

Course Syllabus

The New School - College of Performing Arts - School of Jazz

Arranging Fundamentals – Spring 2016

Class Hours: 6:00-7:50pm **Location:** Arnhold Hall, room 618 **Credits:** 2

Instructor: JC Sanford **Email:** sanfordj@newschool.edu **Phone:** 646-391-7136

Prerequisites:

Theory 1B or equivalent; basic theory, keyboard, and ear training skills. If you can not sing and name all the intervals, spell and play 13th chords (at least in root position), and construct a chord progression more complex than ii-v's or tritone subs using functional harmony, you may not be ready for this class and should plan on taking it in a later semester; if in doubt, please discuss this with instructor.

Course Description

The contents of this course are intended to get you thinking as arrangers from technical and creative perspectives. It will cover “nuts and bolts” aspects of musical composition and arranging (from instrumental resources to layouts for scores and parts to basic voicing and voice-leading considerations) as well as their more imaginative aspects (from exploring textural and timbral possibilities to manipulating tunes from a variety of perspectives). Topics will cover analysis and adaptation of standards; 2 and 3-part linear writing; voicings; range, register and idiomatics of instruments; blending timbres; transposition, and precise notational practices. Live instrumental demonstrations will take place periodically in class. (There are no vocal elements in this course)

Resources/Materials:

There is no text to purchase for this course. Reading, listening and other study materials will be provided in Canvas (in the form of PDFs or web links).

You will need to have access to, and some facility with, either Finale or Sibelius. See below for some words of warning regard the use of music engraving software.

Bring pencils, erasers, rulers, and manuscript paper to class every day!

Course Policies:

Assignments: Each week there will be a written assignment, predominantly built upon the application of techniques studied in class that week to arranging standards. It is **CRITICAL** that you turn in these assignments on time. Assignments will be set up in Canvas, and depending on the specific assignment, students will have to submit electronically and sometimes also in paper. A penalty of 10% will be deducted per day (including weekends) for late work. Computer problems do not constitute an acceptable excuse for late work, so it is a good idea to develop the habit of making backup copies of your work and/or set auto-save settings on a cloud folder.

Please be aware that you can fail this course simply by not turning these in!

Exams/Projects: There will be a “midterm” and a final project to be arranged for 2 or 3 horns and a 3-piece rhythm section. It is extremely important that you complete these projects with score and parts properly copied and transposed in time to have them performed during the designated sessions.

Neat Work: All work is to be neatly copied to a professional standard. Any work that doesn't meet this condition will be returned, to be resubmitted the next day. Much of our work will be done by hand, but in the second half of the semester we will begin to incorporate work done in Finale or Sibelius. Please note that “professional standard” means more than just clear evenly-spaced notes: it includes all necessary performance indications (tempo indications, phrase markings, dynamics, articulations, etc.), logical rhythmic and enharmonic notation, a title and author information, and of course no extra dangling blank bars at the end (or final systems with stretched-out measures). For the two main projects, you will be required to turn in a score and properly-transposed parts. Get in the habit of proofreading everything carefully!

Attendance Policy: One of the keys at getting successful results in this class will be your regular attendance. Please review carefully the attendance policy for this class:

- 2 unexcused absences will lower your final grade one letter.
- 3 or more unexcused absences will automatically mean failure of the course.
- *Being late 3 times constitutes an absence. Coming later than 5 minutes after beginning of the class will be counted as lateness. Coming 15 minutes or more after beginning of the class will be counted as an unexcused absence.*

IMPORTANT: If by any reason you're going to miss a class please communicate with me before the class. I may also ask for permissions slips, doctor notes or whatever I consider might justify any unexcused absences.

Canvas: Various announcements and updates will appear frequently on the course Canvas page. Be sure to get in the habit of checking the Canvas page daily.

Grading:

Short assignments	30%
Quiz	5%
Project 1	25%
Project 2	40%

Your final grade will be the numerical average over 100 of the 3 items to be graded. Your final score over 100 will then be matched with a letter grade according to this table: 95-100 A, 90-95 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-, Below 60 F.

Attendance can only affect your grade negatively. 2 unexcused absences will lower your final grade one letter. 3 unexcused absences make you fail the class. Frequent excessive tardiness will also not be tolerated.

Other Considerations:

- A respectful and tolerant tone is expected from all of us through the semester. This is crucial to work in a healthy and encouraging environment. Derogatory comments of any kind will not be tolerated.
- All of your submitted work assignments are expected to be 100% original. "Teamwork" is not allowed for any assignments. Submitting an assignment that is copied from another student or from a book or the Internet represents a violation of the New School Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy, with an immediate consequence of failure of the course.
- Please no phones/texting in class. No food in class. Water, coffee, or tea is OK.

Weekly schedule 15 sessions:

1. **1/28** Introductions, listening, arranging and composing: aesthetic considerations. General voicing considerations (density, texture, timbre, harmonics and harmonic series). Rhythmic notation and articulations. Basic score layout, clefs, intro to transpositions. *Notation HW.*
2. **2/4** Score and parts layout—basics. Analysis for arrangers—exploring a tune's potential. Melodic variation and embellishment. *Analysis/Melody HW.*
3. **2/11** Instrumental resources I, wind instruments: range, transposition, timbre, mutes, instrumental techniques. *Transposition HW.*
4. **2/18** Instrumental resources II: writing for the rhythm section 1: Bass, piano, guitar, vibraphone. *Transcription HW.*
5. **2/25** 2-part Density, Counterpoint. **2-Part HW. Deadline to choose tune to arrange for project 1.**
6. **3/3** *Ranges/transposition/notation Quiz.* Harmonic structural options. Read 2-part assignments.
7. **3/10** Reharmonization and chord substitution. Formal sketch. *Reharm/Formal Sketch HW.*
8. **3/17** Read Reharmonizations. Score preparation. **2-Part Sketch HW.**

3/24 No class – Spring Break

9. **3/31** Workshop 2-part sketches, etc.
10. **4/7** *Quintet project due.*
11. **4/14** Writing for three melodic voices. Triadic options. Open and close voicings. **3-part HW.**
12. **4/21** Read 3-part assignments. Final project assigned. **Sextet Sketch HW.**
13. **4/28** Review sketches. Laying out scores and parts in Finale or Sibelius.
14. **5/5** Read final projects.
15. **5/12** Read final projects.