Mus 309, Music Since 1900

Prerequisite (one of the following):
MUS 101 Introduction to Music or
MUS 119 The Elements of Music or
MUS 130 Sound Structures

For this 300-level course, completing one of the prerequisites is recommended.

Course Description
An introductory survey of the variegated and rapidly changing trends of the last and current centuries of Western concert/art music, including topics such as the “the virtuoso” in classical, jazz, popular and DJ turntablism performance (Kentaro, C2C); Impressionism, expressionism, neoclassicism, twelve-tone and other serialism, organizing sound, rhythmic complexity (Cowell, Nancarrow, Babbitt), Futurism, Dada and Bauhaus, sound-poetry, sound-art, cabaret, Chinese opera, gamelan (that influenced Debussy, Partch, Cage, Harrison) and others) multi-media, indeterminacy, aleatoricism and improvisation, noise music and textures, spectacle, performance art, experimental and conceptual works, idiosyncratic ideas and techniques, technology and electronic/computer/techno music; proportions in music, interpreting graphic scores, art and time; architectural design and sound currently and historically, tracing the origin and transformation/interpretations of a musical theme through several eras; past styles and styles derived from ethnic or popular music at the discretion of the instructor. Included are pertinent music terminology, recognizing and observing musical parameters, making interconnections with any socio-cultural aspects of diverse cultures, ethnic instruments, music, vocal art, visual-art and theater; appreciating any historical, scientific, aesthetic, philosophical and technological aspects that form a music work’s context.

Developing curiosity, skepticism, analytical thinking, learning research and writing are encouraged. Your interest in writing in English, clear verbal expression, using music terminology correctly, advancing your vocabulary and learning observation, thinking-tools applicable to writing about music, practice in describing, comparing, interpreting, researching, imagining and choosing how to best express your ideas verbally, are all essential. Becoming a self-learner (autodidact) is most essential. Over the semester you will apply and develop numerous “observation and thinking tools” and increase your expertise as a listener, reader and critic who evaluates music, its context and related ideas. If you want to be a keener observer, broader, diverse thinker, interpreter and questioner, then this course is for you.

Required:
Writing papers is required. If your English writing skills need improvement, you will be directed to the Writing Center. The required work includes weekly written papers, periodic short quizzes, attendance and writing reports on live concerts or gallery events featuring sonic art; participation in class
discussion; a research and writing project on a related topic of the student’s choice that shows the student’s command of detailed research, interpretation and relationships both within its historical context, within its own genre, related genres and connections to music and arts of one or more other cultures. Students develop their own eclectic “listening list” to share and discuss with others. Students use Youtube for sonic and visual research, have required online readings of articles, essays, reviews and read sections from various texts including “The Hand”: How it shapes the brain, language and human culture (particularly music) by Frank Wilson, M.D.; “Play” by Stuart Brown, M.D., “Aesthetic Analysis” by D.W.Prall, “Free Play” by Dr. Stephen Nachmanovitch; “Listen to This” by Alex Ross; a model for analyzing avant-garde ideas: “Why a Painting is Like a Pizza” by Dr. Nancy Heller, “Improv Wisdom” by Patricia Ryan Madson, and other resources. A wide range of composers and performers (and a few other artists) is covered including Satie, Debussy, Scriabin, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Ella Fitzgerald, Bobby McFerrin, Aphex Twin, Hausmann, Schwitters, Russolo, Marinetti, Berio, Pousseur, UK Apache, etc.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students completing this course should be able to demonstrate through their writing and discussion:

- The ability to recognize various musical parameters and describe how the composer uses these to create the expression and form of a music work
- Use musical terminology appropriately when writing
- Observe and describe how a text influences the musical narrative of a work
- Show that they understand that music/art works “do not exist in a vacuum” by researching a work’s context, related historical and present connections when writing a paper
- Demonstrate the ability to observe, think critically/analytically and to write clearly as a listener-thinker engaging with a music work or mixed-media art work in a given genre
- Demonstrate their listening skills by writing well-observed and cogent interpretations
- Pose intelligent questions and engage in discussion in class, particularly with instrumental/vocal/other performers who visit and perform for the class
- Demonstrate the ability to think comparatively and imaginatively, to make interesting, detailed, and convincing connections between various kinds of music works, composers, works of art, including writing a final paper that includes, for instance, an appreciation of Smithson’s earthwork Spiral Jetty in relation to the music of Debussy, Eno and performance artist Laurie Anderson.

**Grading policy:**

A final grade will be based on the following:

- weekly writing papers
- periodic short quizzes
- live concert reviews/reports
- developing a shared listening list
- research and writing project on a related topic of the student’s choice

**Attendance and lateness policy**

All students are expected attend each class session to hear lectures, live performances and engage in discussions. Absence or lateness result in missed information that is vital to progress and success in this course.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:**

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room
128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential. Students requiring emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information, go to the following web site.
http://www.ehs.sunysb.edu/fire/disabilities/asp

Critical Incident Management:
Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs for any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students’ ability to learn.

Academic Integrity Statement:
Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instance of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/policies.html

Plagiarism and cheating: Any form of plagiarism or cheating will result in a failing grade. University’s statement on academic dishonesty: “Plagiarism is the use of others’ words and/or ideas without clearly acknowledging their source. When you incorporate those words and ideas into your own work, it is important that you give credit where it is due and use footnotes and citations. Intentional or unintentional, plagiarism is considered academic dishonesty and will be reported to the Academic Judiciary. To avoid plagiarism, you must give the original author credit whenever you use another person’s ideas, opinions, drawings, or theories as well as any facts or any other pieces of information that are not common knowledge. Also, quotations of another person’s actual spoken or written words; or a close paraphrasing of another person’s spoken or written words must also be referenced. Accurately citing all sources and putting direct quotations (of even a few key words) in quotation marks are required.

Grades: "A": work is superior; dramatically surpasses minimum requirements; "B" work is good; exceeds minimum requirements; "C" work is satisfactory; meets minimum requirements; "D" is poor; does not meet minimum requirements; “F”: failed.