

# MUS 317: Counterpoint

Credit: 3 semester hours

MWF 8:00am–8:50am

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Aven 404

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**Required Text:** *Counterpoint*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., by Kent Kennan (Prentice).

**Prerequisites:** Completion of MUS 202–206. Transfer students with credit for 2<sup>nd</sup>-year theory from other institutions must pass a diagnostic theory test or pass MUS 202 with a C.

**Course Description:** This course presents the elements of 18<sup>th</sup>-century counterpoint. Work is accomplished through composition and analysis exercises in the style of J.S.Bach.

**Rationale:** The contrapuntal practices of 18<sup>th</sup>-century composers form the basis of most music by serious, subsequent composers. The techniques learned in this class apply to almost any type of music. Such studies are critical for the music student in order to gain an understanding of the music of the last three hundred years.

## Learning Objectives:

1. Familiarize the student with the linear and harmonic principles of the contrapuntal music of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as exemplified in the works of Bach.
2. Apply the principles of common-practice harmony and voice leading learned in the first two years of music theory study.
3. Introduce the student to some of the greatest literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in which contrapuntal forms and practices may be recognized and studied.
4. Guide the student through a series of graduated exercises that require the use of compositional techniques to produce music of increasing length and complexity.

**Academic Integrity:** While students are encouraged to study and practice together, turning in work that is not one's own will result in no (zero) credit. The student should read Policy 2.19 on Academic Honesty in the current Mississippi College Student Handbook.

**Methods of Instruction:** Lectures, reading assignments, written projects and listening.

**Grading:** Tests and projects covering lectures, readings, analyses and listening will be given throughout. Final grades will be determined as follows:

A = 93–100%

B = 85–92%

C = 78–84%

D = 70–77%

F = 69% or lower.

Notes:

1. Students who miss a test due to an unexcused absence will be given a zero for the test and will not be permitted to make it up. If you are absent because of illness, you may make up the test after the subsequent class period if you present a doctor's excuse. If you know you are going to miss a test because of a school-sponsored event, plan ahead and take the test early.
  2. Being absent for more than 25% of the scheduled class meetings will result in an automatic F.
  3. More than three late-arrivals will result in the lowering of your final average.
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### Course Calendar:

Week 1	Read Chapters 1–3. Basic melody writing.
Week 2	Read Chapter 4. Assignments in two-voice writing, note-against-note.
Week 3	Diatonic and chromatic exercises in 2:1, major and minor keys.
Week 4	3:1 counterpoint exercises. 4:1 counterpoint exercises.
Week 5	Read chapters 5–6. 4:1 counterpoint exercises. Conversion exercises.
Week 6	<b>Species Counterpoint Test, including listening WTCL, #1–12</b> Read chapter 7.
Week 7	Periodic form and the Dance Suite. Two-voice composition assignment. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Continuous binary form.</li><li>b. At least two phrases in part one; at least four phrases in part two.</li><li>c. Cadences: HC-PAC in closely-related key    HC/PAC in CRK    HC/PAC in tonic key    PAC in tonic key.</li><li>d. Melodic development, harmonic progression, unity, clarity of phrases and cadences are all factors in grading; the student may feel free to use a work by Bach or Handel as a model.</li></ol>
Week 8	<b>Fall Break</b> Chapter 8. Canon
Week 9	Chapter 9. Invertible counterpoint. Chapter 10. Two-part inventions. Writing sequences, motives.
Week 10	Analysis of inventions. <b>Dance Suite and Invention Test</b>
Week 11	Chapter 11, 13. Three-voice counterpoint and imitation. Real and tonal answers. Writing tonal answers.
Week 12	Chapters 15–17. Fugue, terminology, common elements. Three-voice expositions. Analysis of fugues.
Week 13	Assignment of final project. Analysis of fugues. Writing episodes.

- Week 14      **Fugue Analysis Test, including listening WTCL, #13–24.**  
**Thanksgiving Break**
- Week 15      Concert fugues by various composers: Brahms, Britten, etc.  
Individual help with project.
- Week 16      Individual help with project.  
Review for final examination.

**Final Examination:** Wednesday, December 12, 8:00am–11:00am.

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In order for a student to receive disability accommodations under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, he or she must contact Student Counseling Services (SCS). SCS will assist with information regarding the appropriate policy and procedure for disability accommodations before each semester or upon immediate recognition of the disability. SCS is located in Alumni Hall Room #4 or you may contact them by phone at 601-925-7790. The Director of Student Counseling Services, Dr. Bryant may be reached via email at mbryant@mc.edu.