

Western University, Canada

Don Wright Faculty of Music

9594b: Performance Research II

Instructor: Dr. Kate Helsen (kate.helsen@uwo.ca)

Office / Office Hours: TC 227; Wednesdays 12:30 - 2:30pm

Course Description:

This course will focus on scholarly articles that address the philosophy and practice of the performance of Western art music. A subject rarely considered on an ontological level, the performance of music involves questions about why we perform and what cultural and intellectual assumptions might be. Students will become aware of issues in modern-day performance practice, as well as scholarly resources dealing with performance. The course is structured around recent scholarship related to performance issues, and therefore based on weekly readings. Along with one main presentation based on one reading (to be submitted in hard-copy for evaluation), the student will also be a 'respondent' to four further student presentations throughout the semester, helping to guide and inform the discussion that follows, also producing written work based on these responses. Students will therefore be evaluated not only on their comprehension and dedication to the material, but their ability to foster lively and interesting discourse about it with their peers. The final exam is an oral exam concerning the content of the readings as well as lecture material, to be held individually with the professor for 15 minutes.

Course Objectives:

- To read and comprehend scholarly articles relevant to performance.
- To engage with scholarly articles in a way that encourages strong critical thinking, clear communication, and inspires new directions.
- To consider afresh accepted aspects of performance practice.

Required Texts:

There are no required texts for this course. Weekly readings will be available online (through OWL) and in hard-copy in the Music Library. Students are strongly advised to own a style guide (for example: Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.)

Evaluation:

- One article presentation (to be submitted as a text in hard-copy one week from the presentation day): 20%
- Four *written* article responses (not concerning one's own presentation): 10% x 4: 40% (Due: at least one per month; submitted as a text in hard-copy one week from the day the article is presented.)
- Participation: 20%
- Final exam (oral): 20% (Students sign up individually for a 15-minute time allocation.)

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction: Questioning Performance
Week 2: The Classical Canon
Week 3: The Conductor as Superstar
Week 4: Virtuosity in Historical Perspective
Week 5: The Idea of Interpretation
Week 6: 19th and 20th-century Performance Practices
Week 7: READING WEEK (no class)
Week 8: Who Owns Bach?
Week 9: The Idiosyncratic Performer
Week 10: The Business of Performance
Week 11: Course evaluations, Final exams
Week 12: Final exams
Week 13: Final exams