MUS 501, Compositional Skills of Tonal Music
Instructor: Prof. Sheila Silver
Wednesdays, 2:30-5:30pm, Staller Center 2314

This course is intended primarily for composers. Any student interested in taking 501 should contact Prof. Silver

3 credits

MUS 502, Proseminar in Tonal Analysis
Instructor: Prof. August Sheehy
Mondays, 1-4pm, Staller Center 2318

This proseminar will focus on analytical techniques relevant to a formal understanding of the music comprising the "classical" canon—from J. S. Bach to Brahms, with a strong emphasis on the music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. While the theories on which these techniques draw all have 18th- and 19th-century precedents, students will be introduced to recent, influential statements (e.g., Ratner, Caplin, Cadwallader & Gagne, Gjerdingen, Hepokoski and Darcy, Rings); these concise expositions will allow our focus to remain on musical works.

This course requires light reading (25–30 pages per week on average), weekly analysis assignments, and intensive in-class discussions. Each student will deliver a final presentation and paper on a musical work chosen in consultation with the instructor.

This counts as a “theory” course for performers, and is intended for all graduate students.

3 credits

MUS 504, Analysis of 20/21th-Century Music
The 20th Century String Quartet
Instructor: Prof. Daniel Weymouth
Thursdays, 1-4pm, Staller Center 2314

The course will involve an in-depth study of several pieces, all string quartets from the (just) past century: Bartok, Berg, Jolas, Ligeti, Crumb, Reich, and Xenakis. We will also consider the nature of analysis and different analytical techniques and what they can (and cannot) tell us about the music.

Students should plan to spend 9 to 12 hours per week on this course outside of class. You will have to do a significant amount of analysis, and I will usually want to see the results, in charts or some similar form, or in prose. There will also be readings and research work. Weekly work will also involve short written responses to assigned readings. Grading will be based on these weekly assignments, along with two papers. The course is suitable for performance students as well as historians and composers, but do expect to do graduate-level work.

This counts as a “theory” course for performers, and is intended for all graduate students.

3 credits
MUS 507, Topics in Music History
The Symphonies of Beethoven
Instructor: Prof. David Lawton
Mondays, 1-4pm, Room TBA

The symphonies of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) had an enormous impact during his lifetime, and provided an imposing, even intimidating body of work for most of the 19th century composers who wanted to write symphonies. Even today, they remain the cornerstone of the symphonic repertoire. We will study all nine of his symphonies in this course, but will delve most deeply into Symphony No. 3 in E-flat (“Eroica”), op. 55, Symphony No. 5 in c minor, Op. 67, Symphony No. 6 in F major (“Pastoral”), op. 68, and Symphony No. 9 in d minor, op. 125. In part the focus on these four works is because there are fine monographs dedicated to each of these works: Cambridge Opera Handbooks for Nos. 3, 6, and 9, a Norton Critical score for No. 5, and a Yale Masterworks Series volume for No. 9. These five books will be required texts for the course, and will be available from the campus bookstore; full scores of all the symphonies can be downloaded from IMSLP.

Particular topics to be addressed in the course include reception history (including the question of programmatic interpretations of these works); formal and structural analysis and interpretation; and issues of performance practice, including tempo (the controversy over Beethoven’s metronome marks), and orchestration (including traditional retouching of some aspects of his scoring by well-known conductors and composers, including Richard Wagner, Gustav Mahler, and Felix Weingartner). We will listen to many different recordings of these symphonies, particularly from the first half of the twentieth century, when differences in interpretation by conductors such as Willem Mengelberg, Felix Weingartner, Wilhelm Furtwängler, and Arturo Toscanini were much more pronounced than what one hears on recordings made today.

The final grade will be based upon a number of short written assignments and listening quizzes, and a substantial final paper, which DMA students may develop into a DMA research essay.

This counts as a “history” course for performers, and is primarily intended for MM/DMA students.

3 credits

MUS 507, Topics in Music History
The Art of Entertaining with Chamber Music, 1756-1827
Instructor: Prof. Keith Johnston
Tuesdays, 1-4pm, Staller Center 2314

This course examines music composed between the birth of Mozart and the death of Beethoven that was intended for performance in an intimate setting. Chamber music during this time was often loosely defined in opposition to the edifying public works performed in the theater. In 1788 Johann Nikolaus Forkel famously described chamber music as “the kind of music which people play together in household rooms for entertainment.” It was a genre not intended to “express moral feelings.” Our task will be to examine in detail the musical styles intended for a variety of social settings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We will focus in particular on the learned and cosmopolitan style developed by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. But we will also explore the lighter and more popular styles developed by composers including Blasius, Boccherini, Dittersdorf, Kozeluch, Pleyel, Vanhal, and others. Works for string, keyboard, woodwind, and brass instruments will all be represented.
Coursework includes weekly readings, the preparation of a modern edition of a chamber work, in-class performances, and a final research paper.

*This counts as a “history” course for performers, and is primarily intended for MM/DMA students.*

3 credits

**MUS 515, Fundamentals of Electronic Music**  
Instructor: Professor Daria Semegen  
Tuesdays, 7-10pm, Staller Center 3343

A technical or scientific background is not required. Graduate students may enroll (undergraduates need special permission). In this intriguing subject, you'll experience, observe and interpret categories of sounds, art forms and work processes in new ways.

Performers, composers and scholars improve their observation and evaluation of sounds, their sonic components and creation through focused parametric listening (hear what you’ve been missing!), basic acoustics, and hands-on electronic music studio work including: sound generation, recording, modification, mixing, timbral design analog/digital editing, post-production methods, musique concrète and analog voltage-controlled modular synthesis techniques (vintage Buchla, Moog, Arp synth).

Our one-of-a-kind classic analog studio with its custom-designed sound modification units includes pioneering German engineer Harald Bode’s devices (“Klangumwander”, Bode Ring-Modulator) whose ideas were adopted by Robert Moog, Donald Buchla and others; EMT Classic Electronic Reverberation units (Elektromesstechnik), a variety of band-pass, graphic, analog filters/equalizers, TSM flanger and other effects/signal generators.

Observe, detect, understand and compare how sounds behave within various contexts, observe their aural perception, psychological effect, strategies of use and their aesthetic and technical aspects. Included is a brief historical survey of electronic music and audio technology, discussion of landmark works, aesthetic concepts, creative approaches including combinations with other media/arts and technologies; analog and digital processes and their ergonomics: influences on thinking, choice of working methods, musical outcomes, sensory and aesthetic discernment.

Pursue answers to philosophical and practical questions including: What is art? What do we observe in different art mediums? What is the purpose of pitch? Why and how can noise be music? What are the psychological effects of silence and sound in different contexts? Why is improvisation-play an essential basis for nuanced studio work? What are the basic tasks and thinking-tools of artists working in any medium? How do we analyze abstract works in medium? How are DJs performance virtuosos? How do we observe, understand and evaluate work using sonic+visual media? How do works of art work with our defense mechanisms?

Included are basic sound engineering skills and studio terminology; designing timbres, densities, transients for sonic gestures, editing in textural composition, spatialization, sonic depth of field; recognition, description and analysis of formal structures in electronic music with or without scores; composition strategies and improvisation methods, digital editing techniques in sound-art composition.

We hear and discuss students’ studio practice tasks and any original work. Periodic assignments may include audio tasks, brief research papers and critiques on listening, mixed media, musical/tech landmarks, individuals, styles/trends/devices/aesthetics/psychoacoustics, genres or related topics. This evening class has a refreshment break: complimentary coffees, teas, munchables.
MUS 515 fulfills the music theory requirements of MM students in performance. This is not a theory requirement for DMA students, and is not intended to generate a DMA essay except with special permission.

MUS 515 is required for MA, PhD composition students. It is a listed prerequisite for MUS 516 - Electronic Music Workshop and for MUS 517 - Computer Music.

Undergraduates may complete a “Permission for Undergraduate Students to enroll in Graduate Courses” on https://www.grad.stonybrook.edu/forms/. Bring the form to our Tuesday class. Email questions to Daria.Semegen@sunysb.edu

This counts as a “theory” course only for performers in the MM program.

3 credits

MUS 536, Area Studies in Ethnomusicology
Music, Tension, and Conflict
Instructor: Prof. Benjamin Tausig
Mondays, 1-4pm, Staller Center 2310

This introductory graduate ethnomusicology course explores the deep connections between musical practice and geopolitical tension and conflict in the past half-century, during which time the effects of colonialism, war, political instability, and industrialization have been brought to bear on a variety of global musics. We will examine genre, musical form, and instrumentation, and understand each of these through relevant critical readings in the theory of music and conflict, as well as through an analysis of formal representations of tension in the music itself. Requirements include weekly readings and listening, class presentations, regular response papers and in-class discussions, and a final paper.

Students will listen closely to audio and video recordings (and live performances when possible), analyzing musical selections between and during each meeting. We will engage with scholarship from ethnomusicology, musicology, history, and anthropology in order to explore how particular songs and styles have been interpolated into modern arenas of statecraft, war, propaganda, political resistance, capitalism, global media, and efforts toward peacebuilding. The definitions of tension and conflict itself will be interrogated, and a key goal of the course will be to reflect on the ways that music becomes audible in its various emergences. The course is designed for MM/DMA and MA/PhD graduate students, so ability to read and interpret music is expected, although knowledge of any specific musical area is not a prerequisite. Students will upload brief weekly response papers to Blackboard, and write a final research paper by the end of the course.

This counts as a “history” course for performers, and is primarily intended for MM/DMA students.

3 credits

MUS 541, Cross-Cultural Study of Music
Time and Temporality: Perspectives from ethnomusicology, social theory, and film studies
Instructor: Prof. Margarethe Adams
Tuesdays, 1-4pm, Melville Library W1531

How does the marking of time frame political and social narratives? What do visual and sonic imaginings of the past and future reveal about the present? In what ways has the modernist conception
of time shaped the ideational architecture of the 20th and 21st centuries? Drawing on philosophy, anthropology, film and media studies, queer theory, and ethnomusicology, we will explore the temporalities of modernity. In addition to narratives of industry, labor and progress, we will also attend to normative narratives of gender and sexuality, transnationalism and narratives of home, and diverse topics related to time, temporality, and the arts. Specific topics include: queer temporalities in film; feminist futures and “posthuman divas” in popular music; performance and “flow”; music technologies in time: radio space, digital media, and the politics of real-time. This course is an upper-level seminar with a significant weekly reading load. Requirements include weekly written responses, article presentations, a final paper, and a final oral presentation. Attendance and enthusiastic participation in discussion is mandatory!

This seminar is primarily intended for MA/PhD students. Though it counts as a “history” course for performers, any MM/DMA students considering enrolling must confer first with Prof. Adams.

3 credits

MUS 547, Topics in Baroque Music
Performance Spaces of the Baroque
Instructor: Prof. Erika Honisch
Wednesdays, 2:30-5:30pm, Melville Library W1531

This seminar explores how the insights and methodologies of the emerging field of sound studies might be used to further our understanding of the musical past. Where the sounds of sound studies are usually those of modernity, we will strain to hear the more distant sonic past and identify its performance spaces. Our explorations will range over the many forms of music that resounded in Europe’s towns and cities between 1600 and 1750, and we will attend in particular to those sounds (musical and noisy) that shaped or claimed space, and articulated or extended the bounds of place. With this in mind, we will focus less on genre and style, musical text, and compositional strategy, than on the concepts of sound, listening, and the listener that are foundational to sound studies. What were the spaces in which sound was deployed, and in which spaces did specifically musical sounds travel? Who were the listeners, and what were the modes of listening that informed their reception of sound? And finally, what are the limits of sonic history? The diverse performance spaces that we consider are architectural and documentary, permanent and temporary, real and speculative; they will include not only those that were new to the Baroque period, but also those that were inherited from the Renaissance.

Following an opening unit in which we collaboratively draw up the central questions that we will pursue and familiarize ourselves with established methodologies, we will adopt a geographic approach. We will ground specific pieces and sounds in specific spaces and, as far as possible, connect them to specific kinds of listeners or listening communities. Readings will include relevant primary source excerpts (e.g. Bernhard, Kircher, Rameau), foundational texts in sound studies (e.g. Sterne, Corbin), studies of past sounds and spaces (e.g. Rath, Blesser and Salter, Atkinson, Smith), and recent sonically oriented musicological work (e.g. dell’Antonio, Fisher, Dillon, Tcharos).

Readings (ca. 120 pp. per week) will be in English, although I will make reference to important contributions to the literature in other languages. Participants will write a research paper, a “conference” version (20 minutes long) of which will be presented in the final class session. In addition, twice in the semester (between Weeks 5 and 14), participants will lead discussion, focusing on one article and connecting it—as far as possible—to one of the pieces of music assigned that week. There will also be short weekly written responses to the readings and listening.

This seminar is primarily intended for MA/PhD students. Though it counts as a “history” course for performers, any MM/DMA students considering enrolling must confer first with Prof. Adams.

3 credits
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3 credits

MUS 557, Topics in Theory
Listening, Hearing, Perception: Contests of the Ear
Instructor: Prof. Judith Lochhead
Mondays, 1-4pm, Melville Library W1531

This course examines concepts of and distinctions between listening, hearing, and perception and their relation to the formation of music theories and of approaches to music analysis. Emphasis will be placed on contemporary musical practices of various sorts.

The seminar focuses on readings from music theory and analysis, philosophy, cognitive sciences and sound studies. Participants in the seminar will read writings by such authors as Peter Szendy (Listen: A History of our Ears), Jean-Luc Nancy (Listening), Theodor Adorno (articles on analysis and "regressive listening"), Leigh Eric Schmidt (Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment), Edward Casey (Imagining), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (The Phenomenology of Perception), and various other authors on the topics and distinctions between listening, hearing, and perception in a broader philosophical/critical/cognitive contexts. At the same time, participants in the seminar consider writings by such music scholars as Milton Babbitt ("Who Cares if You Listen?"), the Cone/Lewin debate (Perspectives of New Music 1967 and 1969), Justin London (Hearing in Time), Helmut Lachenmann ("Hearing [Hören] is Defenseless—without Listening [Hören] On Possibilities and Difficulties), Joanna Demers (Listening Through the Noise), Brian Kane (Sound Unseen), and others on the concepts of listening, hearing, and perception in relation to thought in and about music. The goal of the seminar is understand better how aural apprehension of music figures in the conception and practice of music theoretical/analytical activities. We will be considering some recent musical works, the specific pieces to be decided upon by seminar participants, and we will be beginning the term with study of Rachel McInturff's electroacoustic work "By Heart" (1996).

Seminar participants will make several in-class presentations over the course of the term, complete weekly writing projects, and produce a substantial term-end project, including a presentation to the seminar.

Absences: Attendance at all seminar meetings is expected, anything less will affect the term grade. Exceptions are made for documentable illness.

This seminar is primarily intended for MA/PhD students. Though it counts as a “theory” course for performers, any MM/DMA students considering enrolling must confer first with Prof. Lochhead.

3 credits

MUS 559, Topics in Analysis
Parody and Proliferation: The Music of Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, and Wolfgang Rihm
Instructor: Prof. Matthew Barnson
Thursdays, 1-4pm, Melville Library W1531

Good artists copy; great artists steal.
- Igor Stravinsky, Pablo Picasso, T.S. Eliot, Lionel Trilling, William Faulkner and/or Steve Jobs
Great or otherwise, for many artists stealing or “appropriating” is rarely an end in and of itself. This is not to discount motives which may be noble or nefarious, or working habits ranging from idle to industrious, or composers trying emulate great masters or emancipate themselves from them. Rather, it is simply the case that appropriation is often only the beginning - the impetus for elaboration. In this course we will study important “parody” works by Boulez, Berio, and Rihm - works based on other (earlier) works.

In order to give us historical context, we will look a few earlier examples of parody like Palestrina’s motet and mass on the plainchant, Assumpta est Maria, as well as several parody Magnificats by Lassus (supplemented by David Crook’s study.)

We will then turn to important works by Berio (Sequenza VI for viola/Chemins II/Chemins IIb/Chemins IIc, Sequenza VII for Oboe/Chemins IV), Boulez (Anthèmes I/Anthèmes II, Incises/Sur Incises), and Rihm (Chiffre-Zyklus, Gedrängte Form/Gejagte Form/Verborgene Formen/Jagden und Formen). Hunting for allusions is insufficient. In studying these works, we will look at the startling number of ways that the appropriated material is elaborated. To supplement our analysis, we will examine texts by authors like Jonathan Goldman, David Osmond-Smith, and Seth Brodsky.

Composers, theorist, musicologists, and ethnomusicologists are most welcome. Final projects/papers can be tailored to students’ area(s) of focus and theoretical frameworks as long as the papers and projects require rigorous technical analysis. MM/DMA students are welcome, especially those interested in performing works by Rihm, Boulez, and Berio (particularly the Sequenzas). A working knowledge of pitch class set theory will be useful and probably essential.

This seminar is primarily intended for MA/PhD students. Though it counts as a “theory” course for performers, any MM/DMA students considering enrolling must confer first with Prof. Barnson.

3 credits