Assessment for Creative Music Technology (MUSI2641)

This module allows a great opportunity to study electronic music composition and music technology. Assessment is via studio composition tasks utilising software and equipment introduced to you this year.

As well as a variety of practical training in class, there will be formative assessments with feedback at the beginning of the first two terms of the module, to prepare you for the following summative assessments.

There are three summative assessments spread over the module, from the first Practical Assignment at the end of the autumn (Michaelmas) term, through another Practical Assignment in the spring (Epiphany) term to a Final Project due in the Easter term. This document gives details on these assignments; we will go through these formally in class at set times indicated in the module overview (http://composerprogrammer.com/teaching/CMT/creativemusictech.html).

It may help you to bear in mind when preparing your submissions that you are expected to demonstrate a professional competence in working with technology and preparing your materials, and a musical sensitivity in your compositional work. Make sure when you submit project files that you submit everything required to run the project so a marker can see and run your work. If you are careful with your file management and keep everything within a single top folder, you will find it straight-forward to submit to the network drive location required. Also think carefully about the compositional flow of your work; do any technical weaknesses (e.g., poor editing) distract from the listener experience? Is there an engaging musical argument through the piece?

Assignment	Explained	Deadline	Feedback	Percentage
Formative exercise 1	Term 1 Week 1	Term 1 Week 4 (6th Nov, 1pm)	Term 1 Week 7	N/A
Practical Assignment 1	Term 1 Week 4	Term 1 Week 10 (18th Dec, 1pm)	Term 2 Week 1	25%
Formative exercise 2	Term 2 Week 1	Term 2 Week 4 (12th Feb, 1pm)	Term 2 Week 7	N/A
Practical Assignment 2	Term 2 Week 4	Term 2 Week 9 (18th March, 1pm)	Term 3 Week 1	25%
Final project	Term 2 Week 8	Term 3 Week 5 (20th May, 1pm)	Summer vacation	50%

How to find the network music drive

To find the directory for the module, you need to go to the network music drive:
On a PC: go to M:\CMT
On a Mac: go to network music/CMT (look for muspc45 under SHARED). Full path from Studio 1 Mac is /Volumes/network music/CMT
or if in Terminal or similar:
/Volumes/network\ music/CMT (Unix pathname way with space indicated)

Formative Exercise

You will use Audacity (and ONLY Audacity) to create a short 1 minute composition from a single provided sound.

In the CMT folder on the network music drive is a starting point sound file, "formative.wav", in the folder Sound Sources.

Using only this sound file, create a one minute stereo piece built from multiple layers of audio. You may combine Audio Tracks to create the final mixdown, and you may only use the following operations:
Fade In and Fade Out
Gain and Pan (sliders on left of track)
Reverse
Cut, copy, paste of material at any zoom level

You will hand in:
Audacity .aup project file for the work showing the multiple tracks (along with the sound files folder PROJECTNAME_data)
Finished render of the audio: 44100Hz sampling rate, 16 bit resolution .wav file (export from your project)

All this data should be placed in a folder given your full name, within the Formative Exercise 1 folder within the CMT folder on the network music drive M:

Practical Assignment 1

In this assignment you will use Pro Tools, Logic or Sonar to create a two minute stereo electroacoustic composition.

In the Sound Sources folder within the CMT folder on the network music M: drive is the starting point sound file, "assignment1.wav". Your aim is to create an entire electroacoustic composition from only this. You are encouraged to creatively apply editing, layering of audio tracks and effects processes via plug-ins and plug-in automation, to make an engaging composition.

You will hand in:
A) 500 word commentary analysing and contextualising your piece and its creation (e.g., what musical principles did you use? Can you connect your work to historic electronic music and reading you've undertaken providing appropriate references?)
B) Finished render of the audio: 44100Hz sampling rate, 16 bit resolution .wav file
C) Project data for the work. You will use one of Pro Tools, Logic or Sonar, using NO third party plug-ins unavailable to the markers (plug-ins that come with the software by default are fine)

All this data should be placed in a folder given your full name, in the practical assignment 1 folder within the CMT folder on the network music drive M:

You will also, for marking and external moderating purposes, supply a labelled physical copy of the data excluding the project files, so provide A) and B) above. Submit a print out of the commentary, and an

audio or data CD-ROM or DVD-ROM or USB stick of the final work (the finished render B) above), to the submission box by the department administrator's office by the deadline.

Formative Exercise 2

In this assignment you will use sound synthesis to create a two minute stereo electroacoustic composition. There is no recorded material as a starting point for manipulation; instead, all sound must arise from the use of hardware or software sound synthesizers. You may use sequencing of synthesizers (e.g. MIDI) to make interesting patterns, though keep an ear to the timbre of what you are producing (Only chaining together a few arpeggios using a sampler glockenspiel sound is not going to make the most varied or impressive composition).

You should not overtly use long samples/recorded material; although sample-based synthesis is permissible (where the originating sounds tend to be short waveform segments), the emphasis is on the interesting sound palette available in synthesizers, and you are encouraged to create a variety of compositionally effective sounds (exploring filtering, modulation, low frequency oscillators, enveloping, effects etc.). You may creatively apply editing, layering of audio tracks and effects processes via plug-ins and plug-in automation, to finish an engaging composition.

You will hand in:
A) 500 word commentary analysing and contextualising your piece and its creation (e.g., what sound synthesis processes did you use? Can you connect your work to historic electronic music and reading you've undertaken providing appropriate references?)
B) Finished render of the audio: 44100Hz sampling rate, 16 bit resolution .wav file
C) Project data for the work. You will use one of Pro Tools, Logic or Sonar, using NO third party plug-ins unavailable to the markers (plug-ins that come with the software by default are fine)

All this data should be placed in a folder given your full name, in the formative exercise 2 folder within the CMT folder on the network music drive M:

Practical Assignment 2

In this assignment you will create a soundtrack for a set video of just under two minutes duration. The video is on the M: drive in the CMT folder, in the VideoSources folder. Note that two versions of the source are provided, an .avi file for Sonar on a PC, and a Quicktime movie (.mov) file for Logic or Pro Tools on a Mac; use the one appropriate to your digital audio workstation choice.

Your choice of musical material is up to you using any technique taught so far in the module; you may use synthesizer instruments, sound file importing and manipulation, and effects units. The only stipulation is that any sound file material must either be recorded fresh by yourself, or must be free of any copyright restriction. You may use certain files with attribution in your commentary (e.g. Creative Commons samples from freesound.org), but must not use any private, copyrighted audio. You may however wish to deploy the BBC sound effects available on the network server in the studios.

You will hand in:
A) 500 word commentary analysing and contextualising your soundtrack and its creation (e.g., what sound sources and musical principles did you use? Can you connect your work to historic film music and reading you've undertaken providing appropriate references?)

B) Finished render of the video. Included audio should be at 44100Hz sampling rate, 16 bit resolution. Video may otherwise use any standard compression codec for the visuals and be in any standard video format (e.g. MP4, Quicktime movie).
C) Project data for the work. You will use one of Pro Tools, Logic or Sonar, using NO third party plug-ins unavailable to the markers (plug-ins that come with the software by default are fine)

All this data should be placed in a folder given your full name, in the practical assignment 2 folder within the CMT folder on the network music drive M:

You will also, for marking and external moderating purposes, supply a labelled physical copy of the data excluding the project files, so provide A) and B) above. Submit a print out of the commentary, and a data CD-ROM or DVD-ROM or USB stick of the final work (the finished render B) above), to the submission box by the department administrator's office in good time before the deadline.

Final Project

In the final project for this module you will create a 5 minute composition showcasing the technical and compositional skills you have developed, and justify it with respect to the electronic music research context. You can use Pro Tools, Logic or Sonar as your main DAW for the project. Optionally, you can explore the use of surround sound, making a multi-channel (up to eight speaker) or 5.1 work. Your piece can utilise non-copyrighted recorded audio and/or sound synthesis. You are free to record your own source sounds if desired including via location recording, and employ any techniques introduced in the module and involved in any previous assignment. You are encouraged to aim for an exciting and engaging composition that demonstrates your prowess in the electroacoustic medium.

You will hand in:
A) 500 word commentary analysing and contextualising your piece and its creation
B) Up to 100 words technical set-up instructions for surround sound playback if required (e.g., how you configured Studio 2 to playback your piece, image of patchbay or other helpful information on playing back your piece accurately)
C) Finished render of the audio at 44100Hz sampling rate, 16 bit resolution (multi-channel works: supply one mono .wav file per channel, clearly labelled, e.g. for 5.1 provide six channels, Left, Centre, Right, Side Left, Side Right, sub .1)
D) Project data for the work. You will use one of Pro Tools, Logic or Sonar as your main project authoring tool; you may use any third party music software in addition (please mention use of additional software in an appendix to your commentary).

All this data should be placed in a folder given your full name, in the final project folder within the CMT folder on the network music drive M:

You will also, for marking and external moderating purposes, supply a labelled physical copy of the data excluding the project files, so provide A) and C) above, and optionally B), e.g., if you create a multi-channel piece beyond stereo. Submit a print out of the commentary and any technical instructions, and an audio or data CD-ROM or DVD-ROM or USB stick of the final work (the finished render C) above), to the submission box by the department administrator's office by the deadline.

Assessment Criteria for Creative Music Technology (also in the Module Handbook)

Grading Criteria

Class	Grade	Criteria
I	86–100	Exemplary: Brilliantly original creative work which challenges the research boundaries of composition with music technology. Exemplary quality of recording and/or treatment of sound materials. Exceptional and sophisticated critical commentary fully engaged with the research sphere.
	76–85	Outstanding: Original creative work demonstrating a highly convincing degree of musical ability which engages with the research boundaries of composition with music technology. A very high quality of recording and/or treatment of sound materials. A sophisticated critical commentary which treats the research domain of music technology impressively.
	70–75	Excellent: Strong evidence of originality and ability in the creative task, approached in a distinctive and musically aware manner with real flair and critical judgement. An excellent quality of recording and/or treatment of sound materials, and a strong critical commentary with excellent coverage of the research domain.
II(i)	65–69	Very good: Some evidence of originality in the approach to the creative task, and very good evidence of musicality. Effective recording and/or treatment of sound materials of clear quality. The critical commentary shows intelligent use of the research context.
	60–64	Good: Some limited evidence of originality in the approach to the creative task, and good evidence of musicality. Recording and/or treatment of sound materials that works well for the task and has no obvious defects. The critical commentary shows engagement with the research context if missing some opportunities for deeper analysis.
II(ii)	55–59	A satisfactory effort: The creative task demonstrates musicality, if lacking evidence of original thought. Command of the technical skills required in recording and/or manipulating sound will be basically secure. The critical commentary makes some attempt to survey the research domain but lacks deeper insight and analysis.
	50–54	A satisfactory effort: The creative task demonstrates musicality, if lacking evidence of original thought. Command of the technical skills required in recording and/or manipulating sound will be basically secure if let down by occasional glitches. The critical commentary makes a basic attempt to survey the research domain but lacks critical engagement.
III	45–49	An adequate effort: The creative task demonstrates some evidence of musicality, though lacks any originality. There is a limited command of the technical skills used for recording

		and/or manipulating sounds. The critical commentary is weak, offering a little knowledge of the topic but lacking any deeper engagement.
	40–44	An adequate effort: The creative task demonstrates some evidence of musicality, though lacks any originality. There are identifiable weaknesses in the technical skills used for recording and/or manipulating sounds. The critical commentary is weak, offering shallow knowledge of the topic but lacking any deeper engagement.
Fail	35–39	A less than adequate effort: undermined by significant flaws in the recording and/or manipulation of sound materials and an insecure command of the technical skills required. Limited evidence of musicality in managing the creative aspects of the task. The critical commentary is cursory, without research context.
	30–34	A poor effort: with widespread inadequacies in the recording and/or manipulation of sound materials and a seriously flawed command of the technical skills required to fulfil the assignment. Little evidence of musicality in addressing the creative aspects of the task. The critical commentary is very limited in scope, without research context.
	0–29	An extremely poor effort: very little or no evidence of application to the creative task and musicality. Extremely poor technical ability. Very limited to non-existent critical commentary.