

PhD/DMA Programs in Music

Fall 2017 Course Descriptions

MUS 84200: Current Trends in Music Theory – Professor Joseph Straus

A survey of recent developments in the field of Music Theory. Topics may include transformation theory, neo-Riemannian theory, Klumpenhouwer networks, atonal voice leading, embodiment, theoretical approaches to jazz, rock, pop, non-Western, and early music, recent theories of tonal form, semiotics, chromatic harmony, gender and sexuality, analysis and performance, and perception and cognition. The course will feature guest lectures from within and outside CUNY.

MUS 86300: Seminar in Musicology: Music & Humanism – Professor Chadwick Jenkins

In some ways, the very notion of the “renaissance” as a descriptor for the period in music roughly spanning 1450-1600 is predicated on cultural movements collectively described as “humanism.” And yet there are several concerns that arise when applying either of these terms to music. If the Renaissance in general is a “rebirth” of concerns, aesthetic and ethical, deriving from Antiquity, then in what sense can that apply to music when the actual music of Antiquity remained *terra incognita* (and the only explicit attempts to recuperate something of the ancient style come at the very end of this period)? If *musica* moves from its medieval position in the quadrivium to some satellite position within the *studia humanitatis*, then what is gained and lost by that shift? Indeed, music occupies a fundamentally ambiguous position in Renaissance thought, partly because of the Renaissance’s continued efforts to reconcile Platonic and Aristotelian concepts.

This course will examine Renaissance musical humanism by taking a fairly broad look at musical scores, descriptions of musical practice, music-theoretical writings, and philosophies of music. We will focus on specific moments and repertoires that bring to light the richness and complexity of music’s relationship to Renaissance humanism. We will also concern ourselves with the various ways in which the Renaissance has been represented in historical writings (both musicological and outside of that field). Topics will include: Josquin and the humanists; Luther as humanist and the music of early Lutheranism; Music and the Renaissance individual; Ficino’s philosophies of music as well as Neo-Pythagoreanism more broadly; the French humanist tradition and *musique mesurée à l’antique*; Aristotelianism and Platonism in Renaissance music theory; the Petrarch project of the Madrigal and Bembism; the 1589 Intermedi as humanist projection; and the earliest formulations of opera as a simultaneous marker of proximity to and distance from the concerns of the ancients. Participants will be asked to submit short response papers every other week and the course will culminate in a more extended research paper.

MUS 85900: Advanced Schenkerian Analysis (Schenker III) – William Rothstein

An advanced course in the theory and practice of Schenkerian analysis. Close readings of writings by Schenker and others will supplement intensive work in analysis. An oral presentation and weekly written assignments will be required.

Prerequisite: Intermediate Schenkerian Analysis or consent of the instructor

MUS 88200: Seminar in Ethnomusicology: Sound in Society – Professor Eliot Bates

This seminar provides an introduction to the field of Sound Studies, including both the conceptual framework as well as practical techniques. We will begin with an overview of the field and its formation in 2004 through a consideration of the work of Trevor Pinch, Karin Bijsterveld and R Murray Schafer. Subsequent weeks will cover topics such as historical soundscapes, sounding the animal world, noise and silence in philosophy, the engineering of sound, sound and radio art, mobile listening, architectural acoustics, and synaesthesia research in cognitive psychology. Assignments for Sound in Society include weekly reading notes, a final research essay, oral presentations on the readings, and a critical soundscape recording (based on recordings that you capture and edit).

Note: formal knowledge of music is not a prerequisite.

MUS 71500: D.M.A Topics, Fall – Professor Norman Carey

D.M.A. Topics consists of two main areas: performance/analysis and an introduction to graduate studies aimed at D.M.A. students. The fall semester focuses primarily on analysis, looking forward to the D.M.A. First Exam given in the spring. The course will begin with a review of harmony and counterpoint and continue with form and phrase structure, harmonic rhythm, and some elements of set theory and serialism. We also examine some aspects of text/music relationships and elements of expression. Assignments will consist of analytical exercises and also analytical essays, which will help to focus on writing skills. (The second semester of the course will delve into research skills, leading to a mock dissertation proposal as a final project.)

MUS 74500: Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis – Professor Eric Wen

Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis will aim to develop an understanding of large-scale musical coherence through a study of the voice-leading and tonal organization of selected compositions. Through the analytic techniques learned in this course, students will gain a deeper understanding of how the principles of harmony and counterpoint operate in tandem, and determine the criteria for structural coherence in music of the common-practice period. In the process of doing so, students will be introduced to the analytic system of graphic notation developed by Heinrich Schenker. Beginning with short extracts and themes, by the end of the semester, a complete work will be analyzed. There is no textbook for the course, but all the musical works studied will be made available as photocopies.

MUS 70000: Introduction to Musicology – Professor Anne Stone

This course is intended to serve as an introduction to the discipline of musicology: its history, methodologies, resources, and debates. It is also intended to introduce the skills and habits of mind necessary for graduate work in musicology, including research and writing skills, the peer review process, and specific writing projects in our discipline, including reviews, abstracts, proposals, and thesis-driven essays. This course will also examine the changing place of technology in the field of musicology and consider ways in which technology affects the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

MUS 86500: Seminar in Musicology (Dramatic Genre): Critical Perspectives on U.S. Musical Theatre – Professor David Savran

Developed in the United States in the late nineteenth century, the Broadway musical has long been the most influential, adaptable, and category-defying theatrical form. This course will trace its genealogy and analyze its role in mediating between popular and elite cultures. We will pay special attention to the musical's relationship to other genres and media, its role in consolidating U.S.-American identities, its seemingly magical power to thrill and enrapture, and its status as a lightning rod for anxieties swirling around cultural legitimation in the U.S. We will also consider musical theatre as a global practice, looking at its European connections in the early twentieth century and its status today as world theatre.

The readings will focus on the history and historiography of the musical, from *The Merry Widow* (1907) and *Show Boat* (1927) to the works of Stephen Sondheim and *Hamilton* (2015), with critical analyses of music, text, performance, and reception. New scholarship—on the sociology of performance, orientalism, critical race theory, gender, and queer spectatorship—will be emphasized. The course will highlight musicals that have been particularly adept at challenging generic boundaries, including *Lady in the Dark*, *Street Scene*, *South Pacific*, *West Side Story*, and *Sunday in the Park with George*. Final grades will be determined by participation in seminar, three written reports, and a final paper.

MUS 88500: Composers Seminar – Professor Jason Eckardt

Weekly seminars will focus on specific issues or problems related to compositional practice. Topics will include systemic approaches to composition, perceptual issues, process and transformation, notation, timbre, and objectification.

MUS 83500: (Ethno)musicology and Social Theory – Professor Jane Sugarman

An introduction to some classic and contemporary schools of social thought that music scholars have drawn on in recent decades. Theoretical writings in sociology, anthropology, philosophy, history, cultural studies, feminist and postcolonial studies, and related fields will be paired with case studies that situate the creation, performance, circulation, and reception of music, and of sound more broadly, within the unfolding of societal processes. Writings that have been of particular interest to ethnomusicologists will be emphasized, but the case studies illustrating them will be drawn from all branches of music scholarship. We will begin with Marxist and Marxian approaches, continue with structuralism and semiotics, interpretive anthropology, and poststructuralism, and conclude with a selection of topics of current interest.

MUS 74100: Introduction to the Analysis of Post-Tonal Music – Professor David Schober

Western concert music of the twentieth century (and beyond) represents a tremendous variety of approaches to harmony, rhythm, texture, and form. While it is not possible in one semester to study every important composer of the period, we will examine a broad selection of these compositional techniques. It is essential to understand post-tonal languages in relation to earlier music, not in isolation from it; some of these musical styles resemble their nineteenth-century “ancestors” more than others, but all of them are, in some sense, the colorful offspring of traditional tonality.

In addition to the standard topics of set-class theory and classical twelve-tone techniques, we will examine Impressionism, octatonicism, and self-contained “systems” developed by individual composers. A common theme throughout the term will be the pervasive role of *symmetry* in post-tonal musical structure.

Students will regularly produce short model compositions and perform them in collaboration with their colleagues in the class. The principal texts will be the scores themselves, supplemented by an assortment of analytical readings.

MUS 86400: Seminar in Music History: 19th Century Song & Song Cycle [covering multiple settings of the same text and song cycles by Schubert and Schumann] – Professor Scott Burnham

We will begin by comparing multiple settings of Goethe’s poems “Erlkönig,” “Wanderers Nachtlied,” and “Kennst du das Land,” by composers such as Zelter, Loewe, Schubert, Schumann, Liszt and Wolf. The seminar will continue with the consideration of song cycles by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms and Wolf. Knowledge of German is helpful but not required.
