

**LONGY SCHOOL OF MUSIC OF BARD COLLEGE**  
**TH514A: INVENT YOUR NOTATION!**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2019**

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Class Website: <http://jhmedu.org/invent>  
Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday noon-12:45, Room L-10  
Credit Hours: 2  
Meeting Times: Wednesday 9:00 – 10:55  
Location: Room L-10

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION, RATIONALE, AND GOALS**

Music notation has been an ongoing experiment for over a thousand years, and has changed the way music is presented, heard, and considered. The modern era has seen an especially large number of innovations. Our class will make its contribution as well, and the way that happens is up to the participants. There is no set agenda for the class beyond that of a project-based course, which it matches in every stage: we will design the course itself, we will explore what others have done, we will invent the notation we use to create our music, and we will perform the music that results.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES**

There is no agenda for the class but that we will invent notation and perform pieces using it. All the other details are for us to determine. Early class meetings will consist of discussions of what we will do (e.g., all individual notation solutions, or a group-led effort to create a shared system?), how we will do it, when and where the concert will be, and so forth. There are myriad decisions to be made, and it is up to the class to make them.

Regular, punctual attendance is mandatory. Simply do not miss class. Roll will be taken every day. One is allowed one free absence, which includes sickness. If one misses more than one class, one's semester grade will be lowered by a letter grade per class missed (i.e. A becomes B, then C, then D, and so on with each successive absence.) Three late arrivals equals one absence.

Homework will be determined by the group, but one can expect that early on we will likely seek examples of and resources to find more experimental notation, while later the work will be to devise and use that notation in pieces we compose.

We will eventually give a concert of the music we have composed, and it will be one of the first things to decide whether we give the concert at Longy only (and in what time and place), or to also present it in another venue. All such arrangements will be made by students in the class.

For success in Invent Your Notation!, students are advised to:

- 1) come to class every day.
- 2) participate in class discussions.
- 3) take on tasks that advance the class goals.
- 4) think deeply, broadly, and open-mindedly about notation.
- 5) complete a credible piece using invented notation.
- 6) have the piece performed on the class concert.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

As a result of completing the course, a student will:

- learn how to locate musical examples online.
- learn to understand what notational systems intend to communicate.
- learn to devise a notation that specifies the outcome one wants.
- learn the value of knowing what one wants in a performance.

- demonstrate one's notation.
- adjust to reality of performers' attempts to deal with one's invention.
- learn the value of existing, widely comprehended notational systems.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is expected that all work submitted is one's own. Simply do your own work.

## ATTENDANCE

Everyone should attend every class, on time. The beginning of each class sets out the goals for the class, and if one misses that introduction, one might not grasp the point of what we are doing. Therefore, three late arrival will result in a mark equivalent to a missed class. Three missed classes will result in a loss of letter grade.

## EVALUATION

The final grade will be determined as below:

- Steadiness of work, homework completion (30%)
- Completion of a piece of between 2 and 10 minutes (30%)
- Completion and submission of a notated score using invented notation (20%)
- Carrying out assigned tasks on time (10%)
- Performance of the piece on final concert (10%)

## GRADING SCALE

Numerals in parentheses indicate value assigned to letter grades when computing averages.

A	94-100	(97)	C	73-76	(75)
A-	90-93	(92)	C-	70-72	(71)
B+	87-89	(88)	D+	65-69	(67)
B	83-86	(85)	D	60-64	(62)
B-	80-82	(81)	F	0-59	(55)
C+	77-79	(78)			

## MISSED WORK, MAKEUPS, INCOMPLETES

Homework and tasks are due as assigned, and are pass-fail: if not completed on time, the grade for that assignment or task is fail, and will be averaged with others of the same type to generate an average. Regarding incompletes, our catalog states that "an incomplete may not be given primarily to allow a student to raise his or her grade to a passing grade for the course, ensemble, or lessons in question." Incompletes are only used in the case of unexpected occurrences which prevent a student from completing the coursework, *not* in cases where students simply let unfinished work accumulate beyond the point of no return in a semester.

## COURSE OUTLINE

Though the class will be designed and enacted by those taking it, this vague course outline is likely to be followed:

- week 1: orientation, some examples
- weeks 2-5: students required to bring examples of notation and recordings of pieces which use them
- weeks 6-10: experiments in developing notation and attempting to perform it
- weeks 11-13: rehearsals and fine-tuning of scores and performances
- week 13 or during exam-jury: public concert and display of manuscripts

## ASSIGNMENTS

To be determined by the group, with descriptions posted weekly to the class website.