Music 3680B: Analyzing Vocal Music
Don Wright Faculty of Music, Western University
Winter 2021 / Mondays, 10:30–11:30 am and Wednesdays, 9:30–11:30 am
Online via Zoom (Link on OWL)

Instructor: Dr. Jonathan De Souza
Email: jdesou22@uwo.ca
Office hours: Tuesdays, 10:30–11:30 am, and by appointment

Overview
How do voices mix music and words, sound and sense? What distinctive analytical challenges are posed by vocal music, and how have scholars approached them? In this undergraduate seminar, we will analyze vocal music in various ways. We’ll often focus on specific musical elements, involving pitch (melody, harmony), prosody (rhythm, meter, timing), and quality (timbre, dynamics). We’ll examine diverse compositions and recordings—from eighteenth-century opera to twentieth-century modernism, from Indian classical music to contemporary pop—and will prioritize repertoire chosen by seminar participants. While this will support general theoretical insights about musical voices, our principal goal will be to enhance our interpretation of specific pieces and performances.

Outcomes
By the end of this course, you’ll be able to create multi-faceted analyses of vocal music; you’ll have developed skills for critically reading scholarly texts; you’ll be conversant with recent research on vocal music and will be able to build on it in your own creative endeavours.

Materials
Readings and resources will be available via OWL.

Contact
If you have general questions about the course, please post them on the OWL Forums. For individual issues, please contact me through OWL Messages or if OWL isn’t
working, email me at jdesou22@uwo.ca. I aim to reply to messages within 24 hours from Monday to Friday and within 48 hours on weekends and holidays.

I’ll be on Zoom and available to chat with students on Tuesdays from 10:30 to 11:30 am. These are my regular “Office Hours”, which means that you don’t need to make an appointment then. Feel free to drop in, using OWL’s Zoom tool. I’m also happy to set up individual appointments. Just send me a message, and we’ll find a suitable date and time.

**Evaluation**

Reading is essential for this course. Each week we will read one assigned text, and I expect you to come to our synchronous meetings prepared for in-depth discussion. Periodically, you will be scheduled to serve as a discussion leader: you’ll share notes and questions on the course website; you’ll also give a brief introduction to the assigned text in our Monday meeting. (We’ll make the schedule during the first week of the term.)

Sometimes, you’ll be scheduled to bring a musical example to our Wednesday meeting. It should connect in some way to the week’s reading. Before class, you’ll share relevant materials online (score, recordings, translation, etc.). In class, you will give a brief introduction to the piece, and we’ll analyze it together. After, you’ll write a short post about it, which will be added to a course blog.

Your final project can take various forms, including an analytical essay, a lecture recital–style video, an original vocal composition with written commentary, and so forth. You’ll submit a project proposal by February 26, 2021, and we’ll workshop them together. Near the end of the term, you’ll give a presentation about your project in class. The final project will be due on April 19, 2021.

These elements will combine in your final grade as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion leading</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blog posts</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final presentation</td>
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<td>Final project</td>
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SCHEDULE

1. Introduction (January 11/13)

Why is the voice important? How do music scholars understand voice today?


2. Singing Persona (January 18/20)

Who is singing or speaking in a song? Composer, poet, singer, piano, or all of the above?


3. Harmonic Dramas (January 25/27)

How can harmony reveal character and motivation in opera, music theatre, and dramatic song?


4. Sounding Metaphors (February 1/3)

What metaphors appear in the text? What cross-domain mappings involve words and music?


5. Linguistic Music (February 8/10)

How does music interact with the sounds of language? Is poetry already musical to some degree?


Reading Week (February 13–21)

6. Rhythm, Meter, Flow (February 22/25)

How do rhythm and meter interact in both music and lyrics?


Project Proposal Deadline (February 26)

7. Phrase Rhythm and Hypermeter (March 1/3)
How are phrases articulated in vocal music? How do grouping and closure affect meaning?


8. Form, Repetition, and Ritual (March 8/10)
What large-scale forms are particular to vocal music? How are these forms experienced?


9. Expressive Timing (March 15/17)
How do singers play with timing? What aspects of vocal performance cannot be notated?

10. The Body in the Voice (March 22/24)

How can we listen to performing bodies? How does vocal music reveal some kind of materiality?


11. Vocal Timbre (March 29/31)

How can we talk about sound quality? How does vocal timbre relate to identity or emotion?


12. Song Gesture (April 5/7)

What parts of vocal performance are visible? How does singing incorporate bodily movement?

13. The Ends of Voice (April 12)


Study Day (April 13)

Final Examination Period (April 14–30)

Final Project Deadline (April 19)

University Policies

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many new challenges, so I aim to be as supportive as possible. All students are welcome in the course, so if I can make it more accessible to you, please don’t hesitate to contact me. Also, if you require specific accommodations, please make sure that your accommodations are active on the Accommodated Exams website (https://studentservices.uwo.ca/Accommodatedexamssignup/). The university’s official policies related to accessibility and accommodations appear below.

i) Course Prerequisites: Music 2651A/B or the former Music 2650A/B, Music 2641U or the former Music 2636A/B. Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

ii) Grading scale: A+=90-100%, A=80-89%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, D=50-59%, F=0-49%.

iii) Academic Consideration for Student Absence: Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student’s final grade. Students are
expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student’s final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year.

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are not met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office. For the Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

As a guideline, if a student has been contacted by the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) to self-quarantine due to a Covid-19-related situation, then the Self-Reported Absence system is not to be used to report this absence or to request an academic accommodation. The student should contact the Academic Counselling office as soon as they are notified.

In general, students are advised to not self-determine when to self-isolate. Unless directed by the MLHU students should go about their business as usual. But if a student chooses to self-isolate due to a suspected Covid-19-related situation while waiting to receive direction from the MLHU then the student is directed to contact the Academic Counselling office as soon as possible for further direction on receiving accommodation consideration.

iv) **Academic Consideration for Missing Work:** In cases where students are unable to submit work due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if an online self-reported absence is submitted, or if appropriate supporting documentation is submitted to the Associate Dean’s office, and the accommodation is granted, then the missed assessments may be rescheduled or discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course, at the discretion of the instructor. If neither a self-reported absence nor an appropriate supporting document is submitted to the appropriate office, then the missed assignments will receive a grade of zero.

v) **Academic Offences:** Submission of work with which you have received help from someone else (other than the course instructor or TA) is an example of plagiarism, which is considered a major academic offence. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy,
specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, as found at:

vi) **Mental Health & Wellness**: Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to the Health and Wellness at Western page (https://www.uwo.ca/health/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or to go to the Wellness Education Centre located in UCC room 76. Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in UC11 or to click on the green “I Need Help Now” button on the Health and Wellness page above.

vii) **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**: Students work with Accessible Education Western (AEW, formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf.

viii) **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 the Western Multicultural Calendar. http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo

ix) **Online Etiquette**: Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of “Zoom-bombing” a class, or of other serious online offenses, may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

**Important Dates**

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<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 11</td>
<td>Classes Begin</td>
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<td>January 19</td>
<td>Last day to add a second-term half course</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 13–21</td>
<td>Spring Reading Week (no classes)</td>
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<td>March 14</td>
<td>Last day to drop a 2nd-term half course without academic penalty</td>
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<td>April 2</td>
<td>Good Friday (no classes)</td>
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<td>April 12</td>
<td>Last Day of Classes</td>
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<td>April 13</td>
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