

# **Syllabus — *A Thousand Years of Listening*, MUSHL 101-06 [1591]**

Professor David Johnson

Spring 2020 — Weekly Class Units, fully online, Mondays beginning January 27  
dj151@hunter.cuny.edu — Office hours by appointment via email or video chat

## **Course Objectives:**

Introduction to Western classical music, for non-majors. No experience or formal musical training is necessary. The class aims to foster an appreciation and understanding of classical music through the development of listening and analytical skills. Students will be able to understand elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, and instrumentation. Students will also become familiar with musical forms and genres, how these and other musical elements evolved from the Middle Ages through the present, and how elements overlap with music in popular styles. Significant composers and repertory from various stylistic periods will be emphasized. The course's workload will consist of a combination of discussion assignments, quizzes, and a concert essay aimed at demonstrating students' ability to combine their critical insight with listening and analytical skills.

## **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view by focusing on repertoire from a range of musical sources: chronological periods of Western art music (Middle Ages to the present), popular music, and non-Western repertoire.
2. Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically by responding to discussion prompts about specific elements heard in assigned repertoire and the ways in which those elements facilitate human expression and contribute to the formation of a particular genre, form, and/or style of music.
3. Produce well-reasoned written and oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions by attending a live concert and writing essays that demonstrate the specific ways in which that repertoire achieves its expressive goals as it adheres to or exceeds the expectations for its particular style.
4. Identify and apply the fundamental concepts of music with interactive Listening Outlines that highlight salient musical features in real time during the listening process.
5. Analyze how arts from diverse cultures of the past serve as a foundation for those of the present. By studying music of the Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras, and understanding the significance of the societies that produced them, students will understand the basis for many contemporary styles such as pop, rock, jazz, and blues.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of the skills involved in the creative process by learning to be an informed, attentive audience rather than a passive one.

## **Required Text:**

R. Larry Todd, *Discovering Music*. Oxford University Press, 2018. [ISBN 9780190255107]

Our course platform is the OUP website called Dashboard. Registration requires a mandatory access code. You can either (a) buy a *new* copy of the textbook, and enter its access code when you register on the website (see below), or (b) obtain a used or rental copy, then *purchase an access code* when registering online. Alternatively, purchase an e-book during registration.

- Buy or rent from Shakespeare & Co. on Lexington Ave. (the quickest, safest option);
- OR buy or rent from the Hunter College Online Bookstore:

<http://hunter.textbookx.com/institutional/index.php?action=browse-books/2218346/>

- OR from OUP itself, during the registration process.

Note that *any* options involving shipping—including Hunter and OUP—should be allowed a generous amount of time! I would advise you order online only if you can be absolutely sure of a vendor's shipping time. Once the semester gets underway, it will be very difficult to catch up.

- The direct link to our Dashboard section:

[https://register.dashboard.oup.com/product?catalog=9780190255152\\_Johnson\\_MUSHL101-01\\_S20](https://register.dashboard.oup.com/product?catalog=9780190255152_Johnson_MUSHL101-01_S20)

---

### Grading:

Weekly Quizzes	75%
Concert Report	15%
Attendance/Participation	10%

- The course comprises fourteen Weekly Units, usually posted on Mondays (though check the Course Schedule, below, for exceptions). Quizzes for each Unit will usually be posted Thursdays, and are due the following Monday. (I will issue reminders of all Quiz dates.) Note: Students submitting Quizzes up to 24 hours late will receive only partial credit; after 24 hours late, a score of zero will be given.
- There are 46 **Quizzes** (one per chapter), allocated variously across our fourteen weeks. They will consist of multiple-choice, listening-identification, and other questions. You will describe the listening examples objectively, using the course's musical elements learned during Weeks 1 and 2. There is no final exam.

A word of advice: study our first *two* Weekly Units thoroughly! They will train your ears and teach you crucial musical concepts to be used, and built upon, throughout the semester. Also be ready to return to and review these two Units later on, as needed.

- You will also be attending two music concerts of your choice and writing a 1,200+ word (c. 4–5 page) **Concert Report**, to be submitted, via email, on or before **Monday, May 4, at 11:59 p.m.** A separate Guidelines Sheet is posted on Dashboard.
- **Attendance** and **participation** in the course are mandatory, chiefly demonstrated by consistent submission of quizzes, and contributions to Dashboard discussion boards, when applicable.

## Class Policies:

- Organization of content:

The course is structured using *both* the Todd textbook and Dashboard's weekly modules. The latter have lessons with "Professor Discussions," using various materials to enhance the book. Quizzes will draw from both sources. You will quickly learn how to integrate Todd and Dashboard in a productive way, but you may find it helpful to read the book chapters first.

- Technological issues:

As this course is taught strictly online, technological upkeep is essential. I strongly urge the use of a **personal computer**, not a tablet. The most recommended browsers are Firefox, Safari, and Chrome. Ideally, you should have a backup browser at the ready. You are responsible for keeping browsers up to date. Browser plugins and extensions may be necessary; we will discuss, if applicable.

- How to Contact Me:

If you have a question about specific course contents or scheduling, please *ask it first* on Dashboard's "General Questions / Comments" forum, since the rest of the class will likely benefit from it. (If you have a question about an open, active quiz, however, please write me separately.) Other issues can be directed to my Hunter email, or video chats can be scheduled. I will not be checking email after 7:00 p.m., and **I will not respond to any queries that are already covered in this syllabus or in Guidelines sheets.**

Note that I can only work with email addresses as they are listed by Hunter College. Students will be held responsible for any consequences from missed messages.

- Online etiquette:

It can be difficult to determine a sender's tone or precise meaning in email and other online postings. You must be absolutely sure, therefore, to be respectful, professional, and as intelligible as possible in all postings, such that you are not being misread. This also reduces unnecessary back and forth. Please use prose (not text-speak) and clear organization of ideas. Messages should include a salutation (such as "Hello" or "Dear") and, of course, your name.

- Hunter Blackboard will be rarely used, and only when I announce it. Student resources: <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/it/blackboard/student-documentation-and-support-for-blackboard>. For the Student Helpdesk: (212) 650-3624, or [studenthelpdesk@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:studenthelpdesk@hunter.cuny.edu).

---

## Course Schedule

### Unit 1/Jan. 27      **Elements of Music, I**

Introductions — How to describe music — How to listen critically

Pitch, Melody, and Key / Rhythm, Meter, Texture, and Dynamics

*Read:* Part I Overview (p. 2); Ch. 1 and 2

*Listen:* music examples on Dashboard

- 2/Feb. 3                      Elements of Music, II**
- Timbre, Instruments, and Ensembles / Musical Form / Historical Styles  
*Read:* Ch. 3 through 6; Summary (p. 57)  
*Listen:* music examples on Dashboard
- 3/Feb. 10                    The Middle Ages**
- Plainchant / Organum and the birth of Polyphony / Machaut / Mass  
*Read:* Part II Overview (p. 60); Ch. 7 through 12; Summary (p. 86)
- 4/Feb. 18                    The Renaissance**  
**[Tues.]**
- Dufay, Desprez, Palestrina / the Madrigal / Instrumental Music  
*Read:* Part III Overview (p. 92); Ch. 13 through 18; Summary (p. 124)
- 5/Feb. 24                    The Baroque Period, I**
- Baroque Style / Monteverdi and Opera / Instrumental Music / Vivaldi  
*Read:* Part IV Overview (p. 130); Ch. 19 through 23
- 6/Mar. 2                    The Baroque Period, II**
- Johann Sebastian Bach / George Frideric Handel  
*Read:* Ch. 24 through 29; Summary (p. 202)
- 7/Mar. 9                    Classicism, I**
- Classical Style / Classical Genres and Forms / Franz Joseph Haydn  
*Read:* Part V Overview (p. 208); Ch. 30 through 32; Ch. 33 (through p. 251 only)
- 8/Mar. 16                   Classicism, II**
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart / Ludwig van Beethoven  
*Read:* Ch. 33 (from p. 251) and 34; Summary (p. 288)
- 9/Mar. 23                   Romanticism, I**
- Romantic Style / German Art Song / Solo Piano Music  
*Read:* Part VI Overview (p. 294); Ch. 35 through 37

**10/Mar. 30                    Romanticism, II**

19th-Century Orchestral Music / Romantic Opera  
*Read:* Ch. 38 and 39

[April 8 through 16 — Spring Recess]

**11/Apr. 17                    Romanticism, III**  
**[Fri.]**

Late-19th-Century Music / Nationalism  
*Read:* Ch. 40; Summary (p. 414)

**12/Apr. 27                    The Modern Era, I**

Modern Styles / Debussy, Stravinsky, Schoenberg and his Pupils  
*Read:* Part VII Overview (p. 420); Ch. 41 and 42

**13/May 4                    —Concert Reports due, at 11:59 p.m.—**

**The Modern Era, II**

Neoclassicism / English and Russian Styles  
*Read:* Ch. 43 through 45

**14/May 11                    The Modern Era, III**

Film and Popular Music / Contemporary Styles  
*Read:* Ch. 47 and 48; Summary (p. 552)

---

**• Music Department policy on Withdrawal and Incomplete:**

Students who wish to withdraw from the class with a grade of W may do so by submitting a withdrawal form to One Stop (Room 217N) by the announced deadline. Withdrawal after the announced deadline is allowed only in cases of serious emergencies and must be approved by the Office of Advising Services. Students who stop attending class without withdrawing officially will receive a grade of WU, which counts the same as F. The Music Department does not support requests to have grades of WU changed retroactively to W.

Grades of IN (“incomplete”) are granted only in special cases at the end of the semester where a student who is otherwise passing the course has a documented illness or other emergency that prevents them from completing their final assignments or final exam, and then only when permission has been granted in writing from the Department Chair, no later than one week before the final class meeting. Please see the Hunter website for more details.

- **Hunter College Plagiarism policy:**

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures. For more information on the College Policy on Academic Integrity, go to:

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/studentaffairs/student-conduct/academic-integrity/cuny-policy-on-academic-integrity>

- **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

In compliance with the ADA and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Hunter is committed to ensuring educational access and accommodations for all its registered students. Hunter College's students with disabilities and medical conditions are encouraged to register with the Office of AccessABILITY for assistance and accommodation. For information and appointments, contact the Office of AccessABILITY, located in Room E1214, or call 212-772-4857 or VRS, 646-755-3129.