

MUS 14: Contemporary Music ~ Winter 2013 Syllabus ~

Instructor

Brian Griffieath-Loeb (bgriffea@ucsd.edu)

Office hours: M/W/F, 10-11am @ S&E 2nd floor, Geisel

Teaching Assistants

Josh Charney (joshuacharney@gmail.com)

Office hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30

Dustin Donahue (dustinwdonahue@gmail.com)

Office hours: by appointment

Pablo Gomez (pgomezca@ucsd.edu)

Office hours: Wednesdays 2-3pm @ CPMC 243

Brendan Nguyen (brendan.nguyen@me.com)

Office hours: by appointment T/W/R @ CPMC 301

Ryan Welsh (rwelsh24@gmail.com)

Office hours: by appointment

Scott Worthington (sworthin@ucsd.edu)

Office hours: Wednesdays, 2:15-3:15 @ Art of Espresso, and by appointment

Course Text

The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century, by Alex Ross. Picador: New York, 2007.

Course Overview

The 20th Century played host to some of the most radical departures in the history of Western Art (i.e., Classical) Music. Basic elements such as melody and harmony were no longer paramount by default. Others such as timbre and texture emerged for deeper investigation. Relationships between composers, performers, audience, and state were tested and in some cases transformed by the surrounding political landscape, whose conflicts in particular would reveal the complexity of an artist's role in society.

This class serves as an introduction to major figures and developments of 20th-century classical music. It involves a substantial amount of listening, much of which challenges popular notions of what music can and should be. To make the experience as rewarding as possible, students are encouraged to embrace the unfamiliar and to discard expectations of immediate appeal—to cultivate openness, patience, and genuine curiosity. That which elicits a strong response—whether positive or negative—stands to teach us something important. And what might immediately seem impenetrable may, over time, become precious. The intrepid listener does not ask music to prove itself on her terms, but whether she can imagine a perspective from which it becomes interesting.

The Days of the Week

Monday	Section A01	10:00a – 10:50a	CPMC 265	Pablo Gomez
	Section A02	11:00a – 11:50a	CPMC 265	Ryan Welsh
Tuesday	Lecture	11:00a – 12:20p	CPMC 136	Brian Griffeath-Loeb
Wednesday	Section A03	12:00p – 12:50p	CPMC 264	Brendan Nguyen
	Section A04	1:00p – 1:50p	CPMC 264	Scott Worthington
Thursday	Lecture	11:00a – 12:20p	CPMC 136	Brian Griffeath-Loeb
Friday	Section A05	9:00a – 9:50a	CPMC 265	Dustin Donahue
	Section A06	11:00a – 11:50a	CPMC 265	Joshua Charney

Important Dates

Monday, January 21

No section (Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday)

Thursday, February 7

Midterm

Thursday, February 14

First concert report due to your TA (at end of class)

Monday, February 18

No section (President's Day Holiday)

Thursday, March 14

Second concert report due to your TA (at end of class)

Thursday, March 21

Final exam (11:30a-2:29p, location TBD)

Listening report (optional xcred) due to instructor *by e-mail* before final exam begins

Grading

Weekly reading and music vocab quizzes (in section)	20%
Concert reports (2-3pp)	20% (10% ea.)
Midterm	25%
Final exam	35%
Optional extra credit report (2-3pp)	5%

Assignment Information

Short weekly quizzes will focus on the reading, though at least one will also cover musical terminology. In the former case, questions assess whether you have assimilated the material as part of the “big picture.” Reading questions will not target minute details.

Concert reports are to be written *after* attending a concert of contemporary music. Do *not* take notes during the concert, as this is distracting both for performers and other members of the audience. Reports should focus on the nature of your experience as vividly as possible, whatever it might be, within the following constraints:

1. If you say something negative (or positive!), do not assume the reader shares your opinion(s). Explain why. Use specific examples within the music. Describe them and decide how they relate to your priorities in music listening. For example, "Given that x, y, and z (e.g., melody, tonal harmony, and a steady beat) are usually a big part of what I enjoy in music, the fact that this piece had none of these presented challenges. In an effort to adapt, I..."

In referencing specific moments, be careful not to get lost in blow-by-blow accounts of each piece. Such information is only relevant insofar as it helps you articulate the nuances of your experience.

2. Do not make points that rely on shared experience. Describing a piece as "like this dream of a purple cloud I had last night" is of no use to me, not having had that dream myself.
3. Do not feel compelled to regurgitate fancy jargon from the class syllabus. In general, I am invested in your fluency with musical terminology. But for the purposes of this assignment, I am more interested in getting as accurate and honest a sense of your experience as possible. Use the words, format, and whatever else that helps you to best accomplish this task.
4. Use the term "song" only to describe pieces of music that are, in fact, songs. As a general guideline, songs are usually *sung*. Also, avoid using the word "random" to describe music that is "difficult to understand." Random has a precise definition and should be employed only when describing music that is truly characterized as such.
5. A list of contemporary music concerts (among others) within the department can be found at the following url: <http://musicweb.ucsd.edu/concerts/>. Not all department concerts are eligible (e.g., Soirée for Music Lovers), so if you're unsure, please check with your TA.

Midterm and final exams will draw from lecture, section, and course reading in the form of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and aural examination questions. The latter will require familiarity with various pieces presented in lecture, such that you can identify them by ear when played an excerpt (usually 1-2 min. in length). This will take a lot of practice, both in section and on your own. **Listening materials will be available on UCSD's (D)igital (A)udio (R)eserve.** In addition to identifying excerpts (by full title), you will be asked to name the composer, year of composition (+/- 15 years), and provide a few significant observations about the work.

Optional extra credit will be available by submitting to the instructor (i.e., *not* your TA) an additional report (same criteria as concert reports) on one of the following works. It is advisable that you listen/view your selection multiple times before sitting down to write. The options, available on DAR:

1. Human Windchimes: Staircases of Doom (2011), by Carolyn Chen
2. Fold explain fold leave (2011-12), by Mauricio Pauly
3. The Flypaper (2005), by Steve Takasugi

Policies

Late work: Reports turned in after class on the due date will be considered late and docked a full letter grade (10%) each day.

Exam makeup: no exams may be made up without a doctor's note and/or prior approval of the instructor. Makeup exams will not be approved without a compelling reason (e.g., illness, family emergency).

E-mail policy: the TAs and instructor will do their best to respond to all inquiries in a timely fashion. This excludes the 24-hour period before any exam or report deadline, during which responses will be handled at their discretion. This is meant to encourage students to seek out the help they need *well in advance*. Anticipate the unexpected and plan your studies accordingly to ensure you're in good shape, even if something (e.g., outside the purview of our class) comes up.

Lecture Calendar

Date	Topics	Assignments
Jan 8	Introductions, course overview, and discussion of course vocabulary	Week 1 Reading: preface, pp. 1-79
Jan 10	Origins of tonality and chromaticism (Wagner, Mahler, Strauss)	
Jan 15	The Second Viennese School: atonality, "emancipation of dissonance" (Schoenberg, Berg, Webern)	Week 1 Reading / Vocab Quiz Week 2 Reading: pp. 80-129
Jan 17	Alternatives to Schoenberg, Part 1a: Impressionism, non-functional harmony (Debussy and Ravel)	
Jan 22	Alternatives to Schoenberg, Part 1b (Satie, DuChamps, Les Six, Dada)	Week 2 Reading Quiz Week 3 Reading: pp. 130-170, 211-232, 290-302, 328-332
Jan 24	Alternatives to Schoenberg, Part 2: Meter, folk, polytonality, "primitivism" (Stravinsky, Dvořák, Bartók)	
Jan 29	Return to the Second Viennese School: Dodecaphony / 12-tone method / serialism	Week 3 Reading Quiz Week 4 Reading: pp. 235-283, 333-372

Jan 31	An American Sound? Polytonality, Americana, stylistic pluralism (Ives and Copland)	(Week 3 Reading Quiz) (Week 4 Reading: pp. 235-283, 333-372)
Feb 5	Midterm prep	Week 4 Reading Quiz
Feb 7	MIDTERM	Week 5 Reading: pp. 373-396
Feb 12	Music During the War (Shostakovitch, Messaien)	Week 5 Reading Quiz
Feb 14	European Modernism, Part 1 Total serialism, Musique Concrète (Boulez, Schaeffer, Stockhausen)	Week 6 Reading: 396-446, 483-514 <u>Concert Report #1</u> DUE to TA <i>after class, Thursday February 14</i>
Feb 19	American Experimentalism, Part 1 Chance, prepared piano, memory disorientation (Cage, Feldman)	Week 6 Reading Quiz Week 7 Reading: 515-557
Feb 21	European Modernism, Part 2 Micropolyphony, clusters, stochastic music (Ligeti, Xenakis)	
Feb 26	American Experimentalism, Part 2 Graphic scores, player piano, phenomenology) (Brown, Nancarrow, Lucier)	Week 7 Reading Quiz Week 8 Reading: 558-592
Feb 28	Post-Modernism Polystylism, collage music, plunderphonics (Schnittke, Berio, Oswald)	
Mar 5	Minimalism “The New Simplicity,” pattern music (Glass, Reich, Johnson)	Week 8 Reading Quiz NO Week 9 Reading
Mar 7	TA lectures 1&2	

Mar 12	TA lectures 3&4	NO Week 9 Reading Quiz
Mar 14	TA lectures 5&6	NO Week 10 Reading <u>Concert Report #2</u> DUE to TA <i>after</i> class, Thursday March 14
Mar 21	FINAL EXAM 11:30a-2:29p, location TBD	Optional xc Listening Report Due Submit to Instructor (bgriffea@ucsd.edu) by 11:29am