

Music 9530
Contexts of Music Analysis

Winter 2025

Instructor: Catherine Nolan
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Course Description

In this course we examine the practice of music analysis from different perspectives or contexts that align with various conceptions by scholars and performers of music. Diverse critical, analytical, philosophical, cultural, and historical contexts engage scholars and performers in their pursuit of music analysis.

The course contains six units, each with a focus on a particular context of music analysis, as illustrated below. Each context focuses on a specific opposition in music analysis, and animates the tension between abstract and concrete, between general and specific, and more broadly between musical organization and expression. Interspersed among the six contexts are two analysis excursions in which we study analytical approaches to two large, contrasting works, where we shift our attention to the practical application of the various contexts of music analysis. The course concludes with an epilogue on musical meaning.

Introduction	Setting the Context(s)
Context 1	The Musical Work: Ontology and Autonomy
Context 2	The Aesthetic Categories of Formalism and Referentialism
Analysis Excursion	Structure and Expression in Steve Reich's <i>Different Trains</i>
Context 3	Musical Form and Experience
Context 4	Music Analysis and Cognition
Analysis Excursion	Structure and Narrative in Franz Schubert's Piano Sonata D. 960, 1st movement
Context 5	Music Analysis and Narrative
Context 6	Musical Unity and Disunity
Epilogue	Musical Meaning

Students in all graduate programs in Music are welcome to take this course and are welcome to contact me by email at cnolan@uwo.ca with any questions they may have.

Course materials

Course readings will be provided via OWL. See the Class Schedule that will be available on the OWL site for the complete list of readings, including a reading for the first class.

Learning Outcomes

As a result of their active participation in this course, students will be able to:

- Expand the role of music analysis in their academic and creative work.
- Develop a critical understanding of the dialectics of musical expression and structure.
- Engage in current debates on the topic of music analysis and meaning in various musical genres and repertoires.

Course Requirements

- Weekly reading assignments
- Participation in class discussions
- Report on one supplementary reading
- Six brief reflection posts to online forum in OWL
- Final paper proposal
- Final paper presentation
- Final paper

Evaluation

Active participation in and productive contributions to class discussion are expected. Students must come prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Some of the readings will be challenging; we will take many opportunities to discuss the challenges and rewards of academic reading and writing.

A list of supplementary readings will be provided at the beginning of the course. Each student will give one presentation (c. 15 minutes) on a supplementary reading from the list.

Each student will also write a short *reflection* of c. 250-300 words for each of the six contexts of music analysis and post your reflection to the forum on OWL. These reflections provide an opportunity for students to integrate and share their understanding of the readings and class discussions with their experiences relating to music analysis. Each reflection post is due before the following class. (See the schedule of readings.)

The remainder of the course requirements revolve around a final paper on an approved topic. You will submit a proposal by Monday, March 11. The proposal should be about 2 pages in length, including a working title, argument or research question(s), and a preliminary bibliography. You will give a presentation (15-20 minutes) in the last two classes. The final paper (c. 4000-5000 words) is due on Friday, April 18.

The breakdown of the requirements described above in your final grade is shown below:

Participation	10%
Supplementary reading report (15 minutes)	10%
6 Reflection postings (c. 250-300 words each)	20%
Final paper proposal	10%
Final paper presentation (15-20 minutes)	10%
Final paper (c. 4000-6000 words)	40%

Due Dates

Reflection on Context 1 – end of day, Monday, Jan. 20
Reflection on Context 2 – end of day, Monday, Jan. 27
Reflection on Context 3 – end of day, Monday, Feb. 10
Reflection on Context 4 – end of day, Monday, Feb. 24
Reflection on Context 5 – end of day, Monday, Mar. 10
Reflection on Context 6 – end of day, Monday, Mar. 17

Final project proposal: Monday, March 10
Final project paper: Thursday, April 17

Mandatory Statements

Enrollment Restrictions

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

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically 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 and Wellness

Students who are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health Support for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>

Statement on Accommodation for Medical Illness

The Graduate Program in Music recognizes that a student's ability to fulfill academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by illness or injury. 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 cases where there is documentation indicating that the student could not reasonably be expected to meet the 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

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.

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, either recently or in the past, you will find information about support for survivors, including emergency contacts, at

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 or call 519-661-3568.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools/software/apps is unacceptable in this course. Please consult the instructor if you have questions.