**Music 128: The Legacies of J.S. Bach**

MWF, 10:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m.

Morrison Hall 128

Dr. David H. Miller

Morrison Hall 226

Office hours MW 2–3:30 or by appointment

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**Course description:**

In the 270 years since his death, the music of J.S. Bach has meant many things to many people. This course will serve as both an introduction to Bach's music (including but not limited to the St. John Passion, the Goldberg Variations, the suites for solo cello, and the Brandenburg Concertos) and a study of that music's legacy, with a focus on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. We will listen to adaptations of Bach's music by jazz musicians, pop stars, and modernist composers, consider why his compositions consistently appear in film and television, and examine how his legacies encapsulate many of the most inspiring and troubling features of classical music culture.

**Learning objectives:**

1. To become familiar with the music of J.S. Bach, including a wide variety of representative genres and works.
2. To think critically about how the meaning of music changes in light of different eras, interpretations, and performing contexts.
3. To learn an assortment of fundamental musical terms and concepts.
4. To practice listening to, speaking about, and writing about music.

**Texts:**

You are not required to purchase any texts for this course. Unless otherwise noted, all recordings for this course are available on a dedicated course YouTube playlist: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCjLxVmAF7FbSbv1gLkXo2Yp1MkVIklh7>. Pieces appear on the playlist in the order in which they were assigned. Likewise, all readings are posted on the course website unless otherwise noted.

**Course outline:**

*Introduction: Who was Bach?*

* Week 1: Some important concepts
* Week 2: Bach the village organist

*Part I: A Bach sampler*

* Week 3: Modernist Bach
* Week 4: Scientific Bach
* Week 5: Virtuoso Bach
* Week 6: Pop Bach

*Part II: Case studies*

* Weeks 7–8: Holy Bach
* Week 9: MID-SEMESTER INTERLUDE (see below)
* Weeks 10–11: Political Bach
* Weeks 12–13: Universal Bach

*Wrapping up:*

* Week 14: THANKSGIVING (NO CLASS)
* Weeks 15–16: RECAP/EXAM REVIEW/PROJECT WORK

**Course requirements and grading:**

1. **Attendance, participation, and engagement: 25%**—See below for details of my attendance policy. In a class this large, “participation” and “engagement” do not refer exclusively to speaking in class; they also include active listening, attending office hours, corresponding with me via email, etc.
2. **Pop quizzes (6): 20%**—Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped. The quizzes are designed to be *easy* if you have done the reading and listening.
3. **Short writing assignments (2): 10%**—There are 3 writing assignments, you choose which 2 you want to complete. Due at the beginning of class on Friday, October 1, Monday, October 18, and Friday, November 19.
4. **Midterm exam: 20%**—During class on Monday, October 4.
5. **Final project: 25%**—Proposal due Monday, November 8; final version due Monday, December 13.

**Important dates:**

* *Friday, September 3*: Organ session with Jonathan Dimmock
* *Monday, September 6*: NO CLASS (Labor Day)
* *Wednesday, September 22*: Violin session with Carla Moore
* *Friday, September 24*: Piano performance by Pearleen Wang
* *Friday, October 1:* Short writing assignment #1 due
* *Monday, October 4*: Midterm exam
* *Sunday, October 10 at 4*:00 p.m.: California Bach Society concert (optional but recommended!)
* *Friday, October 15*: In-class performance of “Es ist vollbracht” from the *St. John Passion* by Prof. Christine Brandes, Dr. Miller, and other guests
* *Monday, October 18*: Short writing assignment #2 due
* *Wednesday, October 20*, *Friday, October 22*, and *Monday, October 25*: NO CLASS (Dr. Miller away)
* *Monday, November 8:* Final project proposals due
* *Friday, November 19:* Short writing assignment #3 due
* *Monday, November 22*: NO CLASS
* *Monday, December 6*: Final projects due
* *Monday, December 13 at 8:00 a.m.*: Final exam

**Attendance, extension, and late work policies:**

Each student is permitted 2 unexcused absences over the course of the semester. Further unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your final grade. That being said, I tend to be generous with excused absences, especially when given advance notice. *If there is a legitimate reason you cannot attend class (including but not limited to illness, mental health challenges, family commitments, job interviews, and travel for work or sports), please let me know at least a few days in advance. I will very likely grant you an excused absence, and your grade will not suffer as a result.*

Along similar lines, *I am very happy to grant extensions when given appropriate notice*. If an extension of a day or two would make your life significantly easier (for example, if you have an exam in another class on the same day an assignment for our class is due), please do not hesitate to contact me. Assignments submitted late without an extension will result in a lowered grade, with assignments submitted more than a few days late resulting in a zero unless a prior arrangement has been made.

**How to listen to music for this course:**

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

1. Listen to each assigned song/work a minimum of three times, and on at least two different days—of course, it is always helpful to listen more than that!
2. Engage in “active” listening, setting aside time to listen without distractions. Follow along with the lyrics or score as appropriate to focus your listening.
3. While I generally recommend “active” listening, “passive” listening (that is, having the music on in the background) can also be helpful, so consider listening to the class playlist as you cook, exercise, or drive your car.

If you read music and would like to follow along with a score as you listen, scores for almost everything we will listen to this semester are available for free online at the International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP) and/or the Choral Public Domain Library (CPDL, for vocal works only).

**Technology policy:**

Laptops and tablets are permitted in class, and you should plan to bring one of these devices with you to every class so that you can refer to the assigned readings (if you prefer, you could also print out hard copies of the readings). Please do your best to use your device only for this purpose and for note-taking during class.

**Disability accommodations:**

Students with disabilities that affect their ability to participate fully in class or to meet all course requirements are encouraged to notify me so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged. Further information is available from the Disabled Students’ Program website at

<http://dsp.berkeley.edu>.

**Academic misconduct and plagiarism:**

Any instance of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty will result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct. According to the Berkeley Campus Code of Conduct, “Plagiarism includes use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source.” Furthermore, “All persons engaged in research at the University are responsible for adhering to the highest standards of intellectual honesty and integrity in research. This statement is available at the website on official campus policies and procedures at <http://campuspol.chance.berkeley.edu/index.cfm>, under the keyword “plagiarism.”