Seminar in Music Theory: Defining Music Russianly
Spring 2015
W 2:00–4:45
MEH 3234

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Office hours: MWF by appointment

Course Description

This seminar offers intensive study of a repertoire and a theoretical tradition that lie outside the mainstream of American musicology and music theory. We will concern ourselves with two interrelated topics: Russian music theory and the analysis of Russian music. Russian-language theory has developed in parallel with Anglo-American theory, although little has been translated into English. We’ll read the secondary literature on Russian theory, exploring the insights it offers both for Russian music and for music theory more broadly. To borrow an observation from Patrick McCreless: within the English-language analytical scholarship, there’s plenty of work on Stravinsky, a fair amount on Shostakovich, a little on Scriabin and Prokofiev, and next to nothing on even such a prominent composer as Chaikovsky. We’ll read the available analytical literature and examine the techniques that English-speaking scholars have applied to the Russian repertoire.

Our focus will not be entirely theoretical. We’ll immerse ourselves in music history and cultural criticism, particularly through the writings of Richard Taruskin, from whose 1997 book title Defining Russia Musically the name of this seminar derives. Taruskin has problematized the commonplace reductive and essentializing view of Russian music as fundamentally nationalist. We’ll build on Taruskin’s work as we explore the conditions under which Russian music has been analyzed and interpreted. No prior knowledge of the Russian repertoire, of the Russian language or culture, or of current Anglo-American theoretical techniques will be assumed or required. It’s my hope that the seminar will bring together students of various backgrounds, each of whom will have a distinct perspective to contribute to our class work.

Suggested Texts

There is no required text. All required readings will be available in PDF format on Blackboard (canopy.uc.edu).

We’ll read large portions of the following two books. Although all assigned excerpts will appear on Blackboard, you may nevertheless wish to obtain your own personal copies:


I highly recommend the following historical studies. The first deals specifically with music, and the second deals with Russian arts and culture more generally:


**Course Requirements**

**9 response essays (3 pages):** Write a short response essay to the readings every week, except when you will be giving a presentation. There is no set format; you may engage with any aspect of the readings. Email your essays to me, as an attached MS-Word document or PDF file, by **10 a.m. Tuesday**, the day before our class meeting. I won’t provide grades or written feedback on your response essays, but they will help shape our class discussion each week.

**3 presentations (30 mins.):** Deliver one analytical, one topical, and one final paper presentation. For analytical presentations, provide a handout with annotated score excerpts, any relevant charts or diagrams, and an annotated bibliography. With large-scale works, you may select a single movement, scene, or section, but you must justify your choice. For topical presentations, provide a handout with text excerpts to be discussed and an annotated bibliography. Analytical and topical presentations may be informal (without a prepared script). Final paper presentations may be formal or informal.

**Final paper (12 pages):** Write a scholarly essay of 12 pages, approximately the length of a 30-minute conference presentation. The focus may be theoretical, analytical, historical, or musicological. A proposal (one page, plus preliminary bibliography) is due by email on **Wednesday, March 4**. The first draft of your final paper is due on the day of your final paper presentation. After you receive my feedback, the final draft will be due on **Monday, May 4**. Both drafts of the paper must be submitted as MS-Word documents.

**Incompletes**

In order to receive an incomplete in this course, the following conditions must be satisfied. (1) You have completed all course work—including the final paper presentation—except the final paper. (2) You submit a formal, written request for an incomplete by March 31. The request should include the reason the incomplete is being requested, the status of the final paper, and a proposed timeline for completion. (3) The request is approved by me.
January 14
Nationalism
No essay due


January 21
Survey of Russian Theory
Essay #1 due


January 28
*Ladovïy ritm* (Modal Rhythm); *Intonatsiya* (Intonation)
Essay #2 due

Presentation 1: Musorgsky, *Sunless* (1874)
Presentation 2: Russian Composition Before Glinka


February 4  
*Peremennost’* (Modal Mutability)  
Essay #3 due

Presentation 3: Chaikovsky, *Eugene Onegin* (1879), Tatyana’s Letter Scene  
Presentation 4: Vladimir Stasov, *Kuchka* Ideologue


February 11  
*Tselostniy analiz* (Holistic Analysis); Form  
Essay #4 due

Presentation 5: Rachmaninov, Six Romances, op. 4 (1890–93)  
Presentation 6: Italian Opera in Russia


Ildar Khannanov, “Russian Methodology of Musical Form and Analysis” (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2003), 208–261.


February 18  
Chaikovsky  
Essay #5 due

Presentation 7: Taneyev, String Quartet No. 4 (1898–99)  
Presentation 8: Chaikovsky, Homosexual (How and for whom has Chaikovsky’s sexual orientation impacted analysis of his music?)


February 25  
Scriabin  
Essay #6 due

Presentation 9: Roslavets, *Trois Études* (1914)  
Presentation 10: Scriabin and Philosophy


March 4
*Korsakovskaya gamma* (Octatonic Scale)
Essay #7 due
Final Paper Proposal due

Presentation 11: Stravinsky, *Svadebka* (1921–23)
Presentation 12: ASM (Association for Contemporary Music) vs. RAPM (Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians)


March 11
Prokofiev
Essay #8 due

Presentation 13: Prokofiev, Quintet, op. 39 (1924)
Presentation 14: Prokofiev in the Soviet Union


Olga Sologub, “Sergei Prokofiev’s Piano Sonata No. 8, op. 84 and Symphony No. 5, op. 100: Neo-Riemannian and Kholopovian Perspectives” (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2014), 17–33.
March 18
No class (Spring break)

March 25
*Lad* (Mode)
Essay #9 due

Presentation 15: Shostakovich, String Quartet No. 7 (1960)
Presentation 16: *Testimony*, the “Memoirs” of Dmitry Shostakovich


April 1
Schnittke
Essay #10 due

Presentation 17: Schnittke, Violin Sonata No. 2 (1968)
Presentation 18: Anglo-American Approaches to Shostakovich Analysis


Christopher Segall, “Alfred Schnittke’s Triadic Practice” (manuscript).
April 8
*Dvenadtsatitonovost’* (Twelve-Toneness) and *Gemitonika* (Hemitonicism)
Essay #11 due

Presentation 19: Gubaidulina, Ten Preludes for Cello (1974)
Presentation 20: Socialist Realism


April 15
Final Paper Presentations

April 22
Final Paper Presentations

April 29 (exam week)
Final Paper Presentations
Presentation Bibliographies

Presentation 1: Musorgsky, *Sunless* (1874)


Presentation 2: Russian Composition Before Glinka


Presentation 3: Chaikovsky, *Eugene Onegin* (1879), Tatyana’s Letter Scene


Presentation 4: Vladimir Stasov, *Kuchka* Ideologue


**Presentation 5: Rachmaninov, Six Romances, op. 4 (1890–93)**


**Presentation 6: Italian Opera in Russia**


**Presentation 7: Taneyev, String Quartet No. 4 (1898–99)**


**Presentation 8: Chaikovsky, Homosexual**


Presentation 9: Roslavets, *Trois Études* (1914)


Presentation 10: Scriabin and Philosophy


Presentation 11: Stravinsky, *Svadebka* (1921–23)


Presentation 12: ASM vs. RAPM


**Presentation 13: Prokofiev, Quintet, op. 39 (1924)**

Neil Minturn, “Appropriate Tradition: The String Quartets of Sergei Prokofiev, op. 50 and 92,” in *Intimate Voices: The Twentieth-Century String Quartet*, vol. 1, ed. Evan Jones (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2009), 256–84. (Although not on the Quintet, it’s virtually the only study of any of Prokofiev’s mid-period chamber works.)


**Presentation 14: Prokofiev in the Soviet Union**


**Presentation 15: Shostakovich, String Quartet No. 7 (1960)**

Sarah Reichardt [Ellis], *Composing the Modern Subject: Four String Quartets by Dmitri Shostakovich* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 43–67.


Presentation 16: Testimony, the “Memoirs” of Dmitry Shostakovich


You may also want to at least glance at the following, all of which are on course reserve:


Presentation 17: Schnittke, Violin Sonata No. 2 (1968)


Presentation 18: Anglo-American Approaches to Shostakovich Analysis


**Presentation 19: Gubaidulina, Ten Preludes for Cello (1974)**


**Presentation 20: Socialist Realism**


