

MUS 11D: HISTORY OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC: ORIGINS-1970

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

| Heading | Value |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Effective Term: | Summer 2025 |
| Units: | 4 |
| Hours: | 4 lecture, 1 laboratory per week (60 total per quarter) |
| Degree & Credit Status: | Degree-Applicable Credit Course |
| Foothill GE: | Area 3: Arts & Humanities |
| Transferable: | CSU/UC |
| Grade Type: | Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass) |
| Repeatability: | Not Repeatable |

Description

The impact of electronic musical instruments and electronic musical technology on the creation of music. Origins in the late 19th and early 20th century and the subsequent development of the first electronic instruments. Emergence of new musical styles including electroacoustic music, music concrete, and elektronische musik. The first use of computers in music. Performance with live electronics. The introduction of the synthesizer and the rise of mainstream electronic music. In addition, students will analyze historically significant works from the experimental art music of the mid-20th century through the popular forms of the 1960s.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Describe and discuss the history of electronic music from its origins through 1970.
- Analyze electronic music instruments and how they affect musical content and aesthetics.
- Identify electronic music styles from the first electronic sound experiments through the multitude of global styles found in the second half of the twentieth century.
- Write comprehensive analyses of changes in electronic music technology and the resulting electronic music styles.

Course Content

- Electronic music before 1945
 - First experiments in the electronic production of sound
 - The Italian Futurists and a new aesthetic for sound
 - The vacuum tube and advances in electronic music technology
- Early electronic music in Europe
 - Before the tape recorder
 - Musique concrete (France)
 - Elektronische musik (Germany)
 - Italian electronic music
 - British electronic music
- Early electronic music in America
 - The New York School
 - The Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center

- The Cooperative School for Electronic Music
- Early electronic music around the globe
 - Latin America
 - Asia
- Tape music composition
 - Fundamental sonic traits
 - Methods and techniques for sound manipulation
- Early synthesizers
 - Synthesizer predecessors
 - Scott and Le Caine
- The voltage controlled synthesizer
 - The Moog synthesizer
 - The Buchla synthesizer
 - Other commercial synthesizers
- Early computer music
 - Mainframe computers
 - Development of musical programming languages
 - Early compositions

Lab Content

- Laboratory activities are provided for students to practice and apply their theoretical knowledge regarding music structural characteristics (rhythm, melody, form, instrumentation, and harmony), genre, and style. The lab content includes:
 - In-depth, guided listening to music examples.
 - Additional opportunities are provided through critical analysis of live concerts, films and documentaries.
 - Learning is assessed in module quizzes and essays.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

- When taught on campus: classroom sound equipment for compact discs, audiotape and records, screen, overhead projector, slide projector, VCR and DVD.
- When taught via Foothill Global Access: on-going access to computer with email software and capabilities; email address; JavaScript enabled internet browsing software.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

- Quizzes on each of the topic areas
- Essays in response to prompts that ask for critical exploration of a topic related to the parts of the course or concert reviews
- Final examination or comprehensive project: in-depth analysis of an electronic musician including biography focusing on influences, analysis of music example for structural characteristics, personal impact, interpretation of lyrics, etc.

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

- Lecture presentations and classroom discussion of electronic music
- In-class listening to historically significant works of electronic music followed by instructor-guided interpretation and analysis
- Group presentations of major projects followed by in-class discussion and evaluation

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Holmes, Thom. Electronic and Experimental Music: Technology, Music, and Culture. 2020.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

A. Reading assignments: Reading of modules for each of the module topics plus online summary.

B. Writing assignments: Essays responding to a prompt.

Discipline(s)

Music or Commercial Music