

WESTERN UNIVERSITY  
DON WRIGHT FACULTY OF MUSIC

**Music 9574 – MMus Choral Seminar 1**

Fall 2025 and Winter 2026

**Instructor:** Dr. Mark Ramsay

**Pronouns:** he/him

**Email:** [mr Ramsay9@uwo.ca](mailto:mr Ramsay9@uwo.ca)

**Office Hours:** by appointment

Class times and location are posted on the course Brightspace site.

**Course Description:**

Selecting repertoire is one of the most important responsibilities of any choral leader. This seminar will explore choral repertoire, analysis techniques, and related rehearsal strategies with the intent to refine the skillset of practicing choral leaders. Students will actively seek out, select, analyze, and evaluate repertoire on a weekly basis, sharing their findings with their colleagues, and expanding the breadth of their own programming knowledge. Repertoire will be explored by theme, composer traits, and ensemble needs. Students will have the opportunity to research the work of a self-selected composer and to build a cohesive concert program for an identified ensemble.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

Students will...

- expand knowledge of available choral repertoire.
- refine the ability to research and select appropriate repertoire in response to targeted search criteria.
- improve repertoire analysis skills to better inform rehearsal approaches.
- enhance communication skills.
- engage with colleagues to consider multiple perspectives related to repertoire selection.

**Methods of Evaluation:**

Weekly repertoire selection and analysis/Bi-weekly class presentations	60%
Composer Research Project	20%
Programming Assignment	20%

*Weekly repertoire selection and analysis*

Each week, students will seek out and analyze one piece of choral music that fits the identified theme, composer trait, or ensemble need. The selected score must be shareable with the class (in print or digital form) and must be entirely or almost entirely visible (some digital previews will hide a small portion of the score). The completed analysis will be posted in a shared folder on Brightspace for all classmates to access. A basic analysis structure will be provided and practiced in class. Evaluation will be based on the depth and accuracy of the analysis, the appropriateness of the selected repertoire to the search criteria, and the student's commitment to broaden the scope of their repertoire knowledge.

*Bi-weekly class presentations*

Every second week, students will have 30 minutes to present their selected score to the class, sharing aspects of their analysis in greater detail and exploring rehearsal strategies with the class that align with identified challenges in the music. Evaluation will be based on the

effectiveness and clarity of communication and the appropriateness of the selected rehearsal strategies for the identified challenge in the music. See presenter schedule below.

***Composer Research Project (due by December 16)***

Students will identify and research one composer of their choice with the goal to broaden their understanding of the composer's output, compositional approaches, and stylistic traits. The completed project will include: (1) a one-page fact sheet with links to relevant biographical information, repertoire lists, sources for published works, and recordings; and (2) a detailed, written comparative analysis of three pieces the student deems to be representative of the composer's overall work. Evaluation will be based on the clarity of the information presented and the depth and accuracy of the analysis.

***Programming Assignment (due by April 16)***

Students will identify an ensemble of their choice and build a 45-60 minute program of music that is cohesive and accurately meets the needs of the ensemble. The final product will contain: (1) a written description of the needs, abilities, and goals of the ensemble; (2) a written overview of the program that explains how the repertoire is appropriate for the ensemble and how it holds together as a cohesive program; and (3) an analysis of each piece on the program. Evaluation will be based on the appropriateness of the repertoire selected and the depth and accuracy of the score analysis.

**Grading Scale:** A = 80 – 100%; B = 70 – 79%; C = 60 – 69%; F 00 – 59%

**Course Materials**

Sources for repertoire will be shared with students via Brightspace and together we will build an extensive list of sources students can use beyond the class. Students are encouraged to invest in purchasing musical scores to build their own music libraries as they are able.

**Tentative Schedule**

*Revised versions will be discussed in class and available via Brightspace throughout the year.*

Date	Topic and Presentation Length
September 8	Welcome, Overview, and Introductions
September 15	Analysis structure
September 22	Composer of colour (10 mins)
September 29	Indigenous composer (30 mins)
October 6	Woman composer (10 mins)
October 13	Thanksgiving – no class
October 20	SAB voicing (30 mins)
October 27	Queer composer (10 mins)
November 3	Reading Week – no class
November 10	Composer outside of Canada, USA, and Europe (30 mins)
November 17	Final project meetings
November 24	Combined forces (10 mins)
December 1	Improvisation/Aleatoric elements (30 mins)
December 8	A song the audience would know (10 mins)
December 16	Last day to submit Composer Research Project

January 5	Final project discussions and sharing
January 12	Unison or 2-part for adult choir (10 mins)
January 19	A nod to the past (30 mins)
January 26	Environmental music (10 mins)
February 2	Composer under the age of 25 (30 mins)
February 9	Final project meetings
February 16	Reading Week – no class
February 23	Singing for a cause (10 mins)
March 2	With single instrument (30 mins)
March 9	Local composer (10 mins)
March 16	Rhythmic (30 mins)
March 23	Canadian composer (10 mins)
March 30	A staple (30 mins)
April 6*	Final project discussions and sharing
April 16	Last day to submit Programming Assignment

*\*Note: this is Easter Monday and the university has regularly scheduled classes and rehearsals.*

### **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.

### **Statement on 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](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.

### **Statement on 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](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](mailto: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.

**Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):** The use of generative AI on any assignments or projects in this course will not be treated as a scholastic offense (see previous note on Academic Offences). Please review the Principles of Using AI at Western here: <https://ai.uwo.ca/Guidance/Policy.html>