

Music 371
Compositional Techniques: Counterpoint and Common Practice Harmony
Forrest Tobey
Syllabus
Spring, 2009

Course Description: This is the second course in a sequence of three music theory courses at Earlham College. This is the core course where we cover the traditional topics of all college-level music theory courses: the harmonic language of the common practice period as exemplified in the music of the late Baroque (Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, Purcell), the Viennese classicists (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert) and the first generation of Romanticists (Chopin, Schumann, Mendelssohn and the operatic language of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti). The emphasis in this course will be on the compositional techniques of this period and your assignments will consist of analyses of these techniques and composition exercises “in the style of...” You will be writing and/or analyzing modal counterpoint, tonal fugues and inventions, chorales, baroque opera arias, classical minuets, rondos and sonatas, and early romantic piano works and songs. In addition, the course will look at questions of musical meaning, emotion and aesthetics, so that we are continually investigating not just how music is put together, but how and why it has the power to move us into a realm of aesthetic experience.

Course Materials:

- Charles Burkhart, *Anthology for Musical Analysis*, 6th edition. This will be our reference for numerous analytical exercises.
- Forrest Tobey, *A Feeling for Harmony, Book 2*. This is the text for this class, and it is online at <http://www.earlham.edu/~tobeyfo/musictheory/index.html>. By writing my own music theory course material, I've been able to focus the course material on what seems most relevant for a three-semester course at Earlham. The second book is being constructed from previously written material and will be completed over the course of the semester.
- Finale Notepad. All students must purchase a downloadable copy of Finale Notepad. It is available at <http://www.finalemusic.com/notepad/>
- **Ear Training:** There is an ear training co-requisite for this class which will give us an additional hour each week to focus on sight singing and dictation. Details about this class will given in our first meeting.

Topics

The course is divided into 8 sessions, with the following main topics and assignments.

1. **Modal 2-part counterpoint and canon (1 week)**
2. **Introduction to four-part writing (2 weeks)**
3. **Bach Chorale Analysis (2 week)**
4. **Chorale composition and melody harmonization (2 weeks)**

5. Fugue (2 weeks)

6. Classical Form and Modulation (3 weeks)

7. Introduction to Chromatic Harmony (2 weeks)

Assignments

You will have an assignment for every class (or sometimes an assignment that will take you two class periods). The assignments will be either composition or analysis assignments. The total sum of these assignments will be 45 % of your grade.

Exams

There will be 4 substantive exams covering 1) chorale analysis, 2) 4-part chorale composition, 3) fugue, and 4) chromatic harmony. The sum total of your exams will be 45% of your grade.

Final Project

You will not have a final exam in this class, but you will have a final project that will involve the complete analysis of a work from the classical period or an original composition in classical style. The project will be worth 10% of your grade.