The seminar looks to gain a more intimate understanding of Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*. Tasks and topics will include the work’s textual sources, the construction of its libretto, questions of parody procedure, musical analysis, theological controversies, and reception history. We are fortunate to have guest presentations from four distinguished historians of the arts (three musicologists and one art historian): Daniel Melamed, Stephen McClatchie, Michael Marissen, and Cody Barteet.

Requirements include active participation in weekly seminars, a presentation, and a term paper based on that presentation.

**SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 September</td>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 September</td>
<td>2. Ritornello procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 September</td>
<td>3. Sources to the text; construction of the libretto. Guest presentation, Daniel R. Melamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 September</td>
<td>4. Critical/analytical literature on ritornello form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 October</td>
<td>5. Theological issues, part 1. Guest presentation, Michael Marissen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 October</td>
<td>6. Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 October</td>
<td>7. Parody and performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 October</td>
<td>8. Term-paper workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 November</td>
<td>9. Reading week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 November</td>
<td>11. Iconography and Baroque piety. Guest presentation, Cody Barteet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 November</td>
<td>12. Mendelssohn’s performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 December</td>
<td>13. The <em>St. Matthew Passion</em> and modernity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 December</td>
<td>14. Presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Requirements**

*Class attendance/participation.* Seminar members are expected to attend every meeting; please do not schedule conflicting activities. Religious commitments and serious illness are ordinarily the only acceptable reasons for absence; please let the instructor know beforehand by e-mail. Members are expected to participate actively and to be fully prepared to do so every time.

*Research paper.* The paper will be due in electronic form a week before presentations and circulated to members of the seminar. Plan a paper of between fifteen and twenty pages, plus supporting material.
Grading
The course grade will be based on participation (30%) and a research paper (70%).

Reference tool
Basic questions about research on Bach are answered in


Required score

Resources
Original sources
- Autograph score: [on Bach-Digital](#) pdf: [Part 1](#) [Part 2](#) [03 D65952 v.47]
- Original parts: [on Bach-Digital](#)
- Score copy by J. A. Farlau NBA II/5a on Bach-Digital: [Part 1](#) [Part 2](#)

Modern scores
- BG 4 pdf: [Part 1](#) [Part 2](#)
- NBA II/5 [1736 version] [Critical Report](#)
- NBA II/5b [Early version]

Text
- Text and translation [M. Marissen](#)
- Text in compact form

Recordings
- McCreesh [1736 forces]
- Butt [1742 forces]
- Suzuki
- Rilling
- Herreweghe
- Harnoncourt
- Bernstein
- Furtwängler

ASSIGNMENTS

**Week 1. Introduction**

Assignment
Please read the overview here:


Listen to the work (any recording you like) and familiarize yourself with its overall organization and musical substance. Come prepared to talk about any number you wish.
Week 2. Ritornello procedure and analytical issues

We will focus on ritornello forms for this meeting. Analyze the tutti arias nos. 1 and 68 (is that one a ritornello movement?), no. 29 “O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde gross,” and a solo aria of your choice.
Consider both ritornello formation and overall architecture. Make structural diagrams for each work; but keep your diagrams simple--don't try to account for every detail. Focus on organization as a ritornello structure, key areas, and distribution of text. Account for mottos and extensive passages of Einbau.

A very brief guide to ritornello analysis

Week 3. Text sources/libretto construction

Resources
Two passion poems that served as sources or models for BWV 244:

Barthold Heinrich Brockes. Der für die Sünde der Welt gemarterte und sterbende Jesus (1712; 1715 reprint).
Outline Translation (from CD liner notes—may not fully agree)

Christian Friedrich Henrici. Erbauliche Gedancken auf den grünen Donnerstag und Charfreytag über den leidenden Jesum in einem Oratorio entworffen (1725). Outline

BWV 244 text as reprinted in a collection


Outline of BWV 244
BWV 244 Dialogue texts
Martin Luther’s actus division of the gospels (1545)

Assignment
1. Study the text of BWV 244. What kinds of texts are present? How is the gospel narrative framed? Where is it punctuated with commentary? How relevant is the traditional actus division of the narrative?
2. How is the poetic portion of the text presented in Picander's 1729 print? What elements are contributed by typography?
3. Examine Brockes’s passion poem, the most famous eighteenth-century passion text. How is it constructed? How does it present the gospel narrative? What kinds of interpolations are there? By whom are they sung? What does he mean by “Soliloquium?”
4. Examine Picander’s passion poem *Erbäuliche Gedanken*, clearly modeled on Brockes’s text. What elements did he adopt?

5. What is the relationship between numbers in Picander's oratorio and the texts he provided for BWV 244? What other elements carry over?

6. How do Bach’s choices in the musical setting relate to the features of the text and their backgrounds?

Reading (to be done after your own work above)


*BWV 244 outline--Olearius' outline structure* (D. Franklin)


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**Week 4. Critical/analytical literature on ritornello**

For this week, please focus on an aria that you haven’t already studied, and do so in light of the following literature:


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**Week 5. Theological issues, part 1**

1. Please read Chapter 1 and the chapters on the *St. Matthew Passion* (chapters 12-14) in this volume:

What are Chafe's goals? What topics does he think are most worthy of investigation? What elements of the work does he investigate, with what kinds of results? You might want to know Friedrich Smend's 1928 article, to which Chafe refers often (optional):


2. Read the following article on the *St. Matthew Passion*


this essay on the *St. John Passion*:


as well as a more recent one to appear from Marissen:


What do these theological treatments of Bach passion share with Chafe's?

3. What are the implications of all of this for the study and performance of Bach’s passions?

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**Week 6. Interpretation**

Examine the treatment of Nos. 41-62, the crucifixion actus according to Olearius, in as many critical studies and commentaries as you can. A list is below to get you started; it would be good to include as many of those as possible along with others you find (for example, extensive treatments in life-and-works volumes). Those able to deal with the German readings should contribute work on those; others can cover English-language criticism.

What are the terms of analysis? What features do writers discuss? What kinds of interpretation and expression do they find? How well historically grounded are the methods? What interpretive strategies do commentators take as natural and normal today, and can you account for their origins?


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**Week 7. Parody and performance**

**Reading**


The early recorded history of the *St. Matthew Passion* is surveyed in


Recordings, including more recent ones are listed at this and following pages:

[http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Vocal/BWV244-Rec1.htm](http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Vocal/BWV244-Rec1.htm)

Many of these recordings are available on Naxos, Spotify, Music Online: Classical Music Library, and in the CU collection.

For approaches to the use of recordings in the study of Bach performance you can consult


**Assignment**

1. Read the treatments of the relationship between BWV 244 and BWV 244a by Gojowy and Brainard, including the particular examples cited. (If you cannot follow the German text of Gojowy’s article you can get its gist from Brainard’s response.)

2. What new approach does Rifkin take? How does this change your view of the methodology used by earlier scholars, and of their conclusions? What larger lessons are there for the problem of "parody?"

3. Is it really possible to reconstruct the Cöthen Funeral Music? On the problem of doing this kind of thing you can read chapter 6 of

Week 8. Term-paper workshop

Please come to class with a topic statement (of approximately one paragraph), and a working bibliography. The week prior to this meeting, please provide the class with a brief assignment, related to your project, that you would like us to consider (in order to help you with your own project). The assignment could be an essay but also a musical work.

Week 9. Reading week

Week 10. Theological issues, part 2

Reading


Week 11. Iconography and Baroque piety

Reading

TBA

Week 12. Mendelssohn's performances

Score (with a useful preface in English and German)


Recording (1841 version) Spering

Please read:

What have been the consequences of Mendelssohn’s presentations in the interpretation and performance of the work?

[Questions from Celia Applegate that might guide your reading]

1. What do you think of Max Weber’s definition of culture as a “finite excerpt from the meaningless infinity of events in the world, endowed with meaning by human beings” and accessible to those “who are people of culture, with the capacity and the will deliberately to adopt an attitude towards the world and to bestow meaning upon it”? Does the book manage to write a history of culture understood this way?

2. [Chapter 1, on FM] Why was leading this revival not a perfectly natural thing for Mendelssohn to undertake, and why was he able to pull it off? Were non-musical considerations more important than musical ones?

3. [Chapter 2, on 18th c. matters] What were the issues that troubled/moved literate Germans in the eighteenth century? How did musical writing make a place for itself in literary culture? What does it mean to experience the nation aesthetically (Bernhard Giesen)? What are the methodological challenges of integrating the history of ideas with the history of music or the history of society?

4. [Chapter 3, music journalism] What were the goals of music journalism in the early decades of the nineteenth century? What do you see as the promise and pitfalls of music journalism as a source for musicologists and/or historians?

5. [Chapter 4, amateurism] What are the social/cultural conditions that make amateurism possible? How does one undertake a gender analysis of amateurism? A class analysis? Do these kinds of analyses pay off? Does amateurism matter, either historically or musically or whatever? (The recent TLS review of the book praises it for having lots of “bit-part players” who add vividness to the narrative. As a matter of self-critique, I’ve been inclined to think that some of these bit-players, e.g. Michael Traugott Pfeiffer, are somewhat irrelevant. Any comments on that?!)  

6. [Chapter 5, religion] In light of the discussion in this chapter, how would you answer the simple question of, was this a secular performance of the SMP or not?
7. Do you find plausible the implication that the 1829 reception still shapes, or at least set the terms for, our own reception of the work, up until the present? (Especially given the brevity and limited chronological scope of the final chapter, it might be interesting to discuss further aspects of its post 1829 adventures, esp. 20th century ones.)

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The St. Matthew Passion and modernity

Please read the relevant sections of:


You might find this essay useful:


Was Bach modern? What does it mean to ask this question? Is the question about Bach or about something else?

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GENERAL INFORMATION

**Enrollment restrictions**

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in music, as well as any student who has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student’s home program.

**Academic integrity**

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 https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

**Statement on health**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.
**Accommodation for medical illness**
The Graduate Program in Music recognizes that a student’s ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by illness or injury. In order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student’s course grade shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the office of the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies), not to the course instructor.

**Accessible education**
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.