

MUCP 4680/5680
Fall 2009
Project #1: instrumentality

Two options, as follows.

Option 1: instrument design (invent an instrument to suit your needs)
2-3 pages of writing

Based on your experience with acoustic and electronic instruments, imagine a novel instrument and a mode of performance appropriate to it. Describe its design features and virtues. How would it be played? How do performers' actions relate to resulting sounds? To what kind of music-making would it be best suited?

Some issues to address:

- interface / control
- physicality
- musical opportunities
- correspondences with existing instrumental designs or technologies
- correspondences with existing modes of performance
- extrovert (visible) and introvert (hidden) aspects of performance practice

The instrument need not be entirely practical to build, but should at least be plausible (no pixie-dust sound-engines).

Option 2: performance practice (adapt your needs to suit an instrument)
1-2 pages of writing, plus a performance demonstration

Practice making sounds and musical gestures with either the Theremin or the test tone generator. Develop a sound world and performance practice that let your imagination engage with the interface, physicality, and opportunities of the instrument.

Prepare (practice!) a brief musical excerpt (original composition or adapted from repertoire) that you feel provides a good example of your performance practice for the instrument.

Write a brief essay describing:

- the musical goals of this mode of performance
- why it is an appropriate mode of performance for this instrument
- how one performs in this manner (brief instructions/guidelines)
- future directions: limitations to overcome, desired developments for the instrument, unexplored opportunities