

MUSIC 9725
INTRODUCTION TO MUSIC RESEARCH

Fall 2025

Instructor: Catherine Nolan (cnolan@uwo.ca)
Office hours by appointment

Course Description

This course is an introduction to research in the fields of music theory and musicology and will begin by considering their close disciplinary relationships and affiliations. The two fields of scholarly inquiry have become so closely intertwined, and share so much in terms of research practice, that they may together be referred to as *music research*.

The recurrence in new forms of critical debates whose origins go back to the nineteenth century is an ongoing feature of music research. The issues underlying these historical debates are helpful in articulating the priorities of music research and in establishing a space for traditional and new approaches to scholarship. For instance, the nineteenth-century debate about the values of absolute and program music and the related controversies about the music criticism of Eduard Hanslick articulate the roots of academic disputes that continue to be relevant today. At the University of Vienna in the late nineteenth century, musicologist Guido Adler set out a vision of the new field of musicology that he divided into two parts: historical and systematic.

The field of music theory became identified as an academic discipline independent from musicology in the mid-twentieth century, and over the next three decades or so reflected the positivism of Adler's vision of systematic musicology as well as academic and technological legacies of the aftermath of World War II. In the 1980s and 1990s the emergence of the so-called "new musicology" reinvigorated earlier debates about priorities in musicology and music theory, and engendered critical self-reflection in music research that in the last thirty years has fundamentally altered the academic landscape in terms of scholarly approach, methodology, and repertoire.

Music research today is inclusive and diverse: inclusive in terms of repertoire and intersections with other disciplines, and diverse in terms of topical issues, approaches, and methodologies.

Course Materials

Course readings will be provided via OWL Brightspace.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be acquainted with materials and central topics of research practices in musicology and music theory over the past seventy or so years and will gain

an understanding of the interdependence of the two fields. Students will refine their skills in research, critical reading, presentation, and scholarly writing.

Course Requirements

Assigned readings, class participation, synopsis of one class meeting, presentation on a topic of your choice, final paper proposal, final paper presentation, final paper.

Evaluation

This course requires extensive reading, and you are expected to come to each meeting prepared to make productive contributions to discussion. You may find some of the readings quite challenging. Remember that you are not expected to have mastered each reading for class discussion. You will need to read carefully and take detailed notes, including compiling relevant questions and observations that you can offer to the class. Participation in class discussion means that you are engaged with the material and that you contribute with your questions and observations from the readings.

You will contribute a *synopsis* of one meeting. A *synopsis* is a written document of 2-4 pages (double-spaced) in length that reflects on the topic and the in-class discussion at that meeting. It should provide a critical overview of the topic and readings. Your *synopsis* is due one week after class and will be shared via OWL. You will sign up for your *synopsis* at our first meeting.

You will give a presentation (about 15 minutes long) on a topic related to the course that particularly captures your interest. You should refer to 2 or 3 articles that are not on the assigned reading list in your presentation. You will prepare slides or a handout for your presentation. Presentation dates will be assigned after the first meeting.

The remainder of the course requirements revolve around a final paper on an approved topic. You will submit a proposal by Friday, Nov. 14. The proposal should be about 2 pages in length, including a working title, argument, preliminary literature that you have reviewed, and a preliminary bibliography. You will give a presentation on the topic of your final paper (about 15 minutes long) in our final meeting. The final paper (15-20 pages) is due on Monday, Dec. 15.

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

Participation	15%
Synopsis	10%
Presentation (topic of your choice)	15%
Final Paper Proposal (due Nov. 14)	10%
Final Paper Presentation	10%
Final Paper (due Dec. 15)	40%

READINGS DRAFT SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to revision depending on the class size.
Any revisions will be announced by September 16.

Meeting	Topic and readings
Sept. 9	Preliminaries: music research and disciplinarity
Sept. 16	Origins of ongoing debates in music research Mugglestone, Erica and Guido Adler. "Guido Adler's 'The Scope, Method, and Aim of Musicology' (1885): An English Translation with an Historico-Analytical Commentary." <i>Yearbook for Traditional Music</i> 13 (1981): 1-21. Agawu, Kofi. "Does Music Theory Need Musicology?" <i>Current Musicology</i> 53 (1993): 89-98. Burkholder, J. Peter. "Music Theory and Musicology." <i>The Journal of Musicology</i> 11.1 (1993): 11-23. Deaville, James. "Negotiating the 'Absolute': Hanslick's Path Through Musical History." In <i>Rethinking Hanslick: Music, Formalism, and Expression</i>, edited by Nicole Grimes, Siobán Donovan, and Wolfgang Marx, 15-37. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2013.
Sept. 23	The so-called "New Musicology" Kerman, Joseph. "How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out." In <i>Write All This Down</i>, 12-32. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994. (Originally published in <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 7 (1980): 311-31.) Cusick, Suzanne G. "Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem." <i>Perspectives of Music Theory</i> 32.1 (1994): 8-27. McClary, Susan. "Paradigm Dissonances: Music Theory, Cultural Studies, Feminist Criticism." <i>Perspectives of New Music</i> 32.1 (1994): 68-85. Agawu, Kofi. "How We Got Out of Analysis, and How to Get Back In." <i>Music Analysis</i> 2004 23.2/3 (2004): 267-86.

Sept. 30	Analysis in music research Cone, Edward T. “Three Ways of Reading a Detective Story or a Brahms Intermezzo.” <i>The Georgia Review</i> 31.3 (1977): 554-73. Cook, Nicholas. “Analysing Performance and Performing Analysis.” In <i>Rethinking Music</i>, edited by Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist, 239-61. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. Guck, Marion A. “Analysis as Interpretation: Interaction, Intentionality, Invention.” <i>Music Theory Spectrum</i> 28.2 (2006): 191-209.
Oct. 7	Music research and the humanities Cone, Edward T., “Music Theory as a Humanistic Discipline.” In <i>Music: A View from Delft</i>, edited by Robert P. Morgan, 29-37. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989. (Originally published in <i>Juilliard Review</i> 5.2 (1957-58): 3-12.) Cheng, William. “Misjudgments of Humanity.” <i>Loving Music Till It Hurts</i>, Chapter 1, 11-32. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. Madrid, Alejandro L. “Understanding Music Studies, Well-Being, and the Humanities in Times of Neoliberalism.” In <i>Music and Human Flourishing</i>, edited by Anna Harwell Calenza, 81-95. New York: Oxford University Press, 2023.
Oct. 14	The Rite of Spring at 100+: Cultural and historical studies Video of the 1987 reconstruction of Stravinsky’s <i>Rite of Spring</i> by the Joffrey Ballet (link to be provided) Garafola, Lynn. “A Century of Rites: The Making of an Avant-Garde Tradition.” In <i>The Rite of Spring at 100</i>, edited by Severine Neff, Maureen Carr, and Gretchen Horlacher, with John Reef, 17-28. Bloomington, IA: Indiana University Press (2017). Howard, Luke. “<i>The Rite of Spring</i> in Popular Culture and Cinema.” In <i>The Cambridge Companion to the Rite of Spring</i>, edited by Davinia Caddy, 236-54. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025. Carr, Maureen and Phillip MacKenzie Torbert. “Situating <i>The Rite of Spring</i> within Stravinsky’s Compositional Oeuvre.” In <i>The Cambridge Companion to</i>

	<i>the Rite of Spring</i> , edited by Davinia Caddy, 173-88. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025.
Oct. 21	<i>The Rite of Spring at 100+: Analytical studies</i> Chua, Daniel K.L. “Contesting Analytical Traditions.” In <i>The Cambridge Companion to the Rite of Spring</i>, edited by Davinia Caddy, 257-72. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025. Straus, Joseph. “Analyzing Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring. Chapter 1: Expression and Meaning.” YouTube Video, 2022. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChmyFZItS6HNVYyFwOUZo4Q Straus, Joseph. “The Melodic Organization of The Rite of Spring.” <i>Music Theory Online</i> 28.4 (2022).
Oct. 28	<i>Public music research and the digital humanities</i> Svensson, Patrik. “Sorting Out the Digital Humanities.” In <i>A New Companion to Digital Humanities</i>, edited by Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth, 558-69. Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2016. Urberg, Michelle. “Pasts and Futures of Digital Humanities in Musicology: Moving Towards a ‘Bigger Tent’.” <i>Music Reference Services Quarterly</i> 20.3/4 (2017): 134-50. Jenkins, J. Daniel. “An Introduction to Public Music Theory.” In <i>The Oxford Handbook of Public Music Theory</i>, edited by J. Daniel Jenkins. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. [digital, no page numbers] Ford, Phil. “The Wanderer: Public Musicology and the Logic of Content Creation.” <i>Journal of Musicological Research</i> 42.4 (2023): 215-27.
Nov. 4	Fall Reading Week (no meeting)
Nov. 11	C. Nolan must be away (no meeting). <i>We will discuss how we will make up this time.</i>
Nov. 18	<i>Cognitive musicology</i> De Souza, Jonathan. “Introduction.” In <i>Music At Hand: Instruments, Bodies, and Cognition</i>,” 1-5. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

	De Souza, Jonathan. "Two Sounding Actions." In <i>Music At Hand: Instruments, Bodies, and Cognition</i>, 28-50. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Temperley, David and Trevor de Clercq. "Harmony and Melody in Popular Music." In <i>The Routledge Companion to Music Cognition</i>, edited by Richard Ashley and Renee Timmers, 165-77. New York: Routledge, 2017.
Nov. 25	Social engagement in music research Ansari, Emily Abrams and Giada Ferrucci. "Faith, Trauma, Resistance, and Resilience in the Revolutionary Songs of Civil War El Salvador." <i>Journal of the American Musicological Society</i> 78.1 (2025): 53-91. Ewell, Philip. "Music Theory and the White Racial Frame." <i>Music Theory Online</i> 26.2 (2020). Piilonen, Miriam. "How Music Theory Went Online." <i>Music Theory Spectrum</i> 47.1 (2025): 57-62.
Dec. 2	Final project presentations

Mandatory statements

Enrolment Restrictions

Enrolment in this course is restricted to graduate students in 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.

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 (GBSW) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSW (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.

Health and Wellness Services

Students who are in emotional or 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 AI is prohibited in this course.