

MSC 310: Music History and Literature I—Fall 2020
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:15, Series L –or– remote

David H. Miller, Ph.D. (dmill629@gmail.com)

Office hours: by appointment

Course objectives: This course seeks to give students an opportunity to learn about and experience music written during the Medieval and Renaissance periods (ca. 1000–1600) through readings, listening, assignments, and discussions. Students will be given creative outlets for demonstrating their knowledge of the material.

Required texts:

- Seaton, Douglass. *Ideas and Style in the Western Musical Tradition*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Burkholder, J Peter, and Palisca, Claude, ed. *Norton Anthology of Music*, Volume 1, 8th ed. New York: Norton, 2014.
- Weiss, Piero and Taruskin, Richard, Editors. *Music in the Western World*. New York: Schirmer, 1984 (will be distributed at first meeting)

Course outline:

Part I: Origins

- Week 1: Music and Christianity in the Middle Ages
- Week 2: Composer Spotlight I: Hildegard von Bingen
- Week 3: Troubadours and trouvères
- Week 4: Notre Dame polyphony

Part II: Invention and synthesis in the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries

- Week 5: New forms of polyphony
- Week 6: English music
- Week 7: Composer Spotlight II: Guillaume DuFay

Part III: Modern musical economies in the Renaissance

- Week 8: Printing and instrumental music in the 16th century
- Week 9: Composer Spotlight III: Josquin des Prez
- Week 10: ELECTION WEEK BREAK

Part IV: Religious turmoil

- Week 11: The Reformation
- Week 12: The Counter-Reformation
- Week 13: THANKSGIVING BREAK
- Week 14: Composer Spotlight IV: William Byrd

- Week 15: REFLECTION AND REVIEW

Course requirements and grading:

- 1. Attendance and participation (25%)**—I don't have a strict policy on attendance and participation, but I expect you to attend most classes and participate actively; the latter is especially important since this is a small course.
- 2. Weekly homework assignments (25%)**—Nine assignments over the course of the semester, usually due on Thursdays. Your lowest homework grade will be dropped (thus you may miss one assignment).
- 3. Genre writing assignments (25%)**—A review of a recorded performances (**due September 24**), an exercise in historical fiction (**due October 8**), and a third assignment TBA (**due November 19**). There will be no homework assignments during the weeks that these assignments are due.
- 4. Final exam (25%)**—A take-home, essay-based exam.

Statement on students with disabilities:

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Providence College and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please let me know immediately. You must have official documentation from the University specifying that accommodations need to be made.

University policy on academic integrity:

Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person – be it a world-class philosopher or your lab partner – without proper acknowledgement of that source. Violations of the University policy on academic integrity, described on the webpage of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, may result in failure of the course or failure on the assignment. Please see the policy as it is outlined in the course catalog, <http://www.providence.edu/forms/college-relations/undergrad1012.pdf>, pages 58-62.

How to listen to music in this course:

This course will introduce you to a huge amount of wonderful music, but you can't get to know that music if you don't listen to it! Here are some tips for making the most out of your listening:

1. Focus your attention by following along with the score as you listen.
2. For works that are featured in NAWM, listen first without reading the commentary, then read the commentary before listening a second time.
3. Listen to each assigned piece a minimum of three times, and on at least two different days; ideally you would listen to each assigned piece once per day during the week that it is assigned.
4. While I generally recommend "active" listening, "passive" listening (that is, having the music on in the background) can also be helpful. Make a playlist on Spotify or YouTube (or whatever music streaming platform you use) so that you can listen to music from class as you cook, exercise, or drive your car.

Finally, a word on the upcoming semester:

Just like last semester was strange, this semester is going to be strange too. We are all adapting to rapidly changing circumstances, and that is probably going to make things hard at times. If you find yourself struggling in any way—missing classes, feeling like you don't want to speak up in class, writing difficulties, or even something unrelated to this course—please let me know. I strive to be a generous and understanding teacher, and my first priority is your well-being. So if you need some help, write me an email: we'll find a time to talk and figure out a plan together.