MUS 501, Compositional Skills of Tonal Music  
Instructor: Prof. Sheila Silver  
Tuesdays, 1-4pm, Staller Center 2314

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

NOTE: This course is NOT designed to fulfill the DMA Theory Requirement.

3 credits

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

Analysis is not just about the “what” of a piece, but also the “why.” We will consider some very well-known works (Mozart, Haydn, Schubert) along with some lesser-known ones. By thinking about various ways of looking at the music – rhythmic, harmonic, linear, thematic, structural – we will attempt develop a way of looking at the whole piece. As a consequence, we will also consider the nature of analysis: what it 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. Weekly work may also involve short written responses to assigned readings. Grading will be based on these weekly assignments, along with two papers (the second one can be a re-write). You will work hard, but I promise that you will also learn a lot. The course is suitable for performance students as well as historians and composers. Some familiarity with the vocabulary of tonal chords is assumed.

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

3 credits

MUS 503, Music of the 20th and 21st Centuries  
Expanding the Traditions: Music from 1950 to the Present  
Instructor: Prof. Judith Lochhead  
Thursdays, 1-4pm, Staller Center 2314

During this course, seminar participants will study music in the Western, concert tradition (with a few additions from avant-garde popular tradition) from 1950 to the present. The course will consider particular works in their historical context, ideas about this music from authors writing as composers, theorists, performers, historians, and critics, performance issues raised by the music, and the analytical issues raised by selected works.

We'll consider works from Pierre Boulez to Chaya Czernowin, from Steve Reich to Nico Muhly, from Frederic Rzewski to David T. Little, from Joan Tower to Anna Clyne, from Terry Riley to George Lewis---to name a few.

Course Goals: 1) listening-study of representative works from the years 1945-2016, 2) study of ideas about music from authors writing as composers, theorists, performers, historians, and critics, 3)
investigation of performance issues raised by the music, and 4) and analytical study of the technical
details of selected works.

Course Requirements: 1) attendance every week, 2) final listening/essay exam, 3) weekly listening and
writing; and 4) a (relatively short) term project.

This course is required for MA students in the History-Theory program and fulfills a music history
requirement for the MM/DMA programs.

3 credits

MUS 504, Analysis of 20/21st-Century Music
Instructor: Prof. Matthew Barnson
Thursdays, 1-4pm, Staller Center 2318

Participants in this proseminar will explore methods and models for analyzing music created in the 20th
and 21st centuries with a particular focus on notated post-tonal repertoires.

During the first half of the course, we will study canonical 20th Century works and the attendant
scholarship (including some set theory). We will then turn to recent music for which little or no
secondary literature exists. Throughout the course we will consider how (now) classic post-tonal
analytical methods illuminate or obscure, privilege or exclude some aspects of music, and how or if they
might be used to understand new or neglected repertoires that might share qualities of “post-tonal”
music even though they might not be strictly “post-tonal.”

Many important works from the 20th Century were accompanied by manifestos, theoretical treatises,
scholarship, publicity, and propaganda. Many Modernist composers or those in their circles - including
scholars, performers, and philosophers - felt the need to explain and defend this music to a hostile or
indifferent public. Thus, we will consider both the techniques and rhetoric of these analytical methods
and the attendant possibilities and problems posed to scholars, performers, and composers employing
them, as well as the expectations placed on audiences hearing the music described.

Finally, participants will apply analytical techniques studied or provisionally developed in the course to
a work created after 2010.

Course work includes weekly readings and listening, regular response papers, analytical assignments,
and a final paper.

This course fulfills a music theory requirement for the MM/DMA programs.

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 student composers, performers, scholars
expand their observation, analysis of sonic components through systematic parametric listening (hear
what you’ve been missing!). We observe how our individual defense reactions and tendencies affect our
perception, intuitive feedback and consequent choices. Learn to observe, compare and understand how
sounds behave in different contexts, their effect on perception, aesthetic and technical outcomes.

A brief historical survey of electronic music and audio technology includes discussion of a few
landmark musique concrète and electroacoustic works, aesthetic concepts, creative approaches and
combinations with other media, arts and technologies. We consider the uses of pitch, noise works, mixed media works, the artists’ methods, thinking-tools and the results. Included are basic studio engineering skills, analysis of sounds/timbers and textures, recognition/description/analysis of formal structures in electronic music works with/without scores; composition strategies, improvisation methods, editing techniques and sound-art composition.

Hands-on studio work includes sound generation, recording, methods of working with registral/speed/spatial modification, mixing, volume definition, timbral/textural design, structures, sonic persona, editing techniques; evaluation/modification/mixing/editing in post-production.

Experimentation is integral to this genre: we design strategies for experiments and improvisation-play to generate new material, modify existing material and apply degrees of random to yield unexpected new results in creative studio work. Lastly, mastering and refining editing techniques (where/why/how to hear and choose) is of paramount importance in creating work that rises above the ordinary demo. In class we also hear and discuss students’ hands-on technical practice and creative assignments. (This evening class has a midpoint refreshment break.)

The one-of-a-kind analog classic electronic music studio has a custom array of sound generation and modification devices, and analog voltage-controlled synths including vintage Buchla, Moog and Arp. Unique modification units include pioneering German engineer Harald Bode’s Klangumwander and Bode Ring-Modulator, used by K. Stockhausen. Included are EMT Electronic Reverberation unit (Elektromesstechnik), many band-pass, graphic, parametric analog filters/equalizers, TSM flanger and others.

Mus 515 fulfills the music theory requirements of M.Mus students in performance. It is not intended to generate a DMA essay except with previous 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 enroll with a special permission form: https://www.grad.stonybrook.edu/forms/. Send questions to Daria.Semegen@stonybrook.edu

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

3 credits

MUS 535, Performance of Baroque Music
Instructors: Prof. Arthur Haas and Prof. Erika Honisch
Wednesdays, 2:30-5:25pm, Staller Center 2322

How are we to perform, today, music from the Baroque era (ca. 1600-1750)? The diverse styles of the instrumental and vocal music composed during this period—preserved in sources of varying quality and specificity—elicit a wide and intriguing array of responses from instrumentalists and singers attuned to pre-Romantic performance practices.

In this discussion-driven and performance-centered course we will take in the many possibilities available to the intrepid and historically-engaged performer. The topics we will explore together include Baroque sound, ornamentation, vibrato, text-music relationships, improvisation, tempo and meter, rhythmic alteration, dynamics, tuning and temperament, and basso continuo. These issues will become concrete through conversations about the mechanics of period instruments as compared to their modern descendants, and the perusal of the many primary source documents—music manuscripts and prints, iconographic and literary sources, as well as music-theoretical treatises—now available online. In this way, students will learn how to approach modern editions critically and use primary sources to guide their performance practice decisions. We will take care to situate our exploration of detailed musical issues within larger historical and critical contexts. In the first place, we will address the importance of
national preferences (e.g. dance in France, rhetoric in Germany). At the same time, we will turn a critical eye on ourselves, exploring the ideologies of the early music movement as it has taken shape in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Students should come to class having carefully read the assigned readings, as the success of this class hinges in large part on the quality of student preparation and participation. Students should also be prepared to perform on their respective instruments, both in the context of small oral presentations, and as part of a larger presentation that complements the final paper. We anticipate a lively classroom as we engage in the large debates that animate early music performance today.

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

3 credits

MUS 543, Topics in Medieval Music
Medieval Motets from Notre Dame to Machaut
Instructor: Prof. Catherine Bradley
Thursdays, 1-4pm, Melville Library W1531

This course explores the medieval genre of the motet in the wake of recent scholarly interventions by Emma Dillon, Judith Peraino, David Rothenberg, and Anna Zayaruznaya. Emerging in early thirteenth-century Paris in the cultural circles surrounding Notre Dame Cathedral and the burgeoning Parisian University, the motet represented a radically new form of polyphonic composition, which often combined sacred and secular elements to sometimes shocking and ironic effect. Through readings that span a diverse range of scholarly approaches—from sound studies to the study of musical monsters—we will investigate motets of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries from various angles, considering questions of cultural contexts and audiences, the aural impact of polytextualitly, textual hermeneutics, and musical chronologies, quotations, and notations.

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. Bradley.

3 credits

MUS 553, Topics in 19th-Century Music
Opera and/as Drama, From Mozart to Wagner
Instructor: Prof. Ryan Minor
Mondays, 1-4pm, Melville Library W1531

Although the question of whether opera consists more fundamentally of music or of drama has bedeviled the genre since its birth in early modern Italy, that debate had arguably no greater consequence than in the period from Mozart and Viennese Singspiel through Wagner’s theorization of the Gesamtkunstwerk. This Ph.D. seminar, thus, will concentrate simultaneously on the development of “German” opera from the 1780s through the 1880s as well as the changing conceptualizations of drama, theatricality, and the institution of the theater itself.

Repertory, obviously, will encompass Mozart and Wagner most famously, but we will also spend some time with lesser-known operatic works as well as seminal theatrical works by Lessing and Schiller. Our theoretical focus, similarly, will look at historical and recent writings on both opera and theater.

While the seminar will not presuppose a deep familiarity with the canonical operas we will study, it also is not geared towards providing that familiarity; the course is not an exercise in masterpiece worship.
Participants will need to devote a substantial amount of time to viewing opera productions outside of class. You should not enroll for this seminar if you are not willing to commit to these screenings, which of course are in addition to the readings. Grades will be based on attendance and participation, weekly written responses, at least two in-class presentations, and a research paper.

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. Minor.

3 credits

MUS 555, Topics in 20th-Century Music
Music and Sound: Nature, Modernity, Modernism
Instructor: Prof. Stephen Smith
Tuesdays, 1-4pm, Melville Library W1531

This seminar asks what it would mean to investigate music, musical thought, and historical conceptions of sound by way of discourses on nature that not only belong to European modernity, but that also locate a form of modernity within nature itself. In a sense, this becomes an exercise in conceptual impropriety or catachresis, linking an array of historical concepts and fields of production (modernity, modernism, music as a cultural practice) with a conceptual terrain that is often determined in opposition to historical modernity (nature as deep past, nature as a passive arena in which historical life unfolds, nature as the raw material out of which historical life is produced, etc.). Our work will cut across this distinction by focusing on moments in theoretical and musical production in which nature itself is figured in terms that appear distinctly modern, even unnatural—this nature will be figured as temporal, contingent, historical, technical, and dissonant in itself—and we will ask what it would mean to produce a musical modernism in the face of this modernity of nature. In so doing, we will attempt also to model a form of deconstructive historical work.

Readings will be drawn from musicology, music theory, ethnomusicology, and anthropology, as well as philosophy (both contemporary and historical) and cultural theory, including especially theories of modernism, and work in ecocriticism and ecomusicology. We will devote substantial energies to 19th- and 20th-century German music, musical thought, and philosophy, but our work will range widely before and after this period, as we develop historical backgrounds for considering this particular modernity, and as we consider music and thought nearer to our own historical moment. Student work will be evaluated in terms of brief weekly assignments, required in-class presentations, and a final research project.

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. Smith.

3 credits

MUS 559, Topics in Analysis
Instructor: Prof. August Sheehy
Wednesdays, 2:30-5:30pm, Staller Center 2314

Music analysis appears to be at odds with historicism. While the latter may be broadly defined as the idea that all forms of knowledge are historically contextual and thus contingent, the former is generally premised on the idea that transhistorical knowledge about music can be derived from careful study of scores. In this course, we will investigate the possibility of reconciling analysis and historicism by studying past analytic practices. Curiously, the histories of analytic practice and historicism run largely in parallel: an eighteenth-century prehistory gives way to a nineteenth-century flowering of ideas and practices, followed by the formation of new disciplines and their institutionalizations in the twentieth century. Our focus in this seminar will be on the middle term, and thus on the “long” nineteenth century
and the canon of “tonal” or “common practice” European music. We will cover compositions ranging from the Mozart Requiem to Brahms’s A-minor Quintet (Op. 51, no. 2), by way of, among other pieces, select movements from Beethoven’s piano sonatas and Wagner’s Tristan und Isolde. In terms of music theory, our reading will be framed chronologically by the writings of Gottfried Weber and Arnold Schoenberg. We will also survey literature on the historiography of nineteenth-century music theory, e.g., Carl Dahlhaus, Thomas Christensen, Ian Bent, Kevin Karnes, Alexander Rehding, and Suzannah Clark.

The goals for the course include acquiring facility with historical analytic techniques, familiarity with their histories, and the development of theses that connect analysis and history. To these ends, there will be weekly readings and assignments in what one might call “historically informed analysis,” as well as a final research paper. This course is intended for students with a firm foundation in music theory and analysis. All readings will be in English, but students with competency in German and French will be encouraged to engage with primary sources in the original languages.

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. Sheehy.*

*3 credits*