

PhD/DMA Programs in Music – Fall 2022 Course Descriptions

MUS 71500: D.M.A Topics, Fall – Professor Scott Burnham

The fall semester D. M. A. Topics seminar focuses primarily on music 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.

In class we will cover prepared analyses and will also do sight analyses. We will also read analyses by professional music analysts. In addition to weekly assignments, students will be responsible for several brief analytical presentations on pieces (or sections of pieces) that they are currently performing or intend to perform.

MUSIC 71200: Research Techniques in Ethnomusicology — Professor Jane Sugarman

This course provides an introduction to ethnomusicological research through an examination of classic and contemporary scholarship in the field. Weekly units will trace an intellectual history of the field from late 19th-century writings through a selection of current issues, interspersed with weeks devoted to practical aspects of ethnomusicology research. Assignments will include weekly readings; weekly response papers, oral reports, or short methodological exercises; and a final paper that critically assesses scholarship on music in one world area or related to one theoretical topic. This course is required of students concentrating in ethnomusicology, but students in other programs are welcome as well. Permission of instructor required.

MUS 83100: Seminar in Ethnomusicology: Music, Gender, Sexuality — Professor Jane Sugarman

Issues regarding gender and sexuality are intrinsic to any study that assesses music or sound as a social phenomenon. This seminar will examine recent writings that relate gender and/or sexuality to music, or sound more broadly, in conjunction with background readings from other disciplines. The focus will be on ethnomusicological writings, and thus on musics from a variety of world areas, although there will also be readings on Western concert, popular, and/or vernacular musics. Included will be readings on sonic and embodied constructions of gender and sexuality; feminist, trans, and queer performance; the intersection of gender and sexuality with issues of race, nation, class, and/or ability; ways that gender and sexuality inform our research strategies; and activist approaches to research on gender and sexuality. Assignments will include weekly readings, weekly response papers or online discussion threads, and a final research paper. Permission of instructor required.

Note: Formal knowledge of music is not a prerequisite for taking this class. Open to students outside music.

MUS 82502: Seminar in Theory: History of Music Theory II – Professor William Rothstein

This course covers Western music theory from Zarlino to Schoenberg. Students will gain a broad knowledge of those disciplines that are known collectively as “music theory,” whether or not they were regarded as “theory” in their own time. We will read extensively in English-language sources, both primary and secondary, and will consider these sources from both present-day and historically situated perspectives. Requirements for the course include several short papers, a term paper, and a final exam.

MUS 84000: Seminar in Music: Disability Studies in Music – Professor Joseph Straus

Like the fictions of gender and race, disability is a cultural and social formation that sorts bodies and minds into desirable (normal, healthy) and undesirable (abnormal, sick) categories. This course will interrogate the many ways disability identity has been confined to rigid and unproductive social, political, and aesthetic categories. It will also explore a significant counter-tradition in which disability is seen as a significant artistic resource and a desirable way of being in the world. This course lies at the intersection of musicology/music theory and cultural disability studies, probing what each can learn from the other. We will read standard texts in cultural disability studies and a wide range of recent scholarship in music. Topics will include representing, narrating, and performing disability musically, as well as blindness, deafness, madness, intellectual disability, and autism. Intersections with race, gender, and sexuality will be on the agenda throughout.

MUS 88500: Seminar in Composition – Professor Jeff Nichols

Weekly seminars will address issues in analysis, performance, notation, and aesthetics in twentieth- and twenty-first-century music. Topics will be guided by the research interests of members of the class. Among the creative goals of the seminar is a new composition to be performed by a visiting ensemble in the spring semester.

MUS 70000: Introduction to Musicology – Professor Anne Stone

An introduction to the discipline and practice of musicology. The emphasis will be on developments since the 1990s; in the second half of the course, we will explore some literature from outside the discipline that has influenced recent musicological thinking.

MUS 78200: Seminar in Ethnomusicology: Analyzing Music of the World – Professor Ben Lapidus

This class explores transcription and analysis of a variety of musical genres from around the world, including their traditional and modern iterations as well as related popular music styles. A variety of analytical approaches will be covered including pitch-related analyses, time-related analyses, and others.

MUS 83200: Music In/On the Internet – Professor Eliot Bates

There are two primary ways that we think of music being in or on the internet. The first is how the internet serves as a medium for the circulation of music—a history that begins pre-mp3 (and pre-internet) with tracker communities and Usenet and today encompasses algorithmic, data-driven distribution platforms for both “massless” audio files and physical music commodities. The second is how the internet functions as a site or place for social interaction about and around music—from fandom to producer communities. But how can a medium also be a site or place?

In this seminar we will analyze the interrelatedness and friction between both formations, historically and in the present. In addition to considering case studies, we will analyze extant methods and theories for conducting ethnographic research to prepare us to investigate phenomena ranging from platform infrastructures to viral memes to livestreamed concerts to esoteric message forums to fan communities (on divergent social media platforms). Throughout the semester, we will consider one of the biggest questions that faces researchers of music in/on the internet: to what extent is online music revolutionary or disruptive (catchphrases within high tech industries and venture capital firms), rather than an extension of longstanding local, regional, national, economic, and/or sociomusical practices?

Note: formal knowledge of music is not a prerequisite for taking this class. Open to non-music majors.

MUS 87700: Seminar in Musicology: Sound in Multidisciplinary Collaboration – Professor David Grubbs

A groundswell of collaborative experiments involving composers, artists, and performers gathered force in the 1960s and contributed to reconceptualizations of these roles that continue to this day. In this seminar we will study collaborative methodologies in a post-Cagean era as music composition finds itself operating within multidisciplinary performance, expanded cinema, video, installation, interactive media, and sound art. Attending to music and sound in these practices in the time of their emergence will facilitate research into co-authorship, improvisation, deskilling and reskilling, distributed creativity, medium, and genre, among other topics. Artists under discussion include Tony Conrad, Pauline Oliveros, José Maceda, Cecil Taylor, Maryanne Amacher, Milford Graves, and George E. Lewis. Collaborative scholarship will be explored and encouraged.

MUS 84800: Seminar in Theory/Analysis: Elements of Closure – Professor Kofi Agawu

How and why do compositions end when they do? What are the structural and rhetorical components of an ending, and what might a focus on closure reveal about musical style and individual composerly strategies? Referring to a larger beginning-middle-ending framework, we will focus in this seminar on elements of closure in a small group of compositions ranging from nineteenth-century miniatures to a handful of larger symphonic movements. Regular analytical exercises will be supplemented by readings drawn from writings by Cone, Meyer, Kallberg, J. Kramer, L. Kramer, K. Berger, Anson-Cartwright, Hopkins, Herrnstein Smith, and Said, among others. A substantial final paper will be required.

MUS 86800: Seminar in Musicology: Music and Early Sound – Professor Karen Henson

An exploration of the various interactions among music and sound media from the 1870s to the 1920s, with particular reference to telephony, phonography, the gramophone, and film. Students will read classic and recent texts in the history of technology and sound and media studies by Barthes, Benjamin, Gitelman, Haraway, Lastra, McLuhan, Sterne, Thompson, and Weheliye. We will work with American, European, and global sources, including those accessible remotely from the National Museum of American History (NMAH) at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC (where the professor was recently a fellow). The seminar will include guest visits from Smithsonian curators.
