

MTH 293 Introduction to Composition  
Spring 2011  
Final Project Guidelines

I. Form

- A. You need one. Have a plan.
- B. There are a variety of forms suitable for this project, but the list below may help you get started (just no through-composed or improvisatory varieties, please).
  - 1. A short rondo.
  - 2. A short theme and variations.
  - 3. Ternary.
  - 4. Arch form (ABCBA).
- C. Unless your piece is *very* slow, keep it **under five** minutes.

II. Instrumentation

- A. Be conservative with your forces (nothing larger than a quintet).
- B. Some different combination of instruments than you used for the first project.
  - 1. It will probably *not* be very edifying for you to go from one type of instrumental quartet to another, for example.
  - 2. I would encourage you to explore some different combination and/or size of ensemble.
  - 3. There will be time for your symphony later. For this project, do not get overly ambitious—sometimes simpler is better.

III. Pitch Content

- A. Become a member of the current century. We have a larger harmonic/melodic vocabulary available to us than any generation of composers before us, so take advantage of some of those resources.
- B. You need not base your entire composition on a particular mode or synthetic scale. However, you should use these sorts of elements (harmonically or linearly) in your composition. Even if you don't care for octatonic scales, for example, you could find something that that pitch collection does that strikes you as interesting and/or dramatic.
- C. Pitch Collections and Harmonic Language we've discussed
  - 1. Chromatic
  - 2. Octatonic scales
  - 3. Whole Tone
  - 4. Pentatonic (major or minor)
  - 5. Modes
  - 6. Parsimonious (neo-Riemannian) Progressions

IV. Other

- A. Make it music.
  - 1. Dynamics.
  - 2. Articulations.
  - 3. Tempi.
  - 4. Expressions.
- B. Make it idiomatic.
  - 1. Learn what sorts of things sound natural to your instruments.
  - 2. This goes beyond considerations like range. I am referring to melodic patterns and musical gestures that work well for the instrument in question.