This course is designed to introduce students to the concepts and techniques of concert music composition. Through analysis of standard repertoire, students will be introduced to techniques of melodic, harmonic, and formal construction. Students will then practice these skills through guided assignments and put them to creative use in composition projects. Students will study a broad range of works by major composers from all musical eras, gaining insight into different compositional styles and techniques, notation, and instrumentation.

Required Materials: There is no required textbook, but students must have a notebook of music staff paper and pencil/eraser at all class meetings. Access to music notation software (Sibelius or Finale) is recommended, but not required.

Academic Integrity:

Sharing of ideas is strongly encouraged in this course. Students are encouraged to discuss and share their work with one another at all possible opportunities. Plagiarism, however, will not be tolerated, and all assignments must be completed independently.

“Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person--be it a world-class philosopher or your lab partner--without proper acknowledgement of that source. This means that you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas found in published volumes, on the internet, or created by another student.

“Violations of University policies on academic integrity, described in Section 3 of Rights and Responsibilities, may result in failure in the course or on the assignment, and could end in suspension from the University. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, you must ask.

Attendance Policy:

The course will involve a combination of class lectures and one-on-one instruction. Attendance is taken at all scheduled class meetings. You may accumulate three unexcused absences without penalty; after three, your final grade for the course will be docked one notch for each class missed. (A 90 becomes an 85.) Please arrive to class on time. Three late arrivals will amount to one unexcused absence. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor and make arrangements to make up any missed assignments.
Disabilities:

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

Grading:

The grade for this course is determined as follows:

- Written work (analysis/worksheets/quizzes): 40%
- Concert Reports: 20%
- Composition Project 1: 20%
- Composition Project 2: 20%

Assignments must be completed by designated due dates. Late submissions may be accepted by the instructor for reduced credit at the discretion of the instructor. Concert reports will require attendance at 2 concert performances of new music. Composition projects will be graded objectively without any prejudice towards style or aesthetic direction. Grading will be based on demonstration of techniques covered in class and notation. The midterm and final composition projects will be performed and recorded at in-class concerts.

Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

Course Schedule (Estimated. All scheduled items subject to change. Any assigned reading should be finished in advance of the scheduled class meeting):

Friday 8/28 – No Class

Week 1:
Tuesday 9/1 – Course Overview & Introduction to Composition

Friday 9/4 – Conventions of Notation

Week 2:
Tuesday 9/8 – Melodic Construction

Friday 9/11 – Compositional Analysis - Melody

Week 3:
Tuesday 9/15 – Rosh Hashanah – No class

Friday 9/18 – Harmonic Construction
Week 4:
Tuesday 9/22 – Compositional Analysis - Harmony

Friday 9/25 – Rhythmic Construction and Analysis

Week 5:
Tuesday 9/29 – Brandeis Monday Schedule – No class

Friday 10/2 – Project 1 Instrumental demo

Week 6:
Tuesday 10/6 – Project 1 work/Individual meetings

Friday 10/9 – Project 1 work/Individual meetings

Week 7:
Tues 10/13 – Project 1 work/Group meetings

Friday 10/16 – Composition Project 1 In-Class Performance/Recording

Week 8:
Tuesday 10/20 – Accompaniments, Surface Design and Texture

Friday 10/23 – Compositional Analysis: Surface Design and Musical Form

Week 9:
Tuesday 10/27 – Chamber Ensemble Instrumentation

Friday 10/30 – Instrumentation

Week 10:
Tuesday 11/3 – Project 2 Instrumentation Demo

Friday 11/6 – Contemporary Techniques: Modality and Synthetic Scales

Week 11:
Tuesday 11/10 – Contemporary Techniques: Serialism and Atonality

Thurs 11/13 – No class

Week 12:
Tuesday 11/17 – No class

Friday 11/20 – Contemporary Techniques: Minimalism and Process Forms
Week 13:
Tuesday 11/24 – Contemporary Techniques: Aleatoric and Indeterminate Structures

Friday 11/27 – Thanksgiving Break – No class

Week 14:
Tuesday 12/1 – Project 2 Progress Check-in

Friday 12/4 – Project 2 Progress Check-in

Week 15:
Tuesday 12/8 – Composition Project 2 In-Class Performance/Recording
   Concert Report #2 due