MUS 246W • Music History I
Music from the Earliest Notations to the Sixteenth Century

Prof. Emily Wilbourne
Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College
Mondays and Wednesdays 13:40—14:55

Prerequisites: None
Enrollment requires School of Music permission
Fulfills requirements for the Pathways Flexible Core Area of World Cultures and Global Issues (WCGI)

Introduction and Overview

Music is a unique and compelling subject, one that should have a place in any liberal arts curriculum. Music is an abstract art that requires students to learn and apply a specialized vocabulary and set of concepts; as a result, it teaches students attention to detail and intellectual rigor (WCGI Learning Outcomes #1 and #2). At the same time, music is a powerfully communicative art, and as a result it teaches students how to think and write about larger cultural and global trends and issues (WCGI Learning Outcomes #3, 4, and 5).

In this course students focus on a very early period of music history: music in Medieval and Renaissance Europe. In the course students learn how to identify and apply some fundamental concepts and methods of music history (WCGI Learning Outcome #4), and also how to describe and analyze two larger cultures, cultures that are chronologically, socio-culturally, and musically very different from that of the early twenty-first-century United States (WCGI Learning Outcome #5).

The class consists of lectures and discussion, two exams, and four written assignments. In all of these activities students pay attention not only to “the music itself,” but also to the larger cultures of Medieval and Renaissance Europe. It is indeed only by acquiring the skills to analyze these larger cultures that students can truly understand the music of this period, since much of it is very different in its sound and norms from other music—including most other music in the Western classical tradition.

Issues covered in the course that relate to culture include Medieval and Renaissance attitudes to poetry, song, and performance; belief and spirituality; love and sex; and the individual and individual subjectivity. These attitudes are very different from those of twenty-first-century America and so studying them in class
gives students multiple opportunities to grapple with issues of cultural diversity and learn how to think about and describe cultural events and processes from different points of view (WCGI Learning Outcome #5). In the course students are also encouraged to think about the ways in which Medieval and Renaissance European culture, while itself diverse, was also connected with and profoundly shaped by other, non-European parts of the globe—particularly the musics and cultures of the Middle East and North Africa.

As well as cultural diversity, the course also places a great deal of emphasis on history: the course covers an enormous temporal span, of around six hundred years (from 600 to 1500), and as a result gives students multiple opportunities to think about history and the historical development of a series of societies that are very different from their own (WCGI Learning Outcome #6). Within the six hundred-year period, students pay particular attention to changing attitudes toward religion, from the dominance of Christian Church in the Medieval period to the rise of secularism in the Renaissance; to the different courtly settings in which secular music was commissioned and produced; and to the shift from courts to city-states during the late Medieval period and early Renaissance and associated changes in musical practice and patronage.

By teaching students to identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of Medieval and Renaissance music history; analyze Medieval and Renaissance musical culture in all its diversity; and analyze the development of Medieval and Renaissance musical culture over the six hundred year time period, this course satisfies Learning Outcomes #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 for the Pathways Flexible Core area of World Cultures and Global Issues (WCGI). By requiring students to complete four substantial written assignments, the course additionally fulfills the requirements of a Writing Intensive Course (W).

Required texts:
  [Feel free to get the first or second edition.]

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Recommended texts:


**Grade breakdown:**

1. midterm exam 20 %  
2. final exam 20 %  
3. written assignment 1 (encyclopedia review) 10 %  
4. written assignment 2 (position paper) 10 %  
5. written assignment 3 (academic bibliography) 10 %  
6. written assignment 4 (genre/function analysis) 10 %  
7. portfolio 20 %

**Academic integrity:**

Original work is a crucial component of a university education; plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. All sources must be properly cited, including online resources. Ignorance is not an adequate excuse for mistakes that concern the appropriation of the intellectual work of others. Be warned: any attempt to pass off the work of others as your own will be dealt with to the fullest extent.

The full university statement on Academic Dishonesty, including the penalties for such behaviour, can be found at [http://web.cuny.edu/academics/infocentral/policies.html](http://web.cuny.edu/academics/infocentral/policies.html).

**Americans with Disabilities Act:**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Special Services Office, Frese Hall, rm. 111; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and details about the type of accommodation required. This should be done during the first week of classes. For more information about services available to Queens students contact: Mirian Detres-Hickey, Ph.D., Special Services Office, 111 Frese Hall, 718-997-5870 (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). E-mail: QC.SPSV@qc.cuny.edu

More information is available at the website: [http://www.qc.cuny.edu/studentlife/services/specialserv/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.qc.cuny.edu/studentlife/services/specialserv/Pages/default.aspx)

**Attendance:**

Students are expected to attend all classes. Unexcused absences will have a dramatic impact on your grade: they will impact both your portfolio and your performance on the final exam. Note also that PERSISTENT LATENESS WILL BE TAKEN AS AN ABSENCE. I expect you to be in class for the entire period. During this time you will need to refrain from going to the bathroom, taking calls on your cell phone, and
popping out to buy snacks. You are welcome to bring food to class and eat it here, just be organised enough that you don’t need to leave the room.

**Electronic devices:**
Laptop computers and cell phones are not permitted in the classroom.
Schedule of Classes and Assessment

CLASS 01-02
Plainchant & Liturgy
T&G: ch.1 pp.3-34
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, and 4

CLASS 03
The mass
Bring p/c of composer entries to class
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

CLASS 04
Modes & Hildegard
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

CLASS 05
Guido & early polyphony
Written assignment 1 DUE IN CLASS
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #2 and 3

CLASS 06
Secular musics
T&G: ch.2, 35-71
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

CLASS 07
Notre Dame polyphony
Exercise 2a DUE IN CLASS
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #3, 4, and 5

CLASS 08
Franconian notation
Exercise 2b DUE IN CLASS
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #3, 4, and 5

CLASS 09
Ars nova
Exercise 2c DUE IN CLASS
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #3, 4, and 5

CLASS 10
Isorhythm (cont.) & ars subtilior
T&G: ch.3, 72-100
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

CLASS 11
Machaut
Written assignment 2 DUE IN CLASS
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #3, 4, and 5

CLASS 12
Trecento
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

CLASS 13
Contenance anglais
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

CLASS 14
MIDTERM EXAM

CLASS 15
Bibliographic research
T&G: ch. 4, 101-132
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1

CLASS 16
Burgundian school
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

CLASS 17
Cyclic masses
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

CLASS 18
Written assignment 3 DUE IN CLASS
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #2 and 4

CLASS 19
Franco-Flemish school
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

CLASS 20
Invention of Print
T&G: ch.5, 133-162
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

CLASS 21
Exercise 4a DUE IN CLASS
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

CLASS 22
Josquin & Palestrina
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

CLASS 23
Reformation
Exercise 4b DUE IN CLASS
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

SPRING BREAK

CLASS 24
Counter-reformation & Venetian polychoral music
T&G: ch.6, 163-189
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

CLASS 25
English madrigals
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

CLASS 26
Late Italian madrigals
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

CLASS 27
Invention of opera
Written assignment 4 DUE IN CLASS
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

CLASS 28
Exam review session in class
WCGI Learning Outcomes met: #1, 2, 4, 5, and 6
LAST DAY OF CLASSES

EXAMS START
PORTFOLIO INSTRUCTIONS
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Over the course of the semester, you will consult scores, listen to recordings, watch videos, and read the textbook and other scholarly sources. At the end of semester, each student will submit a portfolio of work that demonstrates that they completed the ongoing, week-to-week work for the course and have learned how to effectively gather and interpret and assess information about music history (WCGI Learning Outcome #1). This portfolio is worth 20% of the final grade. It will include all of the following materials:

- all class notes
- all class worksheets and in-class assignments
- drafts of all written assignments (including exercises submitted)

Your portfolio will be graded on completeness and on the quality of your work.

Since note-taking will prove so crucial to this class, we are going to have a short discussion about effective strategies. Please use the space below this text and on the reverse of this paper to take notes on how to take notes.
Encyclopedia review

Each student will be assigned a composer at random. You will then consult the wikipedia and Grove music online entries for that composer and evaluate those entries as sources of evidence and arguments about that figure and their music (*WCGI Learning Outcome #2*). Please follow these steps:

STEP 01: Look up and **PRINT OUT** the wikipedia and Grove music online entries for your assigned composer. Bring the print outs to class on **MONDAY February 4** (this will be our third class).

We will use the print outs as the basis of an in-class exercise.

STEP 02: Write a three-to-four-page comparison of the two sources. Points that you will wish to consider include the length of the two, the use of anecdote and/or fact, the authorial voice of the entry, the use of references, the associated bibliography, and any references to musical works or techniques (*WCGI Learning Outcome #3*).

Your final evaluation is due in class on **MONDAY February 11** (class 05).

**Along with your final paper please submit**

**copies of the two encyclopedia entries**
Position paper: Medieval Music, performance practice, and Arabic influence

In this assignment the student will read two articles and write a position paper arguing for (or against) a given interpretive strategy (WCGI Learning Outcomes #4 and 5). For this assignment, you will first present and assess the evidence and the arguments made in each article orally in class. You will then develop your own arguments about the articles and present their final conclusions in written form (WCGI Learning Outcome #3). The topic this semester focuses Arabic influences on the performance practice of notated plainchant.

Note that a crucial feature of academic presenting and writing is the presence of an argument, often called a thesis. The point is not just to summarise what is known about a given subject, but to argue for (or against) a specific interpretation of the available facts. The first sections of this assignment are aimed at having you read for argument and evidence. Both of the readings are available on the Google classroom site.

Readings:


Tasks:

2a] For exercise 2a DUE WEDNESDAY February 20 (class 007), you are read the Haines article in its entirety, and to mark up two pages following the directions below (note that they need not be the first two pages, choose whichever ones you find easiest/most relevant). You will need to print the article from the google classroom site in order to do this. You will need three different colours; use them to make the following distinctions:

- **colour 1)** evidence
  Highlight the sentences that present or describe the facts.

- **colour 2)** analysis
  Highlight the sentences in which the author interprets the fact, or elaborates upon the inferences that can be drawn from them.
Highlight the sentences in which the author puts forward an opinion, a conclusion, or a claim.

By the time your article is beautifully decorated, you should have a pretty good sense of what the author is trying to say. Summarise the thesis of the reading in one or two sentences. Write the thesis down and bring the thesis statement + your marked up copy of the article to the next class and be ready to present on it orally. (The reading can be found on the class site.)

2b] Write a **one-page summary** of the first reading. This should be typed and one-and-a-half spaced on the page. Please DO NOT provide a blow-by-blow description of the reading (i.e. "First Haines . . ., then he . . ." = BAD & BORING). Aim to synthesise the material and to talk about the extract in a cohesive way. Bring a copy of the summary to the next class and be ready to present on it orally.
**DUE: MONDAY February 25** (Class 08).

2c] Repeat all the steps that you did for reading one with reading two (by Kirsten Yri). All three parts (two pages colour coded, the one-or-two-sentence thesis statement, and the one-page summary) are due together. Bring a copy of the summary to the next class and be ready to present on it orally.
(Again, the reading can be found on the class site.)
**DUE: WEDNESDAY February 27** (Class 09).

2d] This is the final component of your paper. Based on the two readings you have done, argue for (or against) one of the two interpretive strategies discussed. Feel free to argue for some combination of the two or some other alternative if you would prefer. You MUST make reference to the readings; include quotes where appropriate. You are free to re-use material from the earlier components of this assignment where appropriate, but do not "dump" them into the final version in an unadulterated form.
**LENGTH: 4-5 pages (1 ½ spaced)**
**DUE: WEDNESDAY March 6** (Class 11).
Written Assignment 3: Academic Bibliography

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Due: Wednesday, 3 April (class 18)

Produce a list of ten (10) bibliographic items directly related to your assigned composer/theorist. This list should not present the first ten sources you discover, but the BEST ten sources you discover (WCGI Learning Outcomes #1, 2, and 4). Aim for a range of source types: primary and secondary, journal articles, monographs (a monograph is a single-authored book), edited collections, dissertations, critical editions, scores and recordings.

The bibliography of the Grove article on your assigned person is a very good place to begin compiling your list, however in order to track down the best sources for this assignment, you will need to make use of RILM, The Music Index and IIMP—all of which are available through the research guide located on the home page of the Music Library: https://qc-cuny.libguides.com/music.

For each item on your list, you will need to justify the selection AND explain how you would locate the item (online, library, interlibrary loan, etc.). Indicate why you chose that particular source and what information you believe it contains. MAKE SURE that you check the date at which a particular source was written. With the exception of primary sources, of course, the date might well indicate material that is outdated or has been replaced by more recent work.

You should organise your bibliography alphabetically. Do not number the entries.

Remember to avoid tertiary sources (encyclopaedia articles, textbook extracts, etc.).

The bibliography is to be accompanied by a cover letter detailing the method that you used to find the listed sources. Write it as you would any other letter (with a proper address, a salutation, etc.). Relate the narrative of what you did and in which order. For example:

First, I read through the bibliography attached to the Grove article. There were twelve sources listed, ranging in date from 1912 to 2004. The most recent two sources were both monographs on the topic, so I found them in the library catalogue and then looked at the bibliography for each book, too.

Please Note: In addition to content, you will be graded on the accuracy of your citation up to and including the punctuation. I prefer Chicago 16th; the following
website provides excellent instructions:
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT 4: GENRE ANALYSIS
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Using Laura Macy’s article, “Speaking of Sex,” as a theoretical lens, analyse the social function of a genre other than the Italian madrigal. (5-6pp.)

In this project students have the opportunity to combine musical evidence and cultural and historical context in order to build a complex argument (WCGI Learning Outcomes #1, 2, 3, 4, and 5). As I did for the second assignment, I have broken this task down into several intermediate steps in order to make it easier to tackle. The various components of the assignment and their due dates are listed below (the due dates also appear on the calendar included with the class syllabus).

Bear in mind that you need to choose a genre to write your paper about; you can choose anything that we have covered over the semester.

4a] Read and summarise Laura Macy’s article, “Speaking of Sex: Metaphor and Performance in the Italian Madrigal,” The Journal of Musicology 14 (1996): 1-34. [Note that the article is available on the class blackboard site.]

To do this properly, I ask that you think through the same steps that you used in assignment 2a, where you printed out the article and marked up the pages with different colours. The point here is to differentiate between evidence, analysis and argument as they appear in the paper. Make sure that you can answer the question of which is which.

Summarise the thesis of the reading in one or two sentences. Write the thesis down and bring the thesis statement + your copy of the article class on WEDNESDAY 10 April (class 21).
4b] Chose a specific musical example that demonstrates the typical musical features of your chosen genre. Work out how to embed the example into a wordprocessing document. Describe the relevant musical elements in as much detail as possible; your description should be about five-hundred words long. Bring this component to class on WEDNESDAY 17 April (class 23).

4c] Write the paper itself: using Macy’s article, “Speaking of Sex,” as a theory lens, consider the question of how your chosen genre facilitated social interaction; refer to at least one specific musical example. Explain how the values of the performers and listeners are represented in the musical texture.

Consider the following statement, which sums up the ideals behind this paper quite nicely:

As listeners and composers negotiate and agree upon the defining features of a given genre, they are also implicitly communicating to each other (and to us) the things that they find important—in their art, their systems of belief, their culture, their own identities. This concept opens many doors for interpretation, because as we start to understand what a culture values about the genres it creates and consumes, we can learn a great deal about contemporary experiences of specific works made to fit within these generic patterns.¹

The final paper is due on the penultimate day of class, WEDNESDAY 8 May (class 27).