

MUS9523B: Music Analysis and Performance

Winter 2026 / Don Wright Faculty of Music / Western University

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Course Description

Music theory, as an academic discipline, has traditionally focused on abstract musical structures and idealized listeners. Yet, in recent years, theorists have increasingly considered performance-related questions and collaborated with performers. In this graduate seminar, we'll examine scholarly literature associated with this paradigm shift and will apply it in our own research and creative practice. Overall, we'll seek to understand various ways that music analysis and performance can inform each other.

Graduate Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to critically evaluate academic literature on performance and analysis. They will have developed their ability to integrate analysis and performance in their own scholarly and/or creative practice. And they will have developed skills related to research, music analysis, writing, and communication.

Materials

All course materials will be provided on the course's [OWL Brightspace](#) site. There are no anticipated costs for students.

Evaluation

As a graduate seminar, this course emphasizes conversation about assigned texts. I expect you to come to class ready to discuss the readings in depth. At a minimum, you should aim to share a question or comment every week. *Discussions* will be evaluated based on your contributions in class.

You'll apply various analytical approaches in four short writing *assignments* (due Jan. 30, Feb. 12, Mar. 6, and Mar. 20). Each assignment will be no longer than 500 words and will examine a short musical excerpt of your choice.

Your *final project* will develop an analysis of a longer work. A project proposal will be

due on February 25, including an annotated copy of the score, a written description of the issues to be examined, a preliminary bibliography (listing relevant analytical sources), and a discography. The project will culminate in a 25-minute presentation on March 25 or April 1, as a mini-lecture recital or conference presentation, supported by a detailed handout.

These elements will combine in your final grade as follows:

Discussions	20%
Assignments	40% (4 × 10%)
Final Project	40%

Policies/Statements

Enrolment Restrictions. Enrolment in this course is restricted to graduate students in Music, as well as any student who has obtained special permission from the course instructor and the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

Academic Offences. Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf. Note especially that plagiarism is a major scholastic offence. Students are expected to write all assignments in their own words. If you take an idea from another author, you must acknowledge this by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing.

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence. Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Health and Wellness Services. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer

to Mental Health Support at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Accessible Education Western (AEW). Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program. Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams, and assistive technology instruction.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI). GenAI is still developing rapidly, and it has complex implications for research. In this course, all uses of GenAI for assignments must be documented: specifically, please disclose any GenAI use in an appendix, citing specific tools, sharing your original prompts, and explaining what you did with any AI-generated material. Also, please keep a log of course-related GenAI activity and be prepared to share it upon request. Overall, though GenAI use *per se* will not be considered an academic offence in this course, presenting AI-generated text as your own writing (i.e., without citation) will be understood as a form of plagiarism. If you're unsure about whether a certain application of GenAI is permitted, I'll be glad to answer your questions.

Religious Accommodation. Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in this year's Western

Diversity Calendar at <https://www.edi.uwo.ca/>.

Technical Support for OWL Brightspace. If you need assistance with OWL Brightspace, you can seek support on the OWL Brightspace Help page. Alternatively, you can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk online or by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800 for technical support. Current versions of all popular browsers (e.g., Safari, Chrome, Edge, Firefox) are supported with OWL Brightspace, but it's best to use the most up-to-date version of the browser and to enable JavaScript and cookies.

Acknowledgement. This course design has been inspired by the online [Pedagogy Resource](#) of the Society for Music Theory's Performance and Analysis Interest Group, curated by Daphne Leong, with assistance from Edward Klorman. I am grateful to the members of the interest group who generously shared their teaching materials.

MUS9523B / Winter 2026 Schedule

Introduction: Analysis and/or Performance

- Jan. 7 Daphne Leong, "Analysis and Performance, or *wissen, können, kennen*," *Music Theory Online* 22, no. 2 (2016).
- Jan. 14 Nicholas Cook, "Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance," *Music Theory Online* 7, no. 2 (2001); John Rink, "Analysis and (or?) Performance," in *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Analysis for/from Performance

- Jan. 21 Janet Schmalfeldt, "On the Relation of Analysis to Performance: Beethoven's Bagatelles Op. 126, Nos. 2 and 5," *Journal of Music Theory* 29, no. 1 (1985): 1-31; Catherine Nolan, "Reflections on the Relationship of Analysis and Performance," *College Music Symposium* 33/34 (1993/1994): 112-39.
- Jan. 28 Elizabeth West Marvin and Robert W. Wason, "On Preparing Anton

Webern's Early Songs for Performance: A Collaborators' Dialogue," *Theory and Practice* 20 (1995): 91–124; Daphne Leong and Elizabeth McNutt, "Virtuosity in Babbitt's *Lonely Flute*, with Reflections on Process," in *Performing Knowledge: Twentieth-Century Music in Analysis and Performance* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

Jan. 30 *Assignment 1 due*

Analysis of Performance

Feb. 4 Daniel Barolsky and Peter A. Martens, "Rendering the Prosaic Persuasive: Gould and the Performance of Bach's C-Minor Prelude (WTC I)," Alan Dodson, "Solutions to the 'Great Nineteenth-Century Rhythm Problem' in Horowitz's Recording of the Theme from Schumann's *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, No. 2," and Mitchell S. Ohriner, "Grouping Hierarchy and Trajectories of Pacing in Performances of Chopin's Mazurkas," *Music Theory Online* 18, no. 1 (2012).

Feb. 11 Alexander Refsum Jensenius, "Some Video Abstraction Techniques for Displaying Body Movement in Analysis and Performance," *Leonardo* 46, no. 1 (2013): 56–60, 43; Samuel Gardner and Nicholas J. Shea, "Gestural Perspectives on Popular-Music Performance," *Music Theory Online* 28, no. 3 (2022).

Feb. 12 *Assignment 2 due*

Feb. 14–22 *Reading Week*

Analyzing Musical Embodiment

Feb. 25 George Fisher and Judith Lochhead, "Analyzing from the Body," *Theory and Practice* 27 (2002): 37–67; Eugene Montague, "Instrumental Gesture in Chopin's Étude in A-Flat Major, Op. 25, No. 1," *Music Theory Online* 18, no. 4 (2012).

Project Proposal due

- Mar. 4 Jonathan De Souza, *Music at Hand: Instruments, Bodies, and Cognition* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 6–17, 109–18, 126–33; Christa Cole, “Hands, Fingers, Strings, and Bows: Performance Technique and Analysis in J.S. Bach’s Largo for Solo Violin,” *Music Theory Online* 30, no. 3 (2024).
- Mar. 6 *Assignment 3 due*
- Analyzing Musical Interaction**
- Mar. 11 Edward Klorman, *Mozart’s Music of Friends: Social Interplay in the Chamber Works* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 111–55, 267–88.
- Mar. 18 Cecilia Oinas, “Sonic Bridges and Pitch-Based Bonding in Two Songs by Saariaho,” *Music Theory Online* 29, no. 3 (2023); Nathaniel Mitchell, “On Meter and the Social Dynamics of Cueing in Bill Monroe’s ‘Muleskinner Blues,’” *Music Theory Online* 30, no. 3 (2024).
- Mar. 20 *Assignment 4 due*
- Mar. 25 *Presentations*
- Apr. 1 *Presentations*
- Apr. 8 **Conclusion: Analysis as Performance**
Nicholas Cook, “Analysing Performance and Performing Analysis,” in *Rethinking Music* (Oxford University Press, 1999).