

# Readings in Music Theory

FALL 2020

## Instructor

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Chris Segall (he/him), Associate Professor of Music Theory

Email: [segallcr@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:segallcr@ucmail.uc.edu)

Phone (call/text): (718) 541-5840

Virtual office hours: Thursday, 4:45–5:45 p.m.; Friday, 10:00–11:00 a.m. (Eastern Time)

## Course Description

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You and I are going to dive into current research trends in music theory. We'll read recent scholarship in a wide range of subfields, focusing on a few big questions. What are the goals of music theory, and how and why have they changed? How does music theory mediate among the creative process, the musical text, and the listening experience? Whom is music theory for, and whom has it excluded? On a practical level, we'll explore how to read scholarship and situate it in the context of larger debates. Sometimes we'll be joined by invited guests. Overall, this course will prepare you to enter the field of music theory, whether as interested observer or active participant.

## Who Should Take This Course?

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You! True, this course is required for music theory majors, but it benefits from the widest possible range of student backgrounds and perspectives. Each of you will bring something different to the course, and I want your voice to be heard. Whether you have read every issue of *Music Theory Spectrum* or have never heard of *Music Theory Spectrum*, I encourage you not only to participate but also to take ownership of your role in this class. You belong here.

## Weekly Meeting

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This is a synchronous online course. We'll meet for a live video conference of 60–75 minutes on Wednesday afternoons, usually at 2:30–3:45 p.m. (Eastern Time).

## Course Work

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### Readings

Each week, you'll read 100–200 pages of scholarship in a single area. You'll take notes on each reading. Send me your notes by email (first few weeks only), no later than Monday, two days before our class meeting. Response essays have the same deadline.

## Response Essays

You'll write a single 2-page essay that responds to all the week's readings. Submit your essay as a post to that week's discussion board on Canvas, no later than Monday, two days before our class meeting. Whenever we'll feature a guest speaker, email them your essay, too.

We'll start the class discussion on Tuesday in the online forum. You'll read your classmates' essays and post friendly, supportive replies. I trust you to keep your comments collegial and to engage with the content of the essays. (Please don't evaluate your classmates' work.) You can participate as much as you like, but I'll ask that each of you respond to at least two essays.

## Book Review

You'll write a book review, 8–10 pages long, on any academic book in the field of music theory. It can be a monograph (the whole book is written by the same author(s)) or an edited collection (each chapter is written by a different author). It can be a book that we'll read an excerpt from, another book in the course bibliography, or a book from outside the course bibliography. Make sure you tell me your selection in advance, so I can say whether it's okay. Submit your book review by November 11.

## Interview

You're going to interview a music theorist and write a short paper, 6–8 pages long, that's a summary and critical reflection of the interview. This is a great way to meet someone new and develop your networking skills! You can choose any established scholar in the field, with the exception of (1) faculty members at CCM or your previous universities and (2) our featured guest speakers. Browse the course bibliography and recent music theory journals and conference programs for ideas. Tell me whom you're thinking of, and I'll say whether it's okay. The busiest times of the semester are (1) the first two weeks of November, when the AMS/SMT national conference takes place, and (2) the end of the semester, from Thanksgiving on. Plan to conduct your interview in October or mid-November, and be sure to read some of your chosen scholar's work before you interview them. Submit your paper by December 9.

## Reading Scholarship

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Each work of scholarship makes an original contribution to the field of music theory, in the form of a new idea or argument. It doesn't just apply an existing idea to a new work. Part of reading scholarship involves identifying what's new, even if you're not already familiar with the work that preceded it.

Scholarly writing often follows certain conventions that can help you figure out what's new. Typically, authors state their main argument up front. They situate the argument with respect to the existing literature, explaining how their idea is different. They present a new methodology: that is, a theory and a method of applying it. Then they test the methodology through a case study, which in music theory is usually an analysis of excerpts from one or more works.

Here's our motto: "The topic of the paper is not the topic of the paper." The methodology is the main contribution, not the case study. I encourage you to describe the methodology without referring to the case study.

Let's say we read a book on metrical dissonance in the music of Robert Schumann. (There is such a book, and it's great: *Fantasy Pieces*, by Harald Krebs.) The methodology is a system for identifying metrical dissonance, or conflicting layers of regularly occurring pulses. The case study is the music of Robert Schumann. Of course, we'll learn something about Schumann's music from reading this book. After all, there's a reason that Schumann was chosen for the case study. But the methodology of metrical dissonance can be applied to any music, not just Schumann's. The book makes a broad contribution to the field of music theory, beyond refining our understanding of one composer's works.

## Taking Notes

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Each piece of scholarly writing advances a primary argument. Each subsection makes a mini-argument that supports the primary argument. You'll use the following template to classify the large-scale and small-scale arguments in each reading. I recommend that you pause after each subsection, summarize its mini-argument in a single sentence (in your own words), and assign it to the appropriate category below.

**Argument:** What is the author's primary argument? The reading's introduction usually presents and contextualizes the primary argument. The remainder of the reading develops the argument in detail.

**Background:** Some subsections review existing ideas or existing literature, in order to identify problems that the author's approach will attempt to solve. How will the present reading build on what's already known?

**Methodology:** A theoretical idea and method for applying it, this is the crux of the author's contribution. How will the author apply and test the primary argument? The author might demonstrate the methodology with short analytical examples, but try to summarize it without referring to particular works or composers.

**Case study:** The reading explores implications of the methodology through extended analytical application. The case study may focus on a single work or composer, or it may deal with several works or composers. What argument is made through each case study? You may not be familiar with the repertoire. Listen to the music, study the score and musical examples, and read through the analysis in detail.

**Conclusion:** Readings usually end by restating the primary argument and findings. What further implications does the author suggest for their work?

**Commentary:** As you work through the reading, write down any other ideas or questions that you have. What do you find particularly interesting or convincing or problematic? How does this reading relate to other scholarship you've read? How else could the methodology be applied?

You'll complete this six-category note-taking template for each reading this semester. I'll ask you to email me your notes for the first few weeks. These notes will help you refer back to each reading without having to re-read it. Compiling them will help train you to read scholarship effectively and place it in a broader scholarly context. They'll help you develop a skill that I hope will be useful in your further academic work.

## Course Schedule

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### **August 26**

#### **The Discipline of Music Theory**

##### **No essay due**

David Carson Berry, with Sherman Van Solkema, "Theory," in *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, ed. Charles Hiroshi Garrett, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 8:169–79.

Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 133–49.

Ben Duinker and Hubert Léveillé Gauvin, "Changing Content in Flagship Music Theory Journals, 1979–2014," *Music Theory Online* 23/4 (2017).

### **September 2**

#### **Schema Theory**

##### **Essay #1 due**

Robert O. Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3–110.

Paul Sherrill and Matthew Boyle, "Galant Recitative Schemas," *Journal of Music Theory* 59/1 (2015): 1–61.

Gilad Rabinovitch, "Gjerdingen's Schemata Reexamined," *Journal of Music Theory* 62/1 (2018): 41–84.

### **September 9**

#### **Neo-Riemannian Theory**

##### **Essay #2 due**

Richard Cohn, *Audacious Euphony: Chromaticism and the Triad's Second Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 17–81.

Richard Cohn, "Neo-Riemannian Operations, Parsimonious Trichords, and Their Tonnetz Representations," *Journal of Music Theory* 41/1 (1997): 1–66.

Jack Douthett and Peter Steinbach, "Parsimonious Graphs: A Study in Parsimony, Contextual Transformations, and Modes of Limited Transposition," *Journal of Music Theory* 42/2 (1998): 241–63.

Suzannah Clark, "On the Imagination of Tone in Schubert's *Liedesend* (D473), *Trost* (D523), and *Gretchens Bitte* (D564)," in *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Riemannian Music Theories*, ed. Edward Gollin and Alexander Rehding (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 294–321.

## **September 16**

### **Embodied Cognition**

#### **Essay #3 due**

Candace Brower, "Paradoxes of Pitch Space," *Music Analysis* 27/1 (2008): 51–106.

Arnie Cox, *Music and Embodied Cognition: Listening, Moving, Feeling, and Thinking* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 36–57.

Kate Heidemann, "A System for Describing Vocal Timbre in Popular Song," *Music Theory Online* 22/1 (2016).

Jonathan de Souza, *Music at Hand: Instruments, Bodies, and Cognition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 6–27.

## **September 23**

### **Topic Theory**

#### **Essay #4 due**

Danuta Mirka, Introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1–57.

Robert S. Hatten, "The Troping of Topics in Mozart's Instrumental Works," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 514–36.

Johanna Frymoyer, "The Musical Topic in the Twentieth Century: A Case Study of Schoenberg's Ironic Waltzes," *Music Theory Spectrum* 39/1 (2017): 83–108.

Thomas Johnson, "Tonality as Topic: Opening a World of Analysis for Early Twentieth-Century Modernist Music," *Music Theory Online* 23/4 (2017).

## **September 30**

### **Early Music**

#### **Essay #5 due**

Featured Guest: Megan Kaes Long, Oberlin College

Send a copy of your response essay to: [megan.long@oberlin.edu](mailto:megan.long@oberlin.edu)

Harold Powers, "Is Mode Real? Pietro Aron, the Octenary System, and Polyphony," *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis* 16 (1992): 9–52.

Margaret Bent, "The Grammar of Early Music: Preconditions for Analysis," in *Tonal Structures in Early Music*, ed. Cristle Collins Judd (New York: Garland, 1998), 15–59.

Peter Schubert, "Authentic Analysis," *Journal of Musicology* 12/1 (1994): 3–18.

Megan Kaes Long, *Hearing Homophony: Tonal Expectation at the Turn of the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 57–98.

## **October 7**

### **Russian Music Theory**

#### **Essay #6 due**

Ellen Bakulina, "Tonality and Mutability in Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil*, Movement 12," *Journal of Music Theory* 59/1 (2015): 63–97.

Philip A. Ewell, "On the Russian Concept of *Lād*, 1830–1945," *Music Theory Online* 25/4 (2019).

Inessa Bazayev, "The Politics of Atonality During the Thaw and Beyond," *Music and Politics* 14/2 (2020).

Christopher Segall, "Expanding Harmonic Function: Yuri Kholopov's Twelve-Step System," *Theoria* 26 (2020): 113–40.

## **October 14**

### **Video Game Music**

#### **Essay #7 due**

Featured Guest: Elizabeth Medina-Gray, Ithaca College

Send a copy of your response essay to: [emedinagr@ithaca.edu](mailto:emedinagr@ithaca.edu)

Tim Summers, "Analysing Video Game Music: Sources, Methods, and a Case Study," in *Ludomusicology: Approaches to Video Game Music*, ed. Michiel Kamp, Tim Summers, and Mark Sweeney (Sheffield, UK: Equinox, 2016), 8–31.

Elizabeth Medina-Gray, "Analyzing Modular Smoothness in Video Game Music," *Music Theory Online* 25/3 (2019).

Thomas B. Yee, "Battle Hymn of the God-Slayers: Troping Rock and Sacred Music Topics in Xenoblade Chronicles," *Journal of Sound and Music in Games* 1/1 (2020): 2–19.

William O'Hara, "Mapping Sound: Play, Performance, and Analysis in *Proteus*," *Journal of Sound and Music in Games* 1/3 (2020): 35–67.

## **October 21**

### **Rap**

#### **Essay #8 due**

Featured Guest: Mitchell Ohriner, University of Denver

Send a copy of your response essay to: [mohriner@gmail.com](mailto:mohriner@gmail.com)

Noriko Manabe, "We Gon' Be Alright? The Ambiguities of Kendrick Lamar's Protest Anthem," *Music Theory Online* 25/1 (2019).

James Bungert, "'I Got a Bone to Pick': Formal Ambivalence and Double Consciousness in Kendrick Lamar's 'King Kunta,'" *Music Theory Online* 25/1 (2019).

Mitchell Ohriner, "Lyric, Rhythm, and Non-Alignment in the Second Verse of Kendrick Lamar's 'Momma,'" *Music Theory Online* 25/1 (2019).

Mitchell Ohriner, "Analysing the Pitch Content of the Rapping Voice," *Journal of New Music Research* 48/5 (2019): 413–33.

## **October 28**

### **Pop/Rock Music**

#### **Essay #9 due**

David Temperley, "The Melodic-Harmonic 'Divorce' in Rock," *Popular Music* 26/2 (2007): 323–42.

Lori Burns, Marc Lafrance, and Laura Hawley, "Embodied Subjectivities in the Lyrical and Musical Expression of PJ Harvey and Björk," *Music Theory Online* 14/4 (2008).

Nicole Biamonte, "Triadic Modal and Pentatonic Patterns in Rock Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 32/2 (2010): 95–110.

Mark Spicer, "Fragile, Emergent, and Absent Tonics in Pop and Rock Songs," *Music Theory Online* 23/2 (2017).



**November 4****No class**

Let's take the week off for Election Day (November 3) and the first weekend of the AMS/SMT annual conference (November 7–8).

**November 11****No class****Book review due**

We'll take today off for Veterans Day and the second weekend of the AMS/SMT annual conference (November 14–15). Remember to send me your book review.

**November 18****Feminist Music Theory****Essay #10 due**

Featured Guest: Rachel Lumsden, Florida State University

Send a copy of your response essay to: [rlumsden@fsu.edu](mailto:rlumsden@fsu.edu)

Laurel Parsons and Brenda Ravenscroft, Introduction to *Analytical Essays on Music by Women Composers: Concert Music, 1960–2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1–13.

Rachel Lumsden, "Music Theory for the 'Weaker Sex': Oliveria Prescott's Columns for *The Girl's Own Paper*," *Music Theory Online* 26/3 (2020).

Fred Everett Maus, "Masculine Discourse in Music Theory," *Perspectives of New Music* 31/2 (1993): 264–93.

Susan McClary, "In the Realm of *All* the Senses: Two Sarabandes by Élisabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre," in *Analytical Essays on Music by Women Composers: Secular and Sacred Music to 1900*, ed. Laurel Parsons and Brenda Ravenscroft (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 110–28.

**November 25****Antiracist Music Theory****Essay #11 due**

Sumanth Gopinath, "Diversity, Music Theory, and the Neoliberal Academy," *Gamut* 2 (2009): 61–88.

Braxton D. Shelley, "Analyzing Gospel," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 72/1 (2019): 181–243.

Robin Attas, "Music Theory as Social Justice: Pedagogical Applications of Kendrick Lamar's *To Pimp a Butterfly*," *Music Theory Online* 25/1 (2019).

Philip A. Ewell, "Music Theory and the White Racial Frame," *Music Theory Online* 26/2 (2020).

## **December 2**

### **Post-1945 Music**

#### **Essay #12 due**

Eric Drott, "The End(s) of Genre," *Journal of Music Theory* 57/1 (2013): 1–45.

Judy Lochhead, "'Difference Inhabits Repetition': Sofia Gubaidulina's String Quartet No. 2," in *Analytical Essays on Music by Women Composers: Concert Music, 1960–2000*, ed. Laurel Parsons and Brenda Ravenscroft (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 102–26.

Jennifer Iverson, "Invisible Collaboration: The Dawn and Evolution of *elektronische Musik*," *Music Theory Spectrum* 39/2 (2017): 200–222.

Maria Cizmic, "Timbre and Vibration in Galina Ustvolskaya's Composition No. 1, 'Dona nobis pacem,'" in *Analytical Approaches to 20th-Century Russian Music: Tonality, Modernism, Serialism*, ed. Inessa Bazayev and Christopher Segall (New York: Routledge, 2020), 189–202.

## **December 9**

### **No class**

#### **Interview report due**

# Course Bibliography

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## The Discipline of Music Theory

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- Agawu, Kofi. "How We Got Out of Analysis, and How to Get Back In Again." *Music Analysis* 23/2–3 (2004): 267–86.
- Broman, Per F., and Nora A. Engebretsen (eds.). *What Kind of Theory Is Music Theory? Epistemological Exercises in Music Theory and Analysis*. Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2007.
- Korsyn, Kevin. *Decentering Music: A Critique of Contemporary Musical Research*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Leong, Daphne. "SMT's Interest Groups: A Synopsis." *Music Theory Online* 24/3 (2018).
- Maus, Fred Everett. "LGBTQ+ Lives in Professional Music Theory." *Music Theory Online* 26/1 (2020).
- McCreless, Patrick. "Rethinking Contemporary Music Theory." In *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinarity, Culture*, ed. David Bard-Schwarz, Anahid Kassabian, and Lawrence Siegel, 1–49. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997.
- Nattiez, Jean-Jacques. *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*. Trans. Carolyn Abbate. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990.

## Cultural Theory

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### Feminist Theory

- Cusick, Suzanne G. "Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem." *Perspectives of New Music* 32/1 (1994): 8–27.
- Guck, Marion A. "A Woman's (Theoretical) Work." *Perspectives of New Music* 32/1 (1994): 28–43.
- Hisama, Ellie M. *Gendering Musical Modernism: The Music of Ruth Crawford, Marion Bauer, and Miriam Gideon*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Kielian-Gilbert, Marianne. "Of Poetics and Poiesis, Pleasure and Politics: Music Theory and Modes of the Feminine." *Perspectives of New Music* 32/1 (1994): 44–67.
- Lumsden, Rachel. "'The Music Between Us': Ethyl Smyth, Emmeline Pankhurst, and 'Possession.'" *Feminist Studies* 41/2 (2015): 335–70.
- McClary, Susan. *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
- Solie, Ruth A. "Whose Life? The Gendered Self in Schumann's *Frauenliebe* Songs." In *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven Paul Scher, 219–40. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

## Queer Theory

Brett, Philip. "Piano Four-Hands: Schubert and the Performance of Gay Male Desire." *19th-Century Music* 21/2 (1997): 149–76.

Hubbs, Nadine. *The Queer Composition of America's Sound: Gay Modernists, American Music, and National Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Lee, Gavin. "Queer Music Theory." *Music Theory Spectrum* 42/1 (2020): 143–53.

Luong, Vivian. "Rethinking Music Loving." *Music Theory Online* 23/2 (2017).

Maus, Fred Everett. "Masculine Discourse in Music Theory." *Perspectives of New Music* 31/2 (1993): 264–93.

Maus, Fred Everett. "Sexual and Musical Categories." In *The Pleasure of Modernist Music: Listening, Meaning, Intention, Ideology*, ed. Arved Ashby, 153–75. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004.

Sofer, Danielle. "Specters of Sex: Tracing the Tools and Techniques of Contemporary Music Analysis." *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie* 17/1 (2020): 31–63.

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Maxile, Horace J., Jr. "On Vernacular Emblems and Signification in David N. Baker's *The Black Experience*." *American Music* 32/2 (2014): 223–51.

## Disability Theory

Honisch, Stefan S. "'Re-Narrating Disability' Through Musical Performance." *Music Theory Online* 15/3–4 (2009).

Howe, Blake. "Music and the Agents of Obsession." *Music Theory Spectrum* 38/2 (2016): 218–40.

Lerner, Neil, and Joseph N. Straus (eds.). *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Maler, Anabel. "Songs for Hands: Analyzing Interactions of Sign Language and Music." *Music Theory Online* 19/1 (2013).

Straus, Joseph N. *Broken Beauty: Musical Modernism and the Representation of Disability*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Straus, Joseph N. *Extraordinary Measures: Disability in Music*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

## Postcolonial Theory

Agawu, Kofi. *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Agawu, Kofi. *The African Imagination in Music*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Attas, Robin. "Strategies for Settler Decolonization: Decolonial Pedagogies in a Popular Music Analysis Course." *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 49/1 (2019): 125–39.

Hisama, Ellie M. "Postcolonialism on the Make: The Music of John Mellencamp, David Bowie, and John Zorn." *Popular Music* 12/2 (1993): 91–104.

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## Embodied Cognition

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Iyer, Vijay. "Embodied Mind, Situated Cognition, and Expressive Microtiming in African-American Music." *Music Perception* 19/3 (2002): 387–414.

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Saslaw, Janna. "Forces, Containers, and Paths: The Role of Body-Derived Image Schemas in the Conceptualization of Music." *Journal of Music Theory* 40/2 (1996): 217–43.

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## Semiotics

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- Palfy, Cora S. "Formal Reminiscence Space and Memory in Sufjan Stevens's Storytelling." *Music Theory Online* 26/1 (2020).
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- Straus, Joseph N. *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.

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- Love, Stefan Caris. "Subliminal Dissonance or 'Consonance'? Two Views of Jazz Meter." *Music Theory Spectrum* 35/1 (2013): 48–61.
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## Pop/Rock Music

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### General

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