

Music 9725: Introduction to Music Research, Fall 2026

Edmund J. Goehring (egoehrin@uwo.ca)

Tu 1:30–4:20

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:30-5 and by appointment

Purpose: What is a musical work? What is history? In what ways are the two related? What are the aims and boundaries of criticism? What is the relation between music theory and music history? What kinds of statements about music are valid? Most musicological studies do not pose such questions so directly, yet they often (indeed, unavoidably) fold into their inquiries such questions about art, history, and criticism. Through reading, listening, and discussion, we will look under the hood, as it were, at some of the machinery that turns inquiry about music. This course will follow a seminar format. To facilitate discussion and encourage careful reading, students will submit one-page logs prior to most classes. Other requirements include a music/analytic paper and a critical essay.

T. 10 Sept. Introduction. On Wittgenstein. **(Log due)**

Reading: Wittgenstein, “Blue Book,” from *The Blue and Brown Books*.

T. 17 Sept. Genre; or, what kind of thing is it?

Reading: Jeffrey Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, chap. 1, “The Rhetoric of Genre,” 3–29, 231–39; Alasdair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 20–36, 284–87; Laurence Dreyfus, “The Status of a Genre,” chapter 4 of *Bach and the Patterns of Invention*, 103–34, 251–54.

Listening: Bach, Gamba Sonata in G-minor, BWV 1029:I; Chopin, Nocturne in G minor op. 15, no. 3.

T. 24 Sept. Where is the author?

Reading: Michel Foucault, “What Is an Author?” in *Twentieth-Century Literary Theory*, 124–42; T. S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” in *The Sacred Wood*; Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *Image. Music. Text*, 142–48; Seán Burke, *The Death and the Return of the Author*, 8–26, plus notes.

T. 1 Oct. History and the analysis of music.

Reading: Scott Burnham, “How Music Matters: Poetic Content Revisited,” in *Rethinking Music*, 193–216; Reinhard Strohm, “Musical Analysis as Part of Musical History,” in *Tendenze e metodi nella ricerca musicologica*, 61–81

Listening: Haydn, String Quartet Op. 33 no. 2:I; Beethoven, Symphony No. 5:III (Scherzo).

T. 8 Oct. Writing about music. **No log.** For this session, please bring in a passage (from a paragraph to a page in length) from your analytical essay for the entire class to discuss. You must submit a passage in order to receive credit for the analytical assignment itself.

T. 15 Oct. Reading week

T. 22 Oct. On (Im)perfection. **Analytical paper due Thursday 24 Oct. at 5pm.**

Reading: James Benziger, “Organic Unity: Leibniz to Coleridge,” *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 66, no. 2 (March 1951): 22–48; Umberto Eco, “The Flaws in the

Form,” in *On Literature*, 201–11; Parker/Abbate, “Dismembering Mozart,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 2/2 (July 1990): 187–95.

Listening: Mozart’s *Marriage of Figaro*, excerpts from the second- and last-act finales;
Beethoven, String Quartet Op. 131:I, II, VII

T. 29 Oct. The limits of theory and analysis.

Reading: Edward T. Cone, “Beyond Analysis,” *Perspectives of New Music* 6/1 (1967): 33–51;
David Lewin, “Behind the Beyond: A Response to Edward T. Cone,” *Perspectives of New Music* 7/2 (1969): 59–69; Cone, “Mr. Cone Replies,” *Perspectives* 7/2 (1969): 70–72.

Listening: Schoenberg, Klavierstück Op. 33a.

T. 5 Nov. History and aesthetics.

Reading: Carl Dahlhaus, “The Value-Judgment: Object or Premise of History?,” in *Foundations of Music History*, 85–107; Leo Treitler, “Historiography of Music,” in *Rethinking Music*, 356–77.

Listening: Mozart, Piano Concerto in G, K. 453:II.

T. 12 Nov. Guest presentation by Cody Barteet, Professor of Art History

Reading: TBA

T. 19 Nov. Between music and literature

Reading: Anthony Burgess, “Music and Literature,” *The Wilson Quarterly* 7/5 (Winter, 1983): 86–97; Gary Schmidgall, *Shakespeare and Opera*, introduction to page 36; Joyce, *Ulysses*, Siren’s episode.

Listening: Mahler, “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen”; Britten, Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings, “Sonnet.”

T. 26 Nov. Music and modernism; or, what is improvisation?

Reading: Stanley Cavell, “Music Discomposed,” in *Must We Mean What We Say?*, 180–212;
Robert Pippin, *After the Beautiful*, conclusion, 131–44; Richard Kramer, “Improvisatori. Improvisiren. Improviser...,” *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 73, no. 1 (2016): 2–8.

Listening: Schoenberg, Op. 11, no. 1; C. P. E. Bach, *Freie Fantasie fürs Klavier*.

T. 3 Dec. The arts, sciences, and intimacy. **Critical Essay due Friday, 6 Dec. at 5pm.**

Reading: Raymond Tallis, *Aping Mankind*, 284–91, 299–306, 359–61; Umberto Eco, “A Reading of the *Paradiso*”; Edward F. Mooney, “Preservative Care: Saving Intimate Voice in the Humanities,” Chapter 10 of *Lost Intimacy in American Thought*, 162–74; Reinhard Strohm, “My Work and Worries in Music History,” Balzan Prize speech.

Listening: Mozart, excerpts from *The Magic Flute*, second-act finale.

TEXTS

Wittgenstein, *The Blue Book*, in *The Blue and Brown Books*. ISBN: 0–06–131211–8. Required. Second-hand copies acceptable.

Course pack. Required. **Cost of course pack is approximately \$60.**

EVALUATION

Weekly logs and projects:	44%
Participation:	11%
One music-analytical paper (c. 1,200 words):	20%
Critical essay (c. 2,000 words):	25%

Weekly logs. For most weeks (except where indicated in the syllabus), you are required to submit on OWL, by the beginning of class, a log of approximately one page (ca. 300 words, typed, double space, standard font and margin).

Consider a passage or aspect of the reading or listening that struck you, and write a few paragraphs about it: use the log to formulate the questions and hypotheses that you bring to class. The entries need not be formal, but they should be thoughtful, articulate, free of typos, and grounded in particulars from the reading or listening. Feel free to focus your entry as tightly as you like, provided that you find it important to the reading or listening. Resist the temptation to catalog your likes and dislikes. Instead, think about what questions the reading seems to be asking, or trying to answer, and what questions it makes you ask. A really good way of proceeding is by quoting a brief passage from the reading and using the log to explicate it.

None of this is to make you feel that you're supposed to come to class with a definitive reading in hand: the idea is for us to arrive at the kinds of questions that will let us hit the ground running and have a worthwhile discussion about the material.

I will read the entries, mark them, and return them by the beginning of next class. I will not accept logs after class. I will not accept logs for unexcused absences.

Analytical assignment. Please take a work (not something that has been or will be discussed in class) and write an analytical essay of approximately 1,200 words on some aspect of it. It could be form, genre, phrasing, program—anything that you think gets us closer to the music. You do not need to discuss the entire piece: one movement, or even one part of one movement will do. On 8 October you must bring in a one-page excerpt from your paper for discussion.

Critical essay. Please take up some topic related to class and, in 2,000 words or so, dive into it by using some reading not assigned in class. Clarifying or evaluating the text or texts you choose should be the main priority of your essay, instead of giving an overview of or editorial on the topic.

Enrollment restrictions: Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in Music, as well as any student 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: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western University and Turnitin.com.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI): The use of generative AI on any assignments or projects in this course will be treated as a scholastic offense (see previous note on Academic Offences). Prohibited uses include for checking grammar, translation, and generating ideas.

Mental Health & Wellness: Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Mental Health@Western](mailto:MentalHealth@Western) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Accessible Education (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.

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 is going through or 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 on the Wellness and Wellbeing website. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.