Topics in 20th Century Music
Syllabus Spring 2011

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Office hours: Tuesday after class

Course description: The course provides an overview of the major trends in classical music of the last 100 years in the West. Special attention will be paid to the musical culture of Central Europe and particularly the Czech lands, which will be situated within the context of broader cultural and political developments in the region. Central compositional and aesthetic issues of 20th-century music will be discussed on the basis of source texts as well as academic writings. Music, politics and nationalism, atonality and serialism, Stravinsky and the musical Paris between the wars, experimental and electronic music, the musical minimalism, and other topics will be covered. Students are supposed to gain a good aural knowledge of the music discussed.

Grading policy
Class participation/attendance: 15%
Reaction paper: 15%
Midterm paper: 20%
Final test: 15%
Final paper: 35%

Schedule of classes

Week 1
25 January – Overview of the Course; European Music of the turn of the 20th century (Mahler, Strauss, Debussy)

Week 2
1 February – Nationalism and Folklorism in Central-European Music (Smetana, Dvořák, Janáček, Bartók)

Overview:

Source readings:

Academic:

**Week 3**
8 February – **The Second Viennese School**
(Busoni, Schönberg, Berg, Webern)


Source readings:
Schönberg, Arnold. From “Composition with Twelve Tones.” In *Source Readings in Music History*, pp. 1355-1366.

**Week 4**
15 February – 22 February – **Musical Paris Between the Wars**
(Stravinsky, Satie, Cocteau, Le Six)


Source readings:

Academic:

**Week 5**
22 February – **Music and Politics**
(Brecht, Weil, Hindemith, Prokofiev, Shostakovich)

Overview: Morgan, Robert P. *Twentieth-Century Music: A History of Musical Style in Modern Europe and America*: pp. 220-250 (Chapter X: The Influence of Politics)

Source readings:


Academic:


**Week 6**

1 March – **Czech Music between the Wars, Music in Terezín**

(Martinů, Hába, Schulhoff, Kaprálová, the “Theresienstadt Composers”)  


Academic:


**Week 7**

8 March – **The International Avant-garde after WWII**

(Messiaen, Boulez, Stockhausen, Cage)


Source readings:  


**Week 8**

15 March – **Exploration of Sound and Electronic Music**

(Russo, Schaeffer, Stockhausen, Babbitt, Live Electronics, Plunderphonics)


Source readings:  


15 March -

**Week 9**
22 March -
Spring Break, no classes

**Week 10**
29 March – Composing with Timbre and Texture; Music Theatre and the Voice
(Ligeti, the “Polish School,” Spectral Music; Berio, Kagel, Goebbels etc.)

Source Readings:

**Week 11**
5 April– Czech Music after WWII
(Kabeláč, Eben, Kopelewnt, Fišer, Loudová etc.)
Overview:

**Week 12**
12 April Minimalism, Pluralism, New Simplicity
(Reich, Glass, Pärt, Górecki, Schnittke etc.)


Source readings:

Academic:

**Week 13**
19 April – Contemporary Composition, Meeting with a Czech composer
**Week 14**
26 April – Recapitulation of the course

**Week 15**
3 May – FINAL TEST

**Week 16**
3 May - Exam week
FINAL PAPERS DUE