

Department of Music, Stony Brook University

Fall 08 Course Descriptions (topics courses only)

Revised 13 August 2008

MUS 450 Undergraduate Seminar

African American Music and Questions of African Essence

Professor Andrew Eisenberg

This upper-level undergraduate course explores intellectual debates over the Africanness of African American musical traditions in the U.S. (particularly the blues, jazz, funk, and rap). The course is designed as both an introduction to the concept of “African American music” (or “black music”) and a history of scholarly thought on music and race in the U.S. Students will be expected to read critically and respond to a diverse body of literature spanning from the early 20th century to the present. Assignments will include short written responses, a final paper, and at least one oral presentation.

TU,TH

9:50AM – 11:10AM

Music Library Seminar Room (W1531)

MUS 501 Compositional Skills of Tonal Music

Professor Sheila Silver

Music 501 is a intense review and refinement of 4 part harmony using Bach chorales as models. Exercises in writing species counterpoint/ Bach-style Invention will also be covered. All entering history, theory and composition students must take the Harmony-Counterpoint Advisory Exam. Music 501 is required of all whose exams indicate such a course would be beneficial.

TU

9:30AM – 12:30PM

Staller 2314

MUS 503

Music of the 20th and 21st Centuries: Expanding the Traditions: Music from 1950 to the present

Professor Judy Lochhead

During this course, seminar participants will study music in the Western, concert tradition (with a few additions from avant-garde popular tradition) from 1945 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. Students will be required to complete a term project and to take a final listening/essay exam. Weekly writing assignments will also be assigned.

TU

1:00PM – 4:00PM

Staller 2314

MUS 504: Analysis of Music of the 20th and 21st Centuries

Professor Benjamin Steege

This course will proceed through five musical case studies representing some significant trends of the last hundred years. Repertory will include music by Arnold Schoenberg, Igor Stravinsky, Stefan Wolpe, Pierre Boulez, and Gérard Grisey. The selection is clearly not comprehensive with respect to the range of movements in this period, but it is meant to provide some diversity

while allowing for extensive treatment of a particular network of interrelated issues. Special attention will be given to questions of phrase, gesture, novelty and repetition, and musical time, though traditional approaches to pitch and rhythm will be integral. Our focus will be more on sound than on compositional process, but the complex connection between these two moments will likely provide material for discussion.

Participants are expected not only to attend regularly but also to complete all assigned reading and exercises. Required work includes active participation in class discussions, five short written exercises, a final presentation, and a final paper based on the presentation.

TH 1:00PM – 4:00PM Staller 2310

MUS 507: Studies in Music History

Meg Schedel

The seminar is designed for students interested in electroacoustic music, composition, the history of 20th century music, and music perception or cognition. The focus of this class is the history of electroacoustic music, including the development of the technical and aesthetic foundations of the field. We will also analyze important works of electroacoustic music using materials provided by composers as well as consider the perception and cognition of electroacoustic music. Although the class is focused on musicology, I believe neither history nor analysis is complete without the perspective brought by the other.

W 2:00PM – 5:00PM Staller 2318

MUS 514: Audio Engineering

Andrew Nittoli

Technical fundamentals of audio engineering for the serious practitioner, with primary emphasis on sound reinforcement and recording arts. Wave propagation and room acoustics will be examined, as well as the nature of sound and music, and their parametric representations in the time and frequency domains. The course focuses on measurement and critical listening, and investigates the basic operational theory of principal devices and systems including microphones, mixers, analog tape machines, interconnects, editing, and digital recording systems. A qualitative approach will be taken in order to make concepts accessible to the musician and technical practitioner.

TH 1:00PM – 4:00PM Staller 3361

MUS 515: Fundamentals of Electronic Music

Professor Daria Semegen

For performers, composers and scholars: A technical or scientific background is not required. The emphasis is on music and hands-on studio work. Explore many aspects of electronic music; combinations with instruments, dance, mixed media; brief historical survey of electronic music and its technology; discuss landmark works, aesthetic concepts, interpretations and creative approaches to contemporary music and arts, technologies and practical, creative techniques, sound-art composition. Work with electronic sounds and musique concrete in the Electronic Music Studio.

Psychoacoustic effects, aural perception, focused parametric listening (hear what you've been missing!). Learn to observe and understand how sounds behave within different contexts, their aesthetic and technical aspects.

Includes timbral structures and designs, improvisation methods, hands-on analog synthesizer techniques, basic acoustics and sound engineering skills; vocabulary of electroacoustic music and studio work; electronic and live sound production, recording, modification, mixing, analog/digital editing; musique concrète and live performance.

In the Electronic Music Studio students do hands-on tech practice and creative assignments that we hear and discuss in class.

When needed, scheduling accommodations are made for performers who occasionally have rehearsals during class time.

* MUS 515 fulfills the music theory requirements of M.Mus degree students in Performance. It is a required course for MA, PhD composition students, a prerequisite for Mus 516 Electronic Music Workshop and for Mus 517 Computer Music. *

E-mail questions to daria.semegen@sunysb.edu

TU

7:00PM – 10:00PM

Staller 3343

MUS 539: Proseminar in Ethnomusicology

Professor Andrew Eisenberg

An introduction to the field of ethnomusicology as practiced in Europe and North America over the past century. Theoretical and methodological approaches in ethnomusicology are examined as they relate to major periods in the history of ethnographic disciplines.

TH

1:00PM – 4:00PM

Music Library Seminar Room

MUS 547: Topics in Baroque Music: Claudio Monteverdi's Madrigal Books

Professor Mauro Calcagno

A composer's workshop for experimenting with his art and interpreting the world. While mainly focussing on text-music relationships, the seminar also deals with cultural, historiographical, and patronage-related topics. The relevance of contemporary critical theory to the analysis of Monteverdi's works (especially concerning subjectivity, narratology, and discourse analysis) will be discussed, as well as the historical and theoretical relationships between madrigal and opera, including issues such as theatricality, gesturality, and performance.

The seminar starts with a survey of the madrigalian literature up to Monteverdi. This is followed by an investigation of Monteverdi's eight madrigal books in chronological order. No knowledge of Italian language is required, but, with the help of translations, you will gain familiarity with the texts set into music, as well as acquaint yourself with related aesthetic issues through secondary literature in English.

W

2:00PM – 5:00PM

Music Library Seminar Room

MUS 553: Music and/as Religion in the "Long" Nineteenth Century

Professor Ryan Minor

It is something of a truism that music attained the status of religion during the nineteenth century--and it is just as commonplace to read that actual religious music suffered as a result of this changing aesthetic. But is this true? What does it mean to think about music or listen to music in a “religious” way? And why would this kind of listening--or the increasingly ambitious compositions at the core of this aesthetic--necessarily crowd out music actually composed with liturgical or religious designs?

This seminar will explore these two intertwined narratives: the increased prominence of secular music in a culture of “art religion,” and the continued composition of sacred music long after its reported decline. In particular, we will consider the historical, cultural, and political contexts in which both art-religion and religious art endowed music with extra-worldly powers--as well as the extent to which these powers also served the decidedly worldly interests that produced them. Readings will engage interdisciplinary perspectives, as well as historical and analytical studies. Most readings will be in English, but a reading knowledge of French or German would be helpful.

Thursday

1:00-4:00 pm

Staller 2314

MUS 559 Analysis of the Music of Xenakis and Ligeti

Professor Daniel Weymouth

Ligeti's work has been described as “inaudible structures, audible music.” Of Xenakis it has been written: “The imagery which nourishes his music has removed the anthropocentric vision of the universe.” Two of the most compelling composers of our time have eschewed melody (for the most part) for texture, and forms based on material for forms based on process. Substantial challenges are thus posed to those who wish to analyze this music; this class will address those challenges. We will look at the oeuvre of the composers and what has been written about it, but emphasis will be on the music itself as well as investigating and formulating appropriate analytical approaches.

Analytical experience is a *prerequisite* (MUS 502 and MUS 504 or the equivalent). Put another way, this is not an introductory level analysis course – please don't take it if you have not already had some tonal *and* non-tonal analysis. Reading knowledge of French or German would be helpful, but is not essential. There will be substantial listening and reading requirements, and weekly assignments (prose or analysis, as is fitting). Class projects will include one term paper and a project to be presented as a lecture. In addition, the class will be run as a seminar; the participants will be expected to bring something “to the table” for every session. Most of all, we are going to have a lot of fun getting very deeply into some great music.

M

1:00PM – 4:00pm

Music Library Seminar Room