

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University  
Visual and Performing Arts Department Degree Proposal

**Proposal 19-11**  
(Voting Units: Academic)

**“Minor in Music Composition”**

1. Introduction:

The minor in Music Composition integrates traditional studies in music theory, orchestration and composition with current technologies in sound design and audio production, embracing the Michigan Technological University vision and mission of melding its technological resources with Science and Arts resources. This minor would be available to all students, but the primary goal of creating the minor in music composition is to enhance our existing majors of Sound Design and Audio production. It would provide our majors with additional skills in the area of music composition, focusing on media, including live theatre and entertainment; documentary; industrial, and educational film/video; digital arts; and gaming performance.

2. Rationale:

The Department of Visual and Performing Arts currently awards two degrees that require expertise in the area of composition: Sound Design and Audio Production. Few universities offering these degrees require music courses as part of the major and most provide little or no training in the area of composition despite the fact that students are required to compose music when employed. Michigan Tech would be unique in that our students, unlike those in other Sound Design Programs, may receive training in this area, thus providing them with a competitive edge in the workforce. It is anticipated that about 12 students will initially enroll in this minor, and in the future it is possible that all Sound Design majors (currently 20) will enroll in this minor.

In the region no other colleges or universities offer a minor in music composition. Of the nine universities surveyed, seven offered a minor in general music. Five of these schools offer no courses in composition.

While most of the degree programs in Sound Design/Audio Production do not require or even offer music courses to students in their programs, a very few (Savannah College of Art and Design and Cal Poly) require music courses as part of the degree. These universities recognize the importance of music courses, and especially composition courses, as part of the curriculum. The only benchmark institution that offers a BA in Sound Design and also offers a minor in Music Composition is Carnegie Mellon making the minor in music composition combined with a BA in Sound Design unique among regional, benchmark and national institutions.

3. Details of Catalog Copy:

- I. Title of Minor:: Music Composition
- II. Catalog Description:

The minor in Music Composition integrates traditional studies in music theory, orchestration, form analysis and composition with current

technologies in sound design and audio production. The emphasis is both on techniques of traditional contemporary composition and composition for media including live theatre; entertainment; documentary, industrial, and educational film/video; digital arts, and gaming performance.

### III. List of Courses

#### a) Required Courses:

FA 2500 Music Theory I	3
FA 3530 Music Theory II	3
FA 3560 Music History	3
FA 3112 Techniques of Contemporary Composition	3
FA 3122 Composition for Media	3
FA 4970 Final Project	1

#### b) Elective Courses:

Performing Ensemble (see list below)	1
--------------------------------------	---

Performance ensemble requirement to be fulfilled by the R&D Big Band, Jazz Lab Band, Jazz Combo, Jazz Improvisation, Pep Band, University Chorus, Superior Winds or Keweenaw Symphony Orchestra or Chamber Music.

#### c) Total Program Credit Hours 17 Credits

### IV. Prerequisites:

None. FA 2500 has no prerequisites and is the prerequisite for the courses in the minor.

### 4. New Course Descriptions:

Two new courses were created for students interested in composition. These form the advanced courses in the formal minor.

FA 3112 – Techniques of Contemporary Composition has been designed as a study in the art of acoustic instrumental, vocal and MIDI composition. Topics that will be explored include the study of musical styles, forms, orchestration and esthetics. We will look at music of pre-20th Century and contemporary composers and explore how this music is relevant to our own. Prerequisite: FA 2500.

FA 3122 – Composition for Media has been designed as a continuation of Techniques of Contemporary Composition. Students will continue to study contemporary compositional techniques and apply these techniques to composition for media – including theatre, television and digital cinema and gaming performance. Prerequisite: FA 2500.

### 5. Estimated Costs:

Facilities and Equipment – Facilities and equipment are already available for the teaching of this program. No additional resources will be required.

Personnel – The cost of a part-time instructor to teach two composition courses will be supported by the Department. No additional expense will be incurred by the University.

6. Planned Implementation Date:

Fall 2011

**Introduced to Senate: 02 March 2011**

**Adopted by Senate: 23 March 2011**

**Approved by Administration: 31 March 2011**