

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Division of Humanities & Social Sciences

Fall 2029

M/W 2:00 – 3:25 via Zoom

Prof. Tom Neenan

Mu 137 Music History to 1750

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course website on Canvas

Welcome to Mu137! I hope that Mu137 will be a respite from the anxiety-filled times in which we live. As we inhabit the online environment of Mu1397 together during the coming weeks, I hope we can all take advantage of the opportunity to relax and enjoy some wonderful music and sharing of ideas about the music.

I am passionate about classical music and hope to share that passion with you. I have been a professional conductor and keyboard player for more than 35 years and have been a lecturer for the LA Philharmonic for more than 25 years. I attend classical concerts whenever and wherever I can and love continuing to learn about classical music of all eras. I'm also a big fan of jazz, film music, and some pop and folk music. – Tom Neenan

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Art” or “classical” music, as we know it, is unique among musical expressions in our world. Most of the characteristics that make so-called western music distinctive are closely related to the history of Europe, with its constant tension between church and state during the Middle Ages, the rise of humanism in the 15th and 16th centuries, absolutism in the 17th century, and the middle class in the 18th century. Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven would not have been possible without developments that took place long before any of them was born.

In this course we will delve into the history of music in Europe from its beginnings to around 1750. Some of the questions we'll consider include:

- Who were the major composers of the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Baroque periods?
- What kinds of music did they write?
- What were the social, political, economic and cultural forces that gave rise to the creation of musical works of the periods in question?
- How did the most important composers advance the art form and what was the reaction of those who listened to their music?
- What technological advances led to the development of new and/or better musical instruments?
- What did music *sound* like long before the age of recordings?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course, we will:

- Develop critical listening skills and a means to express in words what we hear and feel in music
- Enhance our ability to perceive and evaluate different musical styles and approaches to performance
- Expand and deepen our understanding of music of the period and those who composed and performed it as well as those who supported and listened to it
- Deepen our understanding of how the music of the period was influenced by external forces
- Develop skills in communicating effectively in writing
- Develop skills needed in acquiring information from library and online resources

RE: M/W SYNCHRONOUS SESSIONS

If you are unable to attend the live Zoom sessions regularly for geographical, technical or other reasons, you must speak with Professor Neenan during the first week of class in order to develop a plan which will allow you to take the course. **Accommodations will be made but it is imperative that you address this issue personally with Prof. Neenan immediately.**

PREREQUISITES

It is important for you to note that no prior musical experience or knowledge of classical music is required. Students come to the music courses with a broad range of musical backgrounds. As a result, some students will naturally be more conversant in music notation and technical terminology than others. However, those with little musical knowledge or prior experience are at no disadvantage as the course focus is on historical and cultural developments, not music theory or lofty musicological concepts. If you have little or no background in music, there is nothing to prevent you from earning an A in the class. From time to time musical scores will be used in the lectures. These are primarily for my reference in teaching the material. If you do not read music, you should not feel intimidated or excluded. If a video clip with a scrolling score is presented, feel free to close your eyes and just listen to the music. You won't miss a thing.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

We will use several modes of evaluation and assessment. The course is designed to allow a degree of flexibility in completing certain assignments; however, assignments directly related to the specific requirements of an advanced humanities course (writing 4,000 words of composition) and completing are mandatory.

Class attendance, participation and the Daily Question

A good deal of class time is spent listening to music or watching performances on video. In order for you to participate in guided listening and viewing activities and for you to learn by sharing your thoughts with others you need to be present and alert. For that reason, attendance is taken very seriously. Come to our meetings prepared – you'll get a great deal more out of the class if you do. You are allowed two unexcused absences. If you have three or more, you will fail the class.

Class discussion is primed by your completing an ungraded **Daily Question** at the beginning of each class where you sent a chat to everyone with the name of a piece of music and its composer (if known) you listened to in the previous week and comment on what you liked or disliked about it. **Music should be related (at least tangentially) to the reading or discussion for the given week or the week just gone by but should be something other than music that is assigned or covered in a Listening Exercise or Response Question. In other words, you should find a piece of music on your own and relate it to what we are talking about in class.** You receive 15 points for completing the Daily Question, which also serves as an attendance record.

Academic report on George Frederick Handel (required)

Writing an academic report of ~2,000 words, “Handel and the Development of the English Oratorio” will help you develop skills in writing and research while learning about interesting topics related to George Frederick Handel’s most popular music. The paper requires you to gather information about the topic, organize it in a coherent fashion, and report on it clearly and concisely. Because the paper is an academic *report* and not an expository *essay*, you will not be asked to do original research, evaluate resources or defend a proposition, all of which require a degree of expertise in music theory and analysis that is outside our purview. Your report must be formatted according to MLA Guidelines and turned in as an MS Word doc or docx. Refer to the **Handel Report Guidelines** on the **Writing Assignments Information and Guidelines page** for more information. **See course calendar for component due dates.**

Letters to Pope Clement 1606-1607 (required)

You will pretend to be a papal envoy who has been sent to investigate musical goings-on in London, Venice and Mantua. Your travels take you to the royal chapel of King James I of England (formerly James VI of Scotland), to Venice’s Basilica San Marco and finally to the Carnival festivities in Mantua, Italy. While in those cities you write three letters reporting on things you see and hear (about 1,500 words total). This assignment allows you to write in a more creative and fanciful vein and allows you to inhabit times and places that are of immense importance in the history of music. **The assignment is due on Friday of Week 5 – no exceptions.** See guidelines in the Writing Materials folder on Canvas.

Weekly take-away (submitted Mondays, during Zoom session)

Each Monday, at the beginning of our Zoom session, I will ask you to submit via a private chat a **take-away from the previous week’s lecture, reading, or listening assignments**. You are expected to submit a thoughtful response that reflects your having been engaged in actively learning the material. As with the response questions and listening exercises, you will receive full points (10) for a thoughtful response, fewer points for a response that is incomplete or superficial, and no points for a response that is woefully incomplete or not submitted. Take-aways should be 50 – 75 words. **A useful strategy will be to compose your take-away while you are doing the reading or listening assignment and save it to submit at the beginning of the Monday session.**

Response Questions and Listening Exercises

Response questions are intended to motivate you to think about the music we are studying and listening to beyond the confines of the lectures reading/listening assignments. **You may use whatever resources you like in answering response questions and you are encouraged to discuss the question with classmates or Prof. Neenan before you submit your answer.** However, answers you submit must be entirely your own. Be sure to review the Hixon Writing Center’s webpage on “Avoiding Plagiarism:

Guidelines and Expectations for Writing in the Humanities at Caltech:"

<http://www.hss.caltech.edu/academics/avoiding-plagiarism>

Response questions typically require a response of ~150-200 words. You are not required to cite sources **unless you paraphrase or quote a source**, in which case you should include an in-line citation. We will discuss this issue during the first week of class. Follow MLA guidelines for in-line citations and works cited. For more information on MLA guidelines, visit the Purdue Online Writing Lab website.

Your response will be evaluated on how thoroughly you address the questions and how your response reflects serious thought given to the questions. You will receive 20 points for a thorough answer reflecting serious thought; 10 - 15 points for an answer that is somewhat incomplete or superficial; 0 points for a response that is woefully incomplete or reflects very cursory consideration.

The purpose of the **listening exercises** is for you to hone the listening skills you are acquiring in class and for you to evaluate your own progress as a critical listener. Listening exercises typically require you to listen to a piece of music a couple of times and to answer questions about the musical style, form, texture etc. We will do some listening exercises in class during the first couple of weeks, so you know what to expect before you take the first one for credit. Grading is similar to response questions: 20 points for complete, thoughtful responses; 10 – 15 points for partially incomplete responses; 0 points for woefully inadequate or no response.

The course grading scheme assumes you will complete only seven response questions, seven listening exercises, and seven weekly take-aways. You may complete more or fewer than seven, depending on what grade you wish to receive. **If you are taking the class P/F you must complete at least six of each with an average grade of 70% or more – on each – or you will fail the course.**

You may choose to do a response question and skip the listening exercise or weekly take-away for that week or visa-versa. If you complete all the questions/exercises/take-aways, all scores will be added to your course total. You do not need to complete all assignments to do well in the class. Keep track of your total points on Canvas in order to know where you stand in the class.

Response questions and listening exercises must be completed before they close at 1pm Mondays or you will not receive credit – no exceptions. Weekly take-aways must be submitted at the beginning of class on Monday (or prior, if you know you will miss a Monday) or you will not receive credit.

Syllabus Quiz (syllabus quiz required)

Take the Syllabus Quiz (required) before the start of class on Monday, Week 2. You get 2 chances on the quiz. The Syllabus Quiz verifies that that you understand and acknowledge the requirements and grading procedures of this course.

Assignment flexibility

The course grading scheme assumes you will complete **seven out of nine response questions, seven out of nine listening exercises, and seven out of nine weekly take-aways.** You may complete more or fewer than seven, depending on what grade you wish to receive. **If you are taking the class P/F you must complete at least six response questions of each with an average grade of 70% or more – in each category – or you will fail the course.**

COURSE TEXT

There is no assigned textbook. Reading material will be available online or as a PDF on Canvas in advance.

OTHER MATTERS

Prerequisites

You do not need to be a musician or have any musical background to do well in this course. All are welcome and encouraged to explore the world of classical music regardless of previous experience, and the course is taught accordingly. Those who are experienced musicians are encouraged to actively participate as they can be very helpful to those with less experience in explaining musical concepts and terminology.

Special needs

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with Caltech Accessibility Services for Students (CASS). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact CASS as soon as possible, since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. <http://cass.caltech.edu/>. Undergraduate students should contact Dr. Lesley Nye, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Students (administrative contact: Beth Larranaga) and graduate students should contact Dr. Kate McAnulty, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (administrative contact: Angelica Medina-Cuevas).

Honor Code

"No member of the Caltech community shall take unfair advantage of any other member of the Caltech community." The honor code is an important aspect of life on the Caltech campus. I honor it and expect you to do the same.

Collaboration Policy

You are encouraged to collaborate with others in the class in completing course assignments and activities. However, it is imperative that you review the **Collaboration Policy** found on Canvas.

Attendance

Regular Class attendance is required and taken seriously. Students are excused for justifiable reasons, e.g. you are sick, have a job or college interview, are attending a required out-of-town field trip etc. Some verification may be requested. If you are going to be absent, send Prof. Neenan an email **before class**.

Number of unexcused absences

1

2

more than 2

Total Points deducted (cumulative)

15 (equivalent of one Daily Question)

40

automatic fail, no exceptions

Please carefully review rules regarding writing assignments (academic report and concert report):

1. In order to receive credit for an assignment, at least 50% of the total points for that assignment must be earned; otherwise, *no points* will be recorded for the assignment.
2. In the academic report assignment, you must turn in a satisfactory outline and first page draft, along with your final draft, or you will forfeit all points and fail the course.
3. You must complete and receive a passing grade on **all** writing assignments in order to pass the class.
4. Writing assignments turned in after the due date are subject to a penalty equivalent to 15% of the points possible on the assignment. Penalties increase by an additional 10% each week thereafter.

Developing a Game Plan and Course Grading Scheme

Keep in mind that this is an advanced humanities credit course and requires at least 4,000 words of composition. In order to fulfill the writing requirement, you **must** satisfactorily complete the academic report and the Letters from Rome. Be realistic. It is highly unlikely that you will get all the points possible for the assignments. The course is designed so that if you need to skip one or two weekly assignments or you need to be absent once or twice, you may do so without doing serious damage to your grade. Stay abreast of your points total on Canvas and the point totals needed for each grade.

	<u>Points ea. component</u>	<u>Total</u>
Syllabus Quiz		25
Academic report on Handel (~ 2000 words)		300
<i>Outline</i>	150	
<i>First Page Draft</i>	50	
<i>Final Draft</i>	100	
Letters to Pope Clement (~1,500 words)		150
Response questions (done on Canvas)	20	140
(points based on assumption of 7 of 9 weekly responses completed)		
Listening exercises (done on Canvas)	20	140
(points based on assumption of 7 of 9 weekly responses completed)		
Monday take-away response	10	70
(points based on assumption of 7 of 9 weekly responses completed)		
Attendance/Daily Question – (20)	15	<u>300</u>
Total		1,125

Grade scale and rationale

Grades will be based on a Grading Point of **1069** points, or 95% of the total points (assuming 7 of 9 of some assignments).

Grade Scale (based on **1,069** Grading Point)

A	95% or more of Grading Point
A-	90% - 94% of Grading point
B	80% - 89% of Grading Point
	(B- = 80% - 83%; B = 84% - 86%; B+ = 87% - 89%)
C	70% - 79% of Grading Point
D	below 70% of Grading Point
F	below 60% of Grading Point

Taking this course Pass/Fail

Students may take the course P/F. However, in order to pass, students must do **all of** the following:

1. Complete **all** components of both writing projects with a minimum score of 70% on each
2. Earn at least a C in the class (74% or more of the Grading Point)
3. Not exceed the maximum number of unexcused absences
4. Earn an average score of at least 70% each on at least six response questions, weekly take-aways and listening exercises

COURSE CALENDAR

Note: Weekly take-aways, Response Questions and Listening Exercises must be completed by class time on Mondays

Writing assignments are due at 11:55pm on Fridays, unless otherwise indicated

Date Week	Reading and Listening Assignments	SCHEDULE
Week 1 Middle Ages Part I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Britannia Online Encyclopedia – “Establishment of western musical traditions,” beginning up to “Notre Dame School.” Provides a good, general introduction to the topic • Week 1 section of “Week 1 and 2 Readings” on Canvas (Wikipedia articles on Gregorian Chant, The Mass, Proper, Ordinary, Gothic Architecture) • Week 1 Listening Assignment (Canvas) <p>**Begin research on Letters to Pope Clement</p>	<p>Complete Syllabus Quiz by class time on Monday, Week 2</p> <p>Complete Week 1 reading and listening assignment</p> <p>Note: You are not required to respond to the weekly Listening Assignments. Try to listen to each example at least a couple of times and think about the music as it pertains to the readings and lectures.</p> <p>Submit weekly take-away, beginning of class Monday, Week 2</p>
Week 2 Middle Ages Part II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Britannia Online Encyclopedia – “Establishment of western musical traditions,” “Development of Notre Dame School” through “Monophonic Secular Song” • Week 2 section of “Week 1 and 2 Readings” on Canvas (Wikipedia articles on Organum, Medieval motets, Troubadors, Courtly Love, Guillaume de Machaut) • Week 2 Listening Assignment 	<p>Complete week’s reading and listening assignment</p> <p>Complete Week 2 Response Question and Listening Exercise by 2:30 Monday, Week 3</p> <p>Submit weekly take-away beginning of class, Monday, 3</p>
Week 3 The Renaissance Part I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Britannia Online Encyclopedia – “Establishment of western musical traditions,” “The Renaissance Period” through “Instrumental Music” • Taruskin 130-144 on early 	<p>Complete week’s reading and listening assignment</p> <p>Complete Week 2 Response Question and Listening Exercise by Monday, Week 3</p> <p>Submit weekly take-away beginning of class, Monday 4</p>

	Renaissance music from England and Northern France <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Week 3 Listening Assignment	
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Week 4 The Renaissance Part II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Britannia Online Encyclopedia – “Establishment of western musical traditions,” “Vocal music in the 16th century” through end of article • Taruskin 168-76 on Josquin • Week 4 Listening Assignment 	<p>Complete week’s reading and listening assignment</p> <p>Complete Week 3 Response Question and Listening Exercise by Monday, Week 4</p> <p>Submit weekly take-away beginning of class, Monday 5</p>
Week 5 Transition to the Baroque Era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taruskin 186-202 on Palestrina and Byrd • Schulenberg 131-149 on sacred music in Venice • Week 5 Listening Assignment • Listening Evaluation warm-up 	<p>Complete week’s reading and listening assignment</p> <p>Complete Week 4 Response Question and Listening Exercise by Monday, Week 5</p> <p>Submit weekly take-away beginning of class, Monday 6</p> <p>***Letters to Pope Clement due 11pm Friday, Week 5 – no exceptions of any kind allowed.</p>
Week 6 The Early Baroque Part I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schulenberg 40-49 and 54-73 on the transition to the Baroque, Caccini and Monteverdi’s <i>L’Orfeo</i> • Week 6 Listening Assignment 	<p>Complete week’s reading and listening assignment</p> <p>Complete Week 5 Response Question and Listening Exercise by Monday, Week 6</p> <p>Submit weekly take-away beginning of class, Monday 7</p>
Week 7 The Early Baroque Part II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schulenberg 209-217, 234-244, 284-297 on keyboard and other instrumental music of the later Baroque • Week 7 Listening Assignment 	<p>Complete week’s reading and listening assignment</p> <p>Complete Week 6 Response Question and Listening Exercise by Monday, Week 7</p> <p>Submit weekly take-away beginning of class, Monday 8</p>
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Robbins Landon and Norwich on Music in Venice • Reading: “Handel” Wikipedia page – “Introduction,” 1 – 1.3, 2 – 4, 6 and 6.1 • Week 8 Listening Assignment 	<p>Complete week’s reading and listening assignment</p> <p>Complete Week 7 Response Question and Listening Exercise by Monday, Week 8</p> <p>Submit weekly take-away beginning of class, Monday 9</p> <p>***Handel First Page Draft and Outline due 11pm Friday, Week 8 – file on Canvas</p>
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raeburn/Lam, “Johann Sebastian Bach” (“Heritage of Music”) – beginning through “Leaving Cöthen” • Week 9 Listening Assignment <p>No class 9.2 (Thanksgiving Wednesday)</p>	<p>Complete week’s reading and listening assignment</p> <p>Complete Week 8 Response Question and Listening Exercise by Monday, Week 9</p> <p>Submit weekly take-away beginning of class, Monday 10</p>
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raeburn/Lam, “Johann Sebastian Bach” (“Heritage of Music”) – Leipzig to end of the article • Week 10 Listening Assignment 	<p>Complete week’s reading and listening assignment</p> <p>Complete Week 9 Response Question and Listening Exercise by Monday, Week 10</p> <p>Submit weekly take-away 2:30pm Monday, December 7</p> <p>***Handel Report Final Draft due 11pm Friday, December 11</p>

