SAMPLE SYLLABUS FOR MUS 490

**Course Number:** MUS 490  
**Course Title:** Senior Project  
**Instructor:** TBD

**Course Goals:**

Students taking MUS 490 will engage in one of three independent inquiry projects appropriate to their concentration area:

1. Performance concentration: Lecture-Recital  
2. Music Theory/Composition concentration: Composition  
3. Global Perspectives in Music History and Criticism concentration: Research Paper

**Course Overview and Expected Outcomes:**

The following is a list of shared criteria among the above categories:

1. A clear, written explanation of the expected outcome (i.e. finished product) is provided by the student at the outset  
2. Clear definition of the project in writing; this constitutes a contract for the project, and is created by the student in conjunction with the supervising faculty member  
3. This document should include the following:  
   a. Due dates, including interim steps  
   b. Faculty expectations/commitment  
   c. Student expectation, particularly regarding materials needed (or requested)  
4. An oral presentation of the project and its results

**Guidelines and suggested schedule for each of the three concentration categories:**

1) Performance concentration guidelines:  
   a) Students will prepare an anthology of all repertoire studied in applied music instruction during their time at ECSU that includes biographical information on all composers included in the anthology.  
   b) From this anthology, students will research a particular theme that ties together at least 30 minutes of repertoire into a cohesive recital for public consumption.  
   c) The student will present not only the theme topic, but show how the representative examples of solo literature support the theme.
d) The student will also provide an annotated bibliography to support the research component of the project, which will result in a 10-page paper to be delivered formally at the recital.

1.1) Suggested schedule:

1. Student and faculty member agree to proceed with a project during the penultimate semester; a faculty signature is required for the student to register. Student will register for Individualized Music Instruction (MUS 456) for regular lessons, as well as Senior Project.

2. During the penultimate semester, student and faculty supervisor meet to discuss program options, with a final performance program decided prior to final semester. Weekly meetings for music rehearsal, bi-weekly meetings to discuss lecture, and a date for the lecture-recital to be presented will be arranged.

   Outcome: Written contract clearly stating topic, pieces to be performed, and calendar of meetings and deadlines

3. Preliminary research

   Outcome: An annotated bibliography of pertinent resources; supervisor may amend this bibliography

4. First draft of lecture outline submitted to supervisor. This draft to be returned to the student for significant revisions, including major additions and deletions.

5. Second draft of lecture outline, along with program notes submitted for supervisor’s approval. This draft will be returned for what are anticipated as minor revisions and editing.

6. Subsequent drafts will be submitted and revised until ready for faculty readers.

7. Final draft of lecture outline and program notes submitted to faculty readers for approval and commentary.

   Outcome: The paper should be in a publishable form. This last version of the paper is to be shared among several faculty readers, chosen by the supervising faculty member; will be returned with comments

8. At least ONE dress rehearsal prior to performance. Rehearsal will include lecture and performance.

9. Lecture-recital, accompanied by program notes, will be presented to the PA faculty, students, family, friends, etc.

   a. Copies of the program notes and lecture outline are circulated among the PA faculty; at least one copy is placed on file in the PA office as a model of the process for future PA students.

   b. The lecture-recital will be filmed, with copies going to both the student and the PA department.

2) Theory/Composition concentration guidelines:

   a) Students will write an original composition no shorter than 5 minutes in length.

   b) The student must write for an ensemble of performers as a means of demonstrating mastery not just in composition, but in orchestration as well.
Students in Electronic Music must incorporate an electronic component into their project, which may also include performers.

c) A paper of no fewer than 8 pages in length will accompany the composition as a means of documenting the creative process and research used for creating the composition. The paper will also address how the student would approach a similar project in the future.

2.1) Suggested Schedule:

1. Student and faculty member agree to proceed with a project during the penultimate semester; a faculty signature is required for the student to register

2. During the penultimate semester, student and faculty supervisor meet to discuss project options. Student should be prepared to discuss/defend at least two different options.
   Outcome: Written contract clearly stating topic and anticipated calendar for checking progress

3. First draft composition submitted to supervisor.
   Outcome:
   a. Clear understanding of the structure of work in progress
   b. Clear definition of the harmonic language
   c. Clear understanding of the instrumental forces used
   d. Clear understanding of notational practice
   This draft is to be returned to student for significant revisions, including major additions and deletions.

4. Second draft of composition submitted for supervisor’s approval. This draft will be returned for what are anticipated as minor revisions and editing.
   An outline of the methodology used to create the composition will be submitted and returned for significant revisions.

5. Subsequent drafts will be submitted and revised until ready for faculty readers.

6. Final draft of composition and paper submitted to faculty readers for approval and commentary.
   Outcome: The composition and paper should be in a publishable form. This last version of the paper is to be shared among several faculty readers, chosen by the supervising faculty member; will be returned with comments

7. At least ONE dress rehearsal prior to performance. Rehearsal will include an oral summation of project and performance of the composition.

8. The composition will be performed for the PA faculty, students, family, friends, etc.
   a. If forces are available, the performance will involve instrumentalists; otherwise, a MIDI version will suffice. If the work is scored for electronic media, then a presentation of the work will involve the computer ‘performance’.
   b. A concise summation of the project, including a clear explanation of the topic undertaken, and the researcher’s conclusions (this is NOT simply a public reading of the paper).
c. Copies of the paper and composition are circulated among the PA faculty; at least one copy is placed on file in the PA office as a model of the process for future PA students.
d. Oral presentation will be filmed, with copies going to both the student and the PA department.

3) Global Perspectives of Music History and Criticism:
   a) Students will write a research paper no shorter than 30 pages to demonstrate original work and an awareness of the literature appropriate for the topic.
   b) An annotated bibliography will accompany the well-planned proposal before the supervising instructor grants approval.
      The paper will be delivered orally at the end of the semester.

3.1) Suggested Schedule:
   1. Student and faculty member agree to proceed with a project during the penultimate semester; a faculty signature is required for the student to register.
   2. During the penultimate semester, student and faculty supervisor meet to discuss topic options. Student should be prepared to discuss/defend at least two different topics. Outcome: Written contract clearly stating topic, and anticipated dates for checking progress.
   3. Preliminary research
      Outcome: An annotated bibliography of pertinent resources; supervisor may amend this bibliography
   4. First draft of lecture outline submitted to supervisor. This draft to be returned to the student for significant revisions, including major additions and deletions.
      Outcome:
      a. Clear statement of the thesis in the introductory paragraph
      b. Clear evidence of the overall organization of the paper, including all sectional/sub-sectional devisions
      c. Enough text to support the basic thesis and arguments/counterarguments
      d. Some evidence of the use of appropriate supportive materials (at least simple author citations)
   5. Second draft submitted for supervisor’s approval. This draft will be returned for what are anticipated as minor revisions and editing.
      Outcome:
      a. Paper should be substantially finished, including conclusion
      b. All supportive materials are present and properly cited, including any visual or audio aids
   6. Subsequent drafts will be submitted and revised until ready for faculty readers.
   7. Final draft submitted to faculty readers for approval and commentary.
Outcome: The paper should be in a publishable form. This last version of the paper is to be shared among several faculty readers, chosen by the supervising faculty member; will be returned with comments.

8. At least ONE ‘dress rehearsal’ prior to final oral presentation.
9. Oral presentation will be presented to the PA faculty, students, family, friends, etc.

Outcome:
   a. A concise summation of the project, including a clear explanation of the topic undertaken, and the researcher’s conclusions (this is NOT simply a public reading of the paper).
   b. Copies of the paper are circulated among the PA faculty; at least one copy is placed on file in the PA office as a model of the process for future PA students.
   c. Oral presentations will be filmed, with copies going to both the student and the PA department.

Group Activities:
1) LECTURE-RECITAL students will engage with other students in the performance concentration area and reflect at least 3 times during the semester in a master-class setting, during which time they will perform for each other and engage in group discussion about the process, and give immediate feedback to each other with the intent of improving the performance.
2) COMPOSITION students will engage with other students in the music theory/composition concentration area and reflect at least 3 times during the semester in a master-class setting, during which time they will present the work in progress to each other and engage in group discussion about the process, and give immediate feedback to each other with the intent of improving the composition.
3) RESEARCH PAPER students will engage with other students in the history concentration area and reflect at least 3 times during the semester in a group setting, during which time they will present the topic being researched and share the current draft of their paper for peer review and discussion. Students will give and receive immediate feedback with the intent of improving the research paper.

Accompanying Reflection:
Students presenting a LECTURE-RECITAL or COMPOSITION will prepare program notes for the public performance of the project. These notes will include a 1-page reflection on how other disciplines and experiences have influenced their creative/artistic endeavors leading to this culminating experience.

Students presenting a RESEARCH PAPER will also have a 1-page reflection on how other disciplines and experiences have influenced the scholarly endeavor. This will be distributed to those who attend the end-of-term paper presentation day.
Assessment:

1) **LECTURE-RECITAL**: Students preparing a lecture-recital will meet weekly with the applied lesson instructor to ensure techniques unique to the individual instrument or voice are being demonstrated. The student and supervising instructor will also agree upon a timeline for completing various stages of the research and writing portion of the project, which involves a process of submissions and revisions (see suggested schedule above at 1.1).

2) **COMPOSITION**: Students writing a composition will submit working drafts of the composition throughout the semester so as to demonstrate clear understanding of structure, harmonic language, requirements of instruments being used, and notational practice. The student and supervising instructor will also agree upon a timeline for completing various stages of the research and writing portion of the project, which involves a process of submissions and revisions (see suggested schedule above at 2.1).

3) **RESEARCH PAPER**: Students writing a research paper follow a strictly defined process, as negotiated with the supervising faculty, for completing their paper. This process includes (minimally), identification of a proper topic, creation of an annotated bibliography of supportive resources, and submission of several drafts as evidence of editing and revision (see suggested schedule above at 3.1).

4) **All students** will demonstrate the ability to apply current and critical thinking in a focused area of study through their writing and performance, and weekly meetings with the supervising faculty member will allow constant monitoring of progress toward completion of the project.

5) The 1-page reflection will accompany the final project as described in the column to the left. It will be submitted to the supervising faculty member; since this is a personal statement based on the student’s experience, the faculty member will only make editorial suggestions to the student.

6) An end-of-term day of presentations will happen during finals week. All students in MUS 490 will present their papers for the entire music faculty. All majors are invited to attend as well. In addition, public performances for each individual LECTURE-RECITAL and COMPOSITION student will be scheduled during the final weeks of the term.

7) Faculty members who teach Composition and Music Theory will evaluate the composition once complete to assess accuracy and appropriateness of the music notation in communicating the student’s intent.

8) All students will engage in the process of submitting papers to the supervising faculty member for editing and revisions.

9) The final paper, regardless of concentration area, will be assessed for documentation, bibliographic references, and organization as they reflect on the achievement of academic goals.