

MUSIC FOR CINEMA AND TELEVISION

A Research-Creation Seminar

Music 9740, January 2026

This seminar focuses on the practice of composing music to enhance the impact of moving images in cinema and television. The course combines creative processes and academic practices to foster innovation and the development of knowledge through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation. Participants will undertake their work within one of two broad areas, *practice-as-research* (the creation of art works) or *practice-led research* (scholarly investigations that lead to new understandings of practice):

Practice-as-Research

As artist-researchers, seminar participants who choose this option will divide their time between research (on compositional practices within film genres) and practice (composing music for a scene).

Practice-Led Research

As scholarly researchers of cinematic compositional practice, seminar participants who choose this option will select a film or television show and investigate the ways in which the composer combined music and moving images.

At the beginning of the semester, students in both areas will study a scene from a movie or television show. This research will serve as preparation either for composing an original score to enhance a scene or for a lengthier inquiry into the strategies a composer employed when providing music for moving images. Participants will present the findings of the investigation to the seminar and will write a short, informal paper based on that research. Across the remainder of the term, they will either compose the music for their chosen scene or work on a larger scholarly investigation. Everyone must be prepared to give regular presentations on the progress of their work and to engage actively in constructive criticism of the material presented by others.

For those who choose a *practice-as-research* project, no previous experience in film scoring is expected, but people must have access to a keyboard, an external hard drive, and be familiar with a DAW suitable for working with sample libraries (Cubase, Logic, Reaper, etc. – Logic is installed on all the computers in our lab, and each workstation has a small keyboard). Many free, yet high-quality, sample libraries are available. A list of over 220 of these will be provided at the beginning of the semester, and instruction on working with sample libraries will be given. Participants will select a small number of libraries to use and will not be expected to write in an orchestral style. The course simply provides an introduction to working with sample libraries to enhance moving images. There are no required texts for the seminar. However, readings will be suggested in class, and the knowledge base for the investigations will be established in the first two classes of the term.

COURSE MATERIALS

All materials for the course are available in the computer lab in TC 200. However, a personal laptop and external hard drive may be advantageous.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

20% Presentation (20 minutes) – weeks 3-4

20% One informal paper based on the presentation – due week 8

60% Final project (a scene with original music or a written paper) – due 15 April