

Western



**Music 9595
Performance Research III
Fall 2026**

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Office Hours: TBD or by appointment

Course Description

This seminar will explore ways that music theory and analysis can inform music performance. Our investigation will be multi-faceted. A variety of readings from the academic literature will inform in-seminar discussion. We will explore various topics including some derived from Schenkerian analysis and Gestural theory. Focused assignments will help participants to clarify their ideas through practice and reflection. The seminar will culminate in a series of short lecture/performances based on analysis of various chamber works presented by groups formed during the semester.

Course Materials

Participants will be expected to familiarize themselves with assigned readings and/or repertoire in advance of the seminar each week. Lists of readings and repertoire will be posted on OWL prior to each class meeting. Also, wherever possible, pdfs of readings will be provided on OWL Brightspace by the instructor.

Learning Outcomes and Objectives

The goals of the seminar are:

- 1) To foster an interest in Theory and Analysis as tools that can inform performance choices.
- 2) To examine what are theory, analysis, and performance.
- 3) To become familiar with different theories and types of analysis by examining their various scopes and domains of applicability.
- 4) To develop skills in discussing theoretical and analytical ideas with others.
- 5) To gain some familiarity with academic theoretical literature.
- 6) To examine more closely the choices we make as performers and our reasons for them.

Seminar Format

The course will be divided into several distinct sections. During Week 2, we will discuss some academic literature about Theory and Performance to start us thinking about the relationships between the two.

For a few weeks after that (Weeks 3 – 6), we will delve in some detail into Schenkerian theory, becoming familiar with certain concepts which might be especially useful to us as performers. We will close this section of the course by reading closely an analysis informed by Schenkerian theory from the book *Performative Analysis* by Jeffrey Swinkin.

Short, focused written assignments that relate to the topics discussed will be provided to increase your familiarity with, and confirm your understanding of, the material.

In Week 7 & 9 we'll begin our discussion of gestural theory, examining articles by Roger Graybill and Alexandra Pierce.

Week 10 will involve a return to a broader view of our topic, and we will think about the relationship between performance and theory generally using articles from the academic literature (by Robert Hatten and Joel Lester) as a starting point for discussion.

During the latter part of the course, you will work in small groups (the organization of groups will begin during the first weeks of the seminar). Each group will pick a piece of reasonable length (c. 5–10 minutes) to analyze and perform. During Weeks 11 and 12, each group will verbally present their analysis of their chosen piece and discuss various ways that their analysis might impact performance decisions. This discussion will be followed by a performance of the work.

The delivery of all electronic materials in this course, including readings, polls, notes, scores, recordings, etc., will be made through the course website on OWL Brightspace unless otherwise specified in class.

Course Evaluation

Participation – 30% - Participation in class is weighted quite heavily in the marking scheme. Because this seminar may serve as an introduction to some theoretical ideas, less discussion may occur around certain topics than is typical of a seminar; however, when appropriate, discussion will be strongly encouraged. Participation includes being present, paying attention to the flow of the seminar, familiarizing yourself with the readings and listening examples, and, when possible, contributing your thoughts.

Assignments – 30% (3x 10%) - Three short written assignments over the course of the semester will focus on aspects of the material discussed in the preceding seminars. Tentative dates for the assignments are listed below in the Course Timeline. Assignments are due one week after they are assigned.

Verbal Group Presentation and Performance – 25% (15%+10%) - After being assigned to a group, you will be expected to select a short piece to analyze and perform (c.5–10 minutes). Sometime during Week 11 or 12, your group will present an analysis to the seminar and discuss various ways that analysis might affect a performance of the chosen work. This discussion should be about 20 minutes in length, with time for some class discussion afterwards. Your discussion will be followed by a performance of your piece. This performance will not be marked with the stringency of a performance jury but rather with the idea that you are looking to put into practice the discoveries you've made in your research and analysis.

Individual Write-Up of Group Analysis – 15% - A short write-up (4-5 pages) of your group's findings will be submitted by each participant. In this write-up you will discuss the findings of your group with a particular focus on how those relate to your own part in the chosen piece (e.g., if you are a pianist, you will write in more detail about the piano part). This assignment is to be completed independently.

Course Timeline

The seminar will be held on Wednesdays throughout the fall term from Sept. 9 to Dec. 9. An outline of when assignments will be due is included below. (N.B.: This calendar is intended as a guideline and may be subject to change.)

Wednesdays

Week 1	Sep 9	Introduction
Week 2	Sep 16	Exposition: Performance and Theory
Week 3	Sep 23	Development: Tonal Analysis I
	Sep 30	National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
Week 4	Oct. 7	Tonal Analysis II
	Oct. 14	Reading Break
Week 5	Oct. 21	Tonal Analysis III Assignment 1 available
Week 6	Oct. 28	Tonal Analysis IV Assignment 1 Due
Week 7	Nov. 4	Swinkin Reading from <i>Performative Analysis</i> Assignment 2 Available
Week 8	Nov. 11	Transformation Theory: Different ways of Hearing Assignment 2 Due
Week 9	Nov. 18	Gestural Analysis – Alexandra Pierce Assignment 3 Available
Week 10	Nov. 25	Recapitulation: Performance and Analysis Assignment 3 Due
Week 11	Dec. 2	Final Presentations
Week 12	Dec. 9	Final Presentations

Enrolment Restrictions

Enrolment in this course is restricted to graduate students in Music, as well as any student who has obtained special permission 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 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. 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/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 (AE)

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 (AE), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AE 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 is strongly discouraged for the purposes of the seminar for two reasons: 1) one of the goals of the seminar is to provide an opportunity for students to practice formulating unique ideas and viewpoints stemming out of close engagement with written sources and with colleagues. Generative AI works directly against this process and the rewarding struggle that it sometimes entails. 2) Generative AI tends to be packed with errors the more specific the topic which it addresses, due to the sources it amalgamates. The chance for incorrect and/or vague and useless information to creep into work on topics as specific as those we will address in the seminar is too high to risk its employment.