ground from which to begin. There will also be a final open presentation session. Selection for participation in this course is at the discretion of the instructor.

Independent Study – Phil Ballman. You've learned how to play your instrument, but how do you get started as a professional musician? This course is designed to help motivated musicians bring project-based proposals to successful completion. Whether your goal is to book a local show, organize a tour, negotiate a deal with a label, publicize a CD release concert, generate buzz about your band, learn how to make money through publishing, or something else entirely, you need information, guidance, and access to the right resources to make it happen. As a managed independent study, this course will be
comprised of independent work, including individual meetings with the instructor for direction and assistance, and several seminar-style meetings where participants will share progress and provide feedback. At the conclusion of the semester, ideally you will have achieved your specific goal, or made significant progress towards completion of a longer-term project. The final project will be documentation of the process in the form of a written paper. Selection for participation in this course is at the discretion of the instructor. 1-3 credits

Internship in the Music Industry - Kyle Wilson (coordinator). Learn about the Music Industry from the inside by working (10-20 hours per week) as an intern with companies such as Verve, Blue Note, Sony, Lincoln Center Jazz and others. Network and make valuable professional contacts, as well as possible future employment opportunities. Students who register for Internship must attend a mandatory orientation meeting, which Kyle Wilson will schedule before the end of the semester, where they will submit a resume and learn the procedures involved in securing an internship. Students whose resumes are unprofessional will be required to attend a seminar in resume preparation offered by the Career Development office. Prerequisite: Sophomore or up status. 1-6 credits—counts towards business requirement

Intro to Species Counterpoint 1A - Armen Donelian. Species counterpoint is an effective tool for developing the ear to hear and react to the subtleties of interacting melodic lines. In jazz at its most basic, this interaction is embodied in the relationship of the bass to the melodic solo. This course will explore the five types of counterpoint in a 2-voice setting and prepare the student for an extension of the principles to 3-part writing. Prerequisite: Theory 2B or equivalent. 2 credits

Introduction to Sibelius – Gene Perla. This introductory class will teach the basics of computer copying and lead up to the design of professional looking lead sheets and scores. Prerequisite: Theory 1B or equivalent. 10 sessions, 1 credit

Listening Discovery: “What the heck was that?” - Martin Mueller. This is a course where the students enrolled present musical samples, duplicating the “listening party,” a gathering held purely for the love and discovery of music. At each class session, students will be required to bring in a burned copy of anything BUT some standard tune that everyone’s heard a million times by an artist that everyone knows. It is about quality. It is about range. It is, perhaps more than anything else, about surprise. In other words, you bring something interesting, unexpected. It can be mainstream, but the song should be sonically fascinating, well recorded, somehow unique and not something you think others have heard. Each class will consist of a series of blind listening rounds. After listening and commentary on each round, each student contributing samples will explain why they choose their selection, and be prepared to articulate what this music means in context to themselves, their artistry, and their study. Grading is pass/fail, and based on a strict attendance and participation formula as well as the submission of one short paper at end of semester. Limited to 12 students. 1 credit
Music Pedagogy – Martin Hundley. This course is designed to develop students’ skills as music teachers, with primary focus on private lesson instruction. The topics covered include (but are not limited to): being prepared, setting standards, organizing teaching materials, pacing and timing, motivating ambivalent students, and understanding developmental psychology as it applies to students of different ages. Students in the class will be asked to teach lessons, share and analyze their own experiences as students of music, and to develop a good critical understanding of their past and present music teachers. The first part of the semester will be oriented toward basic instrumental instruction; the second part of the semester will move in the direction of teaching more advanced students, including instruction in jazz style and improvisation. 2 credits—counts towards business requirement

Philosophies of Time and Process (in Music) – Chris Stover. In this course we will critically examine the thoughts about time, flow, and process of philosophers from Heraclitus and Parmenides through Deleuze and Ricoeur, with particular emphasis on Hegel’s dialectics, Henri Bergson’s model of process and flow, and phenomenological frames from Husserl and his followers. We will also focus on some ways in which musicians and music theorists have used these frames to examine and describe musical process and Becoming. Throughout, we will engage musical compositions and occasionally other artistic media such as film, to contextualize the discussion and to suggest avenues for further and deeper consideration. This is a seminar course involving weekly readings and responses, moderated discussions, and a final research paper or project. 3 credits

Prospects of Recording - Bob Hurwitz. This course, taught by the president of Nonesuch Records, examines the issues facing musicians as they enter into the marketplace. It focuses on an age-old question: how to navigate between the worlds of art and commerce? The title refers to a 1964 article by the legendary Canadian pianist Glenn Gould, one of the few musicians at that time to think about music in relationship to technological changes as they affected culture. This course explores the creative life and commercial forces in today’s culture, and the role of media companies and modern technology in limiting or enhancing the abilities of creative artists to envision their careers and to reach their audiences. Admission to the course is limited on the basis of a written essay. 2 credits—counts towards business requirement

ProTools - Karl Wenninger. Students will get extensive hands-on experience with ProTools, the leading software for hard disk recording. Recordings of the spoken word, field recordings, multi-track recordings, and sampled material from commercial CDs will be used for editing, mixing and sound processing purposes. 2 credits

Senior Thesis – Chris Stover. Students in their final semester may earn 5 credits by doing a Senior Thesis. Any interested student must submit a proposal to the Director of Academic Affairs and have it approved prior to the beginning of the semester. 5 credits

Song Arts: Song-craft Techniques for Contemporary Songwriters – Billy Seidman. In this course, students learn the techniques, strategies, and critiquing systems used by the world’s top songwriters to win an audience for their music. They will achieve a practical understanding of what “emotional engines” drive
their music and the music they love through weekly writing assignments designed to “grow the ears” to the larger creative opportunities possible in songs. Students must have active experience in songwriting and have produced songs with lyrics and/or music. **2 credits**

**Billy Seidman**’s songwriting career has spanned staff positions at Sony/ATV/Tree Publishing in Nashville, Careers/BMG Publishing and Carlin America Music Publishing in New York. His songs have been recorded by Gold and Platinum artists including Irene Cara, Vicki Sue Robinson and Evelyn “Champagne” King. As a session and touring guitarist, he’s worked with Motown legends Ashford & Simpson, as well as with such artists as Patti Austin, Jocelyn Brown, David Sanborn, and Philippe Saisse. Billy developed and has headed the BMI New York Songwriting Workshop since its inception in 2000. He also conducts workshops for The Songwriters Hall Of Fame.

**Sound in Time** - Diane Moser. This course is the most fundamental definition of music. Beginning with an understanding of the harmonic series and its numeric implications we can begin to explore and create a seemingly endless but organized approach towards tuning systems, intervals, harmony, and temporal organization including polyrhythm and groove. Each student will create a personal lexicon that includes extended techniques, metaphors, and extra-musical inspiration. Through sharing these lexicons each student will create “tailor-made” improvisational scores for members of the class. There will be a final performance of these compositions. **1 credit**

**Collab: Speak Music & Design** – Alexis Cuadrado & Pascal Glissmann. Musicians and designers share a variety of aspects in their creative process—we have similar methods and challenges, we try to be original and innovative and we convey a message, feelings or ideas. However, we use different languages and terminology which makes multi-disciplinary collaborations unnecessarily complex. This class is a collaboration between Parsons and Jazz, taught jointly by one faculty of each division and populated with a 50/50 student ratio from each school. It is designed to give students of both areas the appropriate tools to be able to understand and work with each other fluidly. With a project based and a learn-by-doing approach, students will be forced to think outside their comfort zone and will be encouraged to create new work and assignments for designated mixed teams. **3 credits**

**Special Topics** - Robert Sadin. A study of the specific problems of writing for orchestra. The repertoire studied will be primarily from the European classical literature and range from Monteverdi to Bach, Wagner and Stravinsky. Students’ work will range over a wide variety of jazz, popular and world music material. 10 weeks, **1 credit**

**Survey of the Music Business** – Gene Perla. This course provides an overview of the business of music. Students become acquainted with how the music business affects the professional musician, music educator, and businessperson. Practical information covers areas such as copyright laws, performing rights, mechanical rights, agents, management, unions and benefits, the non-for-profit sector, creating work for yourself, and the success mindset, as well as problems faced by professional musicians including procrastination, lack of motivation, poor career development, and lack of work. Emphasis is on the use of the internet and other contemporary technologies to further the musician’s career. Students learn necessary skills in order to become successful professional musicians and develop the knowledge to build a career in the music industry that includes variety, longevity, and levels of success. **2 credits**—counts towards business requirement