

Arranging (MUSC171): Schedule

Andrew A. Cashner, PhD

Spring 2023, University of Rochester, Satz Dept. of Music

- Syllabus
- Blackboard
- Download PDF of this page
- YouTube playlist

Week 1

- Thu., Jan. 12

Topics

- Orientation: goals, policies, schedule
-

Week 2

- Tue., Jan. 17
- Thu., Jan. 19

Weekly homework

(Due at the start of class Tuesday 1/17)

1. Send me an e-mail:
 - Personal info: name you want me to use, pronouns, class year, majors/minors/clusters, instruments played and/or other musical involvement
 - What do you hope to learn from the course?
 - What concerns or questions do you have?
1. Obtain the required books and software; set up the software

Topics

- What is arranging? Who does it benefit?
 - Examples: The power of transformation and translation
 - What to listen for in an arrangement
 - Musicianship and notation fundamentals: Lead sheets
-

Week 3

- Tue., Jan. 24
- Thu., Jan. 26

Weekly homework

1. Copy the given lead sheet by hand and turn in your manuscript.
2. Start learning to play and sing the song from the given lead sheet. Play the chords simply on keyboard or guitar and sing the melody.

Topics

- Examples: Song introductions
 - Intro to Dorico software
 - Musicianship fundamentals
-

Week 4

- Tue., Jan. 31
- Thu., Feb. 2

Weekly homework

1. Copy the same lead sheet as last week in software using Dorico. Turn in the Dorico file and a PDF.
2. Write out a simple piano part for the song from last week, consisting of just block chords. To the extent possible, put the bass note in the left hand, and the other three or more notes in the right hand.
3. Propose the arrangement you want to write your analysis paper about. Include a link to the source and a brief statement of why you are interested in this.

Topics

- Examples: Added hooks and reharmonization
 - Improvising harmony in class
 - Musicianship fundamentals
-

Week 5

- Tue., Feb. 7
- Thu., Feb. 9

Weekly homework

1. Record a video of yourself playing the song from last week. Sing the melody while playing the piano part you wrote last week. Reuse a portion of the song as a simple introduction.
2. Transpose the same lead sheet by hand, from the original key up a minor third. Use your brain, not software for the transposition. Turn in your manuscript.

Topics

- Examples: Piano reductions; sampling, quotation, and allusion
 - Intellectual property law and ethics
 - How to learn a song by ear
-

Week 6

- Tue., Feb. 14
- Thu., Feb. 16: **Musicianship exam in class**

Weekly homework

1. Prepare for the musicianship exam.
2. Transcribe the song “Cry” by Jon Batiste (from the album *We Are*) in the form of a lead sheet (melody and chords). Show the whole structure of the song (e.g., include bars of rest for the intro and solo sections, with some indication of who plays during those sections; include appropriate repeats and landmarks. Capture the basic rhythms and melodic inflections but you don’t have to render every subtle nuance of the performance. Turn in the Dorico file and a PDF.
3. Propose a piece to write your analysis paper about. It should be an arrangement of some pre-existing music (that is, not just an original composition), at least four minutes long, and in any style or genre, or from any historical period. I would strongly encourage you to find music by a creator who is a person of color or a woman.
4. Practice singing a harmony part to the same song, then write down the part you are singing. Turn in the full score of your lead sheet plus the added harmony voice.

Topics

- Examples: Piano reductions
-

Week 7

- Tue., Feb. 21: *No class*
- Thu., Feb. 23

Weekly homework

1. Record yourself playing the same song, now with an added “hook” intro that uses a new musical idea. Change at least one of the chords to something new.
2. Propose the song you want to do for your final arrangement. Include a link to the source and briefly why you want to do it.
3. Make an outline of the form and textures of the arrangement you are analyzing for your paper.
4. Read the given article on intellectual property and prepare for a discussion.

Topics

- Examples: Harmony arising from counterpoint
- Plagiarism vs. borrowing vs. homage
- Intellectual property discussion

Week 8

- Tue., Feb. 28
- Thu., March 2

Weekly homework

1. Copy the given polyphonic work by hand, changing the clefs to modern clefs (use treble clef for soprano and alto, treble clef transposed down an octave for tenor, and, as you might expect, bass for the bass).
2. Learn the song you selected for your final arrangement by ear well enough to sing it.
3. Write a rough draft of your analysis paper.

Topics

- Examples: Amateur SAB choir arrangements
 - Examples: Vocal arranging
-

Spring Break: NO CLASS March 7, 9

Week 9

- Tue., March 14:
- Thu., March 16
- Fri., March 17, 5 p.m.: **DUE: Analysis paper**

Weekly homework

1. Read the given article on racism and representation and prepare to discuss it.
2. Bring an example to share with the class of an arrangement with a significant intercultural aspect.
3. Transpose the polyphonic work down a tritone, by hand.

Topics

- Examples: Racism and intercultural representation
 - Instrument families
 - Transposing instruments
-

Week 10

- Tue., March 21
- Thu., March 23
- Fri., March 24, 5 p.m.: **DUE: Polyphonic arrangement**

Weekly homework

1. Complete a draft of the polyphonic arrangement as assigned.
2. Write just the vocal parts of your pop song arrangement.
3. Learn the original version of the orchestral work assigned for the piano reduction by ear: practice listening while singing individual parts from the full score. Mark up the score to indicate the main melodic ideas or other elements you want to emphasize.

Topics

- Examples: Piano writing
 - Percussion techniques and notation
 - Discuss intercultural challenges
-

Week 11

- Tue., March 28 **DUE: Ethics presentations in class, group 1**
- Thu., March 30: **DUE: Ethics presentations in class, group 2**

Weekly homework

1. Write just the piano part of your final arrangement.
2. Begin the piano reduction project by transferring the main ideas you marked up last week to piano.

Topics

- Arranging ethics (presentations)
-

Week 12

- Tue., Apr. 4
- Thu., Apr. 6

Weekly homework

1. Prepare a complete draft of your piano reduction for test playthrough in class.

Topics

- Examples: Musical theater orchestration and arranging
 - Piano writing workshop
-

Week 13

- Tue., Apr. 11
- Thu., Apr. 13

Weekly homework

1. Polish your piano reduction, incorporating feedback from last week.
2. Complete your draft pop song arrangement, which should now include vocal and piano parts.

Topics

- Examples: Film and video game music
-

Week 14

- Tue., Apr. 18
- Thu., Apr. 20
- Fri., Apr. 21: **DUE: Piano reduction**

Weekly homework

1. Add the obligato instrument part to your pop song arrangement.

Topics

- Examples: Making the most of a large ensemble; maximal arrangements of minimal sources; minimal arrangements of maximal sources
-

Week 15

- Tue., Apr. 25: *Last day to turn in any late (non-homework) assignments for half credit*

Weekly homework

1. Polish final projects

Topics

- Conclusions
-

Finals Week

- Wednesday, May 3, 5 p.m.: **DUE: Pop song arrangement**