

Theory 205: Model Composition and Non-Tonal Analysis
Eastman School of Music, Fall 2015
Zachary Bernstein (zbernstein@esm.rochester.edu)

Course Description/Goals:

This course combines an investigation of twentieth-century compositional practices with advanced musicianship exercises focusing on the non-tonal repertoire. We will develop a variety of techniques for approaching this diverse repertoire, including pitch-class set and serial theory, and apply those techniques in analyses and model composition.

Tuesday 8:35–9:50 Lecture, ESM 209, plus Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday sections:

74272: 8:35–9:25, ET 412, Owen Belcher

74289: 8:35–9:25, HHH, Anna Fulton

74291: 11:35–12:25, ET 404, Aaron Grant

74309: 12:35–1:25, ET 404, Aaron Grant

86157: 11:35–12:25, MC 1, James Sullivan

Tuesday 10:00–11:15 Lecture, ESM 209, plus Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday sections:

74314: 10:35–11:25, MSH 221, Anna Fulton

74323: 11:35–12:25, MSH 221, Owen Belcher

74337: 12:35–1:25, MSH 221, Joseph VanderStel

74346: 1:35–2:25, MSH 221, Joseph VanderStel

86166: 10:35–11:25, ET 412, James Sullivan

Contact information:

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Joseph VanderStel: jvander7@u.rochester.edu

Required Text

Lars Edlund, *Modus Novus* (available at ESM bookstore). Bring this to each of your section meetings.

Other required readings, scores, and handouts will be distributed in class or on Blackboard. It is expected that you will print and bring handouts and scores to class on the day for which they were assigned, with the exception of certain longer scores, for which I may only request that you bring excerpts. The weekly “summaries” on Blackboard will indicate what I expect you to bring to each class. Please also bring notebook and staff paper to each lecture and section.

Policies

Attendance. More than five unexcused absences during the course of a semester will have a negative effect on your final grade. Three late arrivals will count as an absence—arrivals more than 15 minutes late will be considered equivalent to a full absence. Beginning with the sixth unexcused absence, your final grade will automatically be reduced by one third of a letter grade (for example, from B to B-). Students missing more than 20% of scheduled class meetings (11 classes) for any reason will not receive course credit. For an absence to be excused, you must bring an officially sanctioned note from a doctor, school official, etc., or get in touch with your TA and me in advance to explain why you have to miss class. If you know of a date you must be absent in advance (e.g., for a scheduled performance), please let your TA and me know as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to communicate about the material you miss with your TA and me. It is also your responsibility to keep track of your attendance record. Absences are not an excuse for late or missing work. Unless you have made prior arrangement with your TAs, you must attend the section for which you are registered.

Participation. Informed, engaged discussion of the material and music under discussion is a required, essential part of the class. You should arrive in class having studied the assigned material and formed opinions about it. If you have difficulties with any of the material, you should arrive ready to ask questions about it. As a rough guideline for minimum expectations regarding participation, you should plan on contributing freely (asking or answering questions) in every section meeting and at least every other lecture and be ready to respond every time your TAs or I call on you. TAs will keep records of students sleeping, texting, or surfing the internet during class, declining to participate in in-class activities, or arriving in class without required materials (scores/pencils/staff paper/etc.).

Electronics. Electronic devices must be turned off and put away for the duration of the class. Failure to do so will impact your participation grade. On certain days in which we'll be looking at longer scores that have been distributed electronically, your TAs or I may waive this policy: we'll let you know.

Late work. Late work will only be accepted in the case of an excused absence.

Academic Integrity. All written work submitted for this course must be your own. Unless otherwise stipulated, collaboration is forbidden on all written assignments and papers. Your assignments will generally not require reading or research of any kind besides getting to know the pieces assigned: resist the temptation to Google. However, if you have happened to previously encounter sources on the material assigned, you must cite it appropriately. Violations of the above will be dealt with according to university regulations as stated in the Eastman School of Music Student Handbook.

Disability Accommodations. Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations should contact the Access Coordinator (100 Gibbs St, 585-274-1106) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential.

Grade Breakdown

Theory/Composition: 49%

Homework: 20%

Compositions: 9%

Final paper: 8%

Midterm: 6%

Quizzes: 6%

Aural Skills: 36%

Dictation and exercises: 25%

Final: 8%

Performance of rhythmically challenging piece: 3%

Participation: 15%

Weekly Schedule

A final, detailed schedule for each week, including assignments due and aural skills exercises expected, will be posted on Blackboard no later than the Friday before.

Week 1: 9/1 – 9/4. Contextual Composition.

Week 2: 9/8 – 9/11. 20th-Century Modes and Scales.

Week 3: 9/15 – 9/18. Inversion and Symmetry (1).

Week 4: 9/22 – 9/25. Inversion and Symmetry (2).

Week 5: 9/29 – 10/2. Atonality and Pitch-Class Set Theory (1).

Week 6: 10/6 – 10/9. Atonality and Pitch-Class Set Theory (2).

Week 7: 10/13 – 10/16. Atonality and Pitch-Class Set Theory (3).

Week 8: 10/20 – 10/23. Contemporary Tonality, Polytonality, Quotation, and Collage.

Week 9: 10/27 – 10/30. Twelve-Tone Technique (1).

Week 10: 11/3 – 11/6. Twelve-Tone Technique (2).

Week 11: 11/10 – 11/13. Extended Twelve-Tone Technique and Serialism (1).

Week 12: 11/17 – 11/20. Extended Serialism (2).

Week 13: 11/24 – 11/27. Patterns, Algorithms, and Chance.

Week 14: 12/1 – 12/4. Technologies, Spectralism, and Space.

Week 15: 12/8 – 12/11. New Tonalities/Minimalism.

Important Dates

Keep these on your calendar. More information about each of these events will be provided as they approach.

9/25. Composition 1 (Symmetry) due.

10/6. No class (Fall Break).

10/16. Theory Midterm (scales, inversion, and set theory).

10/20. Composition 2 (Atonality) due.

10/29 – 10/30. No class (Society for Music Theory Annual Conference).

11/20. Consult with your TA about performance of rhythmically challenging piece and final paper.

11/25 – 11/27. No class (Thanksgiving).

12/2. Composition 3 (Serialism) due.

12/11. Performance of rhythmically challenging piece.

XXX. Aural Skills Final.

12/18. Final Paper due by email to your TA.