

History of Western Music, 1600–1800 (MUSC 222)

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Spring 2023, University of Rochester, Satz Dept. of Music

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- Blackboard
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Course Information

Contact

Please see full contact information on Blackboard.

Meeting Schedule

- Main session with Prof. Cashner, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2–3:15 p.m., Dewey B-315
- Workshop with TA, Lauren Ganger, Fridays, 3–3:50 p.m., Dewey B-315

Description

This course provides music majors the opportunity to build a conceptual framework for understanding how and why people in Europe and European colonies made music between about 1600 and 1800 and what it meant to them. It equips students to think historically about music (understanding change over time in forms, practices, and concepts of music), and to think musically about history (understanding lived experience in the past through music). The course highlights the interconnection between the sound of music and the social structures that music shapes and is shaped by. Students will gain detailed knowledge of musical repertoire from this period through close engagement with the sources, including transcription and performance; while developing critical thinking skills through research, writing, and oral presentation.

The period 1600–1800 is often called “early modern” because most of the new and defining structures of the modern world were first developed then. The European monarchies consolidated their power at home and competed as they expanded their political and cultural influence across a globe that was for the first time starting to be linked into a single economic system. What came in a later period to be called “Western civilization” was chiefly the culture of European colonizers, in the form they developed as they imposed their way of life on non-European people. European colonization of indigenous peoples and dispossession of their lands and resources coupled with the expansion of the trade in enslaved African people to completely transform the pattern of life in almost every area. The development of modern science and technology fueled the Industrial Revolution, while revolutions in America and France destabilized the old political system.

The course equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to understand how musical life today was shaped by these major historical forces of the early modern world. The course equips students to use the sources of history to tell multiple stories of musical life in this period. The class emphasizes, on the one hand, how European people used music to build a “Western” world, which included developing a canon of musical “classics”; and on the other hand, their exchanges with and impacts on indigenous peoples in different global locations. The course takes a deliberately anti-racist, anti-oppressive position, in pursuit of a more accurate understanding of how music contributed to systems of power and a broader knowledge

of the musical life of people harmed and excluded by those systems. The course foregrounds the musical contributions of women, indigenous people and people of color, and highlights the importance not only of music from wealthy and privileged communities but also of music from lower-class and enslaved people.

Required Materials

- Class score anthology (on Blackboard)
- J. Peter Burkholder, *A History of Western Music*, 9th edition (New York: Norton, 2014)
 - Also available on course reserve in the Art/Music Library
- Music recordings and videos will be on YouTube playlists available through the schedule page.
- Scores for most selections not in the anthology will be available through Blackboard.
- Readings other than Burkholder will be available via Blackboard.

Learning Goals

1. Build knowledge of the most widespread and historically significant styles, genres, and formal patterns of music in Europe and European colonies during the period 1600–1800.
2. Understand how social elements like venue, patrons, audience, and performers shaped the sonic dimensions of music and vice versa.
3. Demonstrate the ability to find reliable primary, secondary, and tertiary sources for music history, and the ability to write a persuasive argument based on this evidence, in dialogue with existing scholarship.
4. Develop a critical awareness of different ways that we can determine historical significance and create historical narratives, and the benefits and drawbacks of these approaches.
5. Understand the role of music in the historical development of “Western civilization” as an ideology and a political and economic reality, and its impact on indigenous peoples and marginalized groups, and develop an informed appreciation for the creative ways oppressed people used music to survive and adapt.

Assessments

Weekly Listening Journal

Every week there will be a short assignment in which you analyze and reflect on a listening assignment by following a specific process. These will be due by the start of class on the first class day of each week (typically Tuesday). They will be graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory/Incomplete.

Roundtable Discussions

There will be three roundtable sessions in which students will lead discussions on big questions relevant to the material covered in the preceding weeks. For each session, one group of students will serve as discussion leaders: they will prepare discussion questions and guide the conversation. Everyone who actively participates (demonstrates active listening and involvement, and speaks at least once) will receive a Satisfactory grade; students present but not speaking will receive Unsatisfactory.

Exams

There will be two exams: a midterm and a final. The exams are meant to assess your knowledge of repertoire, styles, genres, and techniques, as well as your ability to think critically about broader issues and make connections between different aspects of the course. Exams may be given in a take-home format, or part take-home, part in class. The exams may include the following items (exact details to be clarified in advance of each exam):

- Listening identification of items from the syllabus
- Score identification of items not seen before, in relation to what you know from the syllabus
- Short definitions of technical terms, concepts, people, institutions
- Essay questions

Genre Paper

1. Choose a selection from the class anthology whose music you like and are interested in.
2. Find another example of the same genre, region, and general timeframe, which is not included in the syllabus, and by a different creator. (The genres are listed in parentheses after the titles, like “opera buffa” or “sacred concerto”.) One of the two selections should be composed by a woman or person of color, and I have to approve both selections.
3. Compare the music of these two selections: try to determine what common elements seem to be typical of the genre, and what is distinctive in each one.
4. Do some research into the historical context of these works specifically, their creators, and the genre more broadly.
5. Based on the above, write the following components:
 1. **Music comparison:** Write about 1100 words, discussing the musical sound and structure of both examples in detail, but not a comprehensive bar-by-bar analysis. Choose interesting and instructive moments to focus on.
 2. **Social function and meaning research review:** Write about 1000 words, summarizing the findings of your research about the historical context, social function, and meanings of your pieces and their genre. Include a bibliography of at least three high-quality scholarly research sources, of which one can be a tertiary source like a *Grove Music Online* article.
 3. **Synthesis:** Synthesize the above components in a single paper of about 2000 words, in which you make connections between the social functions of these music selections and their sonic elements.

Grading

20%	Listening journal
15%	Participation in three roundtables (5% each)
15%	Midterm exam
20%	Final exam
10%	Genre paper: Music comparison
10%	Genre paper: Social function and meaning
10%	Genre paper: Synthesis

Grade Scale

Percent	Letter
93–100	A
90–92	A-
87–89	B+
83–86	B
80–82	B-
77–79	C+
73–76	C
70–72	C-
67–69	D+
63–66	D
60–62	D-

Percent	Letter
0-59	E

Policies

Attendance, Participation, Teaching Modality

- All class sessions will be held in person and on time.
- This is an interactive class including discussion and music-making, so every student must participate actively in order to accomplish the course goals, and that means every student must be present.
- I define active participation to mean that a student was present, responded to questions, and contributed to discussions with both speaking and engaged listening.
- Class sessions may be recorded for my improvement as a teacher only. They will not be made available to students as a substitute for in-person attendance except in rare, serious cases (e.g., death in the family, hospitalization).

Due Dates and Late Assignments

- The assignments are due at on the day and at the time listed on the schedule, via the relevant assignment portal on Blackboard.
- I am happy to grant assignment extensions or modifications as they are needed, but I must to do them in advance of the due date and in writing. Do not assume that I will grant an extension once a deadline has passed.
- I will accept weekly journal assignments up to one week after the due date, with a letter-grade deduction. I will not grade these assignments if they are turned in more than one week after the due date.
- For assignments other than the weekly journal assignments, without an extension, I will accept late assignments for up to 50% credit at any time up until the beginning of the final class session. (That is, the last schedule class day, before finals; not the last day of the semester.)
- If you have to miss a roundtable because of a major life event like hospitalization, you will need to work out an equivalent assignment with me.

Academic Honesty

- You must adhere to the university's policies for academic honesty. In short this means doing your own work, and not giving or receiving unfair or non-permitted help on your work.
- The university requires me to report every case of academic dishonesty to the Academic Honesty Board, and I will report every case.
- Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, which means using other people's ideas and words with giving them appropriate credit, including verbatim copying and missing, false, or misleading citations.
- You must cite the full source for any material you use, especially if you use the exact wording of the source (in which case you should also be using quotation marks and citing a page number or specific reference). It is your responsibility to make sure your audience knows where you got your information and what you did with that information. In an oral presentation, you must indicate verbally any material that you are taking directly from another source.
- If you have any questions about what constitutes academic honesty in this course, I am eager to help you; please reach out before you turn in an assignment.

Disability Accommodations

If you need a disability accommodation, please contact the Disability Office and they will let me now how to accommodate you without specifying the nature of your disability.

Anti-Oppressive Goals

This course advocates an active anti-oppressive, anti-racist position that seeks to use the study of music to undo social structures that oppress people and instead to build a just society where all people are respected and celebrated for their intrinsic and inestimable value. There has never been a values-neutral course, and indeed throughout their history, American music departments and schools of music have not only fostered a Eurocentric curriculum, but have actively supported a program of white supremacy. In choices of what to cover and how, what music to promote and what to ignore, and in decisions about hiring, promotion, and institutional investments, universities have consistently and systematically discriminated against women, people of color, and sexual/gender minorities. We have inherited social structures that actively oppress people, and if we do not oppose those structures then we will be perpetuating them. Declaring ourselves “non-racist” or ignoring the problem only makes it worse. If, on the other hand, we take an anti-racist approach and actively oppose racist and oppressive structures, then we can work to make positive change.

This course is designed give you the knowledge and tools needed to think critically about the ways that people have used music to oppress others, and to open up a space for imagining different ways of being that will enable us to build a just society. The selection of music and readings intentionally favors contributions of women and people of color, and the course is meant to spotlight social problems rather than avoid them. I do not expect us all to agree about anything except the innate worth of every human being. I do expect every student to engage with each other, with me, and with the authors and creators we study in this course in a respectful, honest, and kind manner as we work together in pursuit of greater understanding and seek out ways to make things better.

Creating a Supportive Classroom Community

I need your help in creative a supportive community in our classroom. I want to build a space in which students feel safe enough to take the risks necessary to engage with new ideas and develop new skills. We must be careful to avoid any kind of bullying or harrassment; and we must cultivate respect, humility, and kindness. No point of view is out of bounds for discussion, as long as we can find a respectful and sensitive way to talk about it.

I will give you opportunities for feedback throughout the course and I would ask, please let me know if there is anything I can do (or anything I need to change) in order to accomplish these goals. Please be reflective about your own contributions to the classroom environment as well.