

# MUSC171 Arranging: Syllabus

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Spring 2022, University of Rochester, Satz Dept. of Music

## Links

- [Schedule](#)
- [Blackboard](#)
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## Course Information

### Description

Arranging is a key skill in any practicing musician's toolbox. Whether you are reworking an existing song for an a capella or theater group, producing a recording of an original song, or adapting music to fit the practical needs of an amateur ensemble, this class can help you craft effective and appealing arrangements. Students will develop and workshop their own projects with the class while we learn from examples by today's pop and Broadway arrangers, as well as past masters of arrangement including Bach, Mozart, and Liszt. With an emphasis on simple solutions that work for performers of varying skill levels, the course will show you how to bring out the best in the source music while presenting the performing ensemble in its best light. (4 credits)

Prerequisite: Basic ability to read music and to sing or play an instrument.

### Meeting Times

- Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:25–4:40 p.m.
- On Zoom or in Dewey 1-305
- Office hours Tuesdays 11am–12pm or by appointment

### Resources and Materials

- This website will always have the current schedule and course information.
- You'll find assignments and turn them in on Blackboard.
- Music examples will be on a YouTube playlist

- Scores will be available on Blackboard

### Required Materials

- Music-notation software: Dorico, Finale, or Sibelius
  - Discounted licenses are available for students
- Ertuğrul Sevsay, *The Cambridge Guide to Orchestration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)
  - Free access to ebook through UR library

### Learning Goals

- In consultation with me, develop your own goals for how to improve as an arranger and determine how you will reach those goals and demonstrate that you have accomplished them.
- Show that you can translate a musical idea from the original version into another instrumentation.
- Show that you can adapt a musical idea from the original style into another style.
- Develop a deeper knowledge of different arranging techniques used by successful arrangers and producers, past and present, and apply these techniques in your own arranging.

### Assessments

- PARTICIPATION: Provide constructive feedback to peers on their arrangements; respond constructively to feedback from peers and the professor.
- WEEKLY EXAMPLES: Every week, bring one example to the class of a professional arrangement and explain why you find it interesting and effective (or not). If there is a topic listed for that week, fit your choice to the topic.
- PERSONAL GOAL: Accomplish a goal of your own design in consultation with me.
- TWO ANALYSIS PAPERS:
  1. Write a detailed analysis of *two* existing arrangements. One must date from before 1900 and the other from after.
  2. Each analysis should be around 1600 words in length.
  3. Present a short version of each analysis to the class in lieu of one of the normal weekly examples.
- REDUCTION:
  1. Take an existing piece of music for large ensemble (more than six distinct voices or instruments) and reduce it to three voices, still conveying the core musical ideas of the original. You may include an additional percussion part, playable or singable by one person.

2. Then take the three-voice reduction and expand it to your own arrangement for a larger ensemble.
- SONG:
    1. Based on a standard song in lead-sheet format, create an arrangement for a specific ensemble that (1) highlights the strengths of the musicians and compensates for their weaknesses, and (2) presents the core musical idea of the original in a way that is dramatically compelling and creative.
    2. Prepare a performance of the arrangement and make a clear audio recording.

## Grading

20%	Participation and Weekly examples
10%	Personal goal
30%	Analysis papers (15% each)
20%	Reduction
20%	Song

Please note: There will be no final exam in this course.

## Grade Scale

Percent	Letter
93–100	A
90–92	A-
87–89	B+
83–86	B
80–82	B-
77–79	C+
73–76	C
70–72	C-
67–69	D+
63–66	D
60–62	D-
0–59	E

## Policies

### Attendance, Participation, Teaching Modality

- This is an interactive, workshop-style class, so every student must participate actively in order to accomplish the course goals, and that means every student must be present.

- I define active participation to mean that a student was present, responded to questions, and contributed to discussions with both speaking and engaged listening.
- The class will be held on Zoom at least through the end of January, depending on the university's policy.
- All class sessions will be recorded. The recordings will be made available only on the university's private network (via Blackboard). The recordings are not a substitute for attendance.

### **Due Dates and Late Assignments**

- The assignments are due at on the day and at the time listed on the schedule, via the relevant assignment portal on Blackboard.
- I am happy to grant assignment extensions or modifications as they are needed, but I must do them in advance of the due date and in writing.
- Without an extension, I will accept late assignments for 50% credit at any time up until the beginning of the final class session.

### **Academic Honesty**

- You must adhere to the university's policies for academic honesty. In short this means doing your own work, and not giving or receiving unfair or non-permitted help on your work.
- The university requires me to report every case of academic dishonesty to the Academic Honesty Board, and I will report every case.
- Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, which means using other people's ideas and words with giving them appropriate credit, including verbatim copying and missing, false, or misleading citations.

### **Disability Accommodations**

If you need a disability accommodation, please contact the Disability Office and they will let me know how to accommodate you without specifying the nature of your disability.

### **Creating a Supportive Classroom Community**

I need your help in creative a supportive community in our classroom. I want to build a space in which students feel safe enough to take the risks necessary to engage with new ideas and develop new skills. We must be careful to avoid any kind of bullying or harrassment; and we must cultivate respect, humility, and kindness. No point of view is out of bounds for discussion, as long as we can find a respectful and sensitive way to talk about it.

I will give you opportunities for feedback throughout the course and I would ask, please let me know if there is anything I can do (or anything I need to

change) in order to accomplish these goals. Please be reflective about your own contributions to the classroom environment as well.