

## **JCM: Intersections of American Sonic Practice:**

History, Aesthetics and Connections: People, Places, Times and Practices of...

“Classical,” Rock, Punk, Hip-Hop, Funk, Blues, Jazz

(emphasis: more <-----> less)

Course MA 512, Fall 2018 Dr. Peter J. Evans, instructor (978) 235-6463 (cell) pje723@gmail.com

### **Aesthetic Statement of Intent:**

The *Intersections of American Sonic Practice* classes are the academic component of the Jaxx & Contemporary Music (JCM) curriculum. Altogether they form a four-semester cycle that alternates between equal consideration of Jazz and Classical musics through historical, aesthetic and analytical lenses. In this regard, the MAM Literature & Materials cycle is academically unique; it is one of the few courses anywhere that delves into the similarities, contrasts, conflicts and relationships that make up the complex dynamism that exists among all realms of American Sonic Exploration.

Students should think of themselves as trailblazers, mapmakers — the PJE-censored “Introduction” to *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism & Schizophrenia* by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari will be a constant reference for all four semesters. Along those lines we will define and address the issues of being ‘Modern American.’

Fall semesters will proceed through the dates, details and aesthetics of the personae in questions. Maps will be made to show connections between composers, improvisers, musicians, as well as artists, celebrities, etc., almost in the manner of a soft science, as a kind of pop analysis.

Spring semesters will proceed through the scores and transcriptions of the actual music via an open-ended analytical framework that is comparative and connective in nature, à la *Sonic Design: The Nature of Sound and Music* by Robert Cogan and Pozzi Escot. Maps will be made to demonstrate designs within music and connections between composers, improvisers and musicians, more in the manner of hard science.

For success students will need:

- rigorous engagement with the course material
- expression of creative thought
- sound graduate-level scholarship and academic integrity
- dedication to this aesthetic

Though the coursework will be demanding, rigorous and sometimes obtuse, students who dedicate themselves through all four semesters will be rewarded with one of the most unique educational opportunities available to graduate students anywhere.

**Dr. Evans’ ultimate goal with these classes is** to open your ears by exposing you to “new” possibilities, and by way of example, to remind you that Musical Art, regardless of instrument or genre, always needs infusions of the *new* otherwise it is no longer an Art. Consumerism dictates that in order to sell, all music needs to “sound the same,” and this goal has been achieved--all pop music sounds the same, all classical music sounds the same, all jazz sounds the same. Dr. Evans wants you to be able to break free from academo-consumerism. Art needs less “normal” in order to grow and overcome such obstacles. The examples and composers chosen all demonstrate the same kind of thinking—no room for conservatism, no time for reactionaries. The question of whether you “like” something or not is irrelevant, and if you think an example or a style is “not music” then your mind is already closed.

Listen. Learn. Grow. Create. Take chances. Become interesting. Otherwise, why are you here?

## **Texts on Reserve at Bakalar Library:**

*American Music in the Twentieth Century* by Kyle **Gann**, ML 200.5 .G36 1997

*American Pioneers: Ives to Cage and Beyond* Alan **Rich**

*All American Music: Composition in the Late Twentieth Century* by Rockwell, John  
ML 200.5 .R6 1983.

*Edgard Varèse: Composer, Sound Sculptor, Visionary* ML 410 .V27 E325 2006

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Sept.7.**, Pre-20th Century American Composers: William Billings and Anthony Philip Heinrich,  
“Rhizome”

## **SECTION 1: Ultra-Moderns: Memos, Manifestos, Mannerisms & Methods**

**Charles Ives, Henry Cowell, Edgard Varese and Ruth Crawford Seeger**

**Sept.14**====>**Oct.5** *Read* Rich Chapters 2, 3, 4 and Gann chapters 1 and 2

**Oct.5:** Homework due: **Mapping of material from classes and readings,**

**In-Class: Short-Answer Essay, and**

**Listening Quiz (4 aural identifications of composer by style, 4 “in the style of...”)**

## **SECTION 2: Post-WWII**

**Oct.12: *Guru?*** [Gann, pp. 127-183]

John Cage, “*The American Experimental Tradition*”

**Oct.19: *Outcasts*** [read Broyles, ch.9]

Harry Partch, *Bitter Music*, Conlon Nancarrow “*Interview with Conlon Nancarrow*”,  
for next class: **Take Home Quiz/Map**

**Oct.27: *Academics?***

Milton Babbitt, “*Composer as Specialist*” George Rochberg “*The Aesthetics of Survival*”

**Nov.2: *Minimalists*** [Gann, 184-217]

LaMonte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass, *American Minimal Music*

**Nov.9:** Book Review Presentations

**Nov.16: *Maximalists***

Frank Zappa *The Real Frank Zappa Book*

**SECTION 3: ETC.....** [Gann, pp. 218 - ]

**Nov.30: ~Listening Quiz**

Dr. Evans veers through the “*Triple H's*” of the 1980s, 1990s and 20-Aughts, part 1  
—*humor? hip-hop? hardcore?*

**Dec.7: ????** Dr. Evans veers through the “*Triple H's*” of the 1980s, 1990s and 20-Aughts, part 2

**Dec.14: FINAL**

Overarching Essay or two - 70% / Chronological Map of *Since 1980* 15% (take-home)/ Other composer 15%

## **FOR SUCCESS IN THIS CLASS:**

Come to every class having prepared to engage in discussion. Bring reading materials, notes, class folder, pen/pencil and your copy of “Rhizome” from the book *A Thousand Plateaus*. Listen to composers outside of class. Students will be responsible for; in-class and take-home readings, written

and listening quizzes, creating maps and other take-home assignments, a book review and an in-class final exam. Show up to class even if you're not prepared. Come to class even if you are late. Come to class even if you have not completed reading or assignments, as to miss the assignment and the class is doubly wrong. Students will be responsible for; in-class and take-home readings, quizzes, creating maps and other take-home assignments, a book review and an in-class final exam.

**Grading Rubric:** Attendance / Participation / Consciousness/ 50%  
Quizzes / Maps / Written Assignments 20%  
Book Review presentation 10%  
FINAL 30%

**Quizzes** will be given to ensure students keep up with *Mavericks and other Traditions in American Music*. ~Listening Quizzes will ask students to identify title/composer/era as best they can with a short sentence or two that justifies their answer.

**Maps / Written Assignments** should be handed in when due. Late assignments will be accepted, though for an increasingly lesser amount of credit. Failure to hand in assignments will result in an assignment grade of '0' ('zero').

**Book Review Presentation (5 minutes)**

On November 11 each student will give a 5-minute presentation on a book written about American Music found in the Bakalar Library. ~~Each student must provide photocopies of the title page, table of contents, and the first page of the book where the author starts to state their case to the instructor. [upon request the instructor can scan/send material to the class]~~ Additionally, a 2-page report on the substance and merit of the book in question will be submitted the instructor. The report should include discussion of the types of sources used, chapters of MAM-related interest, and one or two items with direct relevance to the materials discussed in class.

**FINAL will include:** Overarching Essay or two - 70% / Chronological Map 15% (take-home)/ Other composer 15% (partial take-home) /

**'Other' Composer Portion of final**

This portion of the final requires each student to write a brief on a composer active through or since 1980 not covered in the course outline. Essays should include birth/death dates, dates and titles of important compositions, people they knew and connections they had, as well as any relation to the main composers in the course outline. Essays should also include whether a student thinks their composer is MAM worthy. Students should discuss their choice of composer prior to the final exam. Each student must choose a separate composer, first come first serve.

**Attendance Policy:**

One absence is allowed. Each missed beyond one will result in a final grade deduction of 7% No absences are allowed on dates of presentation or final examination. Extenuating circumstances will be considered, but *prior consultation with instructor is absolutely necessary*. In place of missed class time, the instructor may assign detailed reading reports, recording comparisons, essay topics, etc.

The first priority of a student is to attend all classes in a punctual manner. If you must miss a class please consult with professor at least one class in advance. You are still responsible for assignments due, and they should be given to instructor prior to your absence. Feeling unwell, waking up late, being stuck in traffic, gigs, needing more time to practice, etc., are not acceptable excuses for

absence. Absences for medical reasons require a doctor's note; absences for family-related issues require consultation with the Dean of Academic Affairs.

The instructor will adjust the semester grade according to the number of classes missed (X/13). For the 13 meetings this semester one absence is allowed without grade deductions. Each absence beyond one will result in a semester-end grade lowered by a letter.

Prior consultation with professor can yield limited exceptions.

Absence on dates of presentations or the date of the final will result in an assignment grade of '0' ('zero') that cannot be made up.

The instructor reserves the right to fail students with multiple consecutive absences.

The instructor reserves the right to fail students with an excessive number of absences.

The instructor reserves the right to un-enroll students who miss consecutive classes without notification.

**Students need to demonstrate mutual respect for others in class, despite differing levels of ability or experience.**

**Essays by Dr. Peter J. Evans SONUS ML 1.S65**

"Topological Aspects of Hildegard von Bingen's Music" Vol.36 no. 2 Spring 2016

"Ruth Crawford Seeger's *String Quartet 1931*: Four Views of Temporal, Harmonic and Timbral Non-Coincidence" Vol.33 no. 2 Spring 2013.

"Notes on a Textual Apprenticeship With Robert Cogan: An Extrapolative Variorum" Vol.31 no. 2 Spring 2011.

"A Dawning — Kentucky's Log-Cabin Composer; Anthony Philip Heinrich" Vol.28 no.1, Fall 2007

"Palindromes: Universal Phenomena" Vol.26 no.1, Fall 2005.

"*Nocturnal*: The Sound Worlds of Edgard Varèse and Anaïs Nin" Vol.24 no.2, Spring 2004.

Since this is a graduate course, undergraduates taking this class will be graded one-third of a letter-grade more leniently on assignments, for example:

grade earned	grade awarded:	
A	A	In terms of latenesses, absences and the failure to hand-in material, the undergraduate grading policy is the same as that for graduate students.
A-	A	
B+	A-	
C	C+	
etc.		

**The use of electronic communication devices is prohibited during class time. All such devices should be turned off before entering class. Students who use such devices or whose devices interrupt class will receive grade deductions for that day's work.**

**Regarding Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is critical to the school's ability to realize its educational mission, as effective teaching and learning are dependent upon the fair and equitable assessment of student achievement. Academic dishonesty is not only wrong from a moral and ethical standpoint, it also undermines the very process of education. It is a breach of trust which devalues the efforts of other students as well as instructors, distorts the institution's educational standards, threatens the school's reputation, and ultimately, calls into question the value of the degrees and diplomas it confers. Longy School of Music of Bard College expects its students to adhere to high standards of academic integrity and takes very seriously violations of these standards, regardless of whether they are committed deliberately or out of ignorance.

**Regarding Incompletes**

All coursework must be completed by the last day of the Examination Period of each semester. Students may formally petition their instructor to receive a grade of Incomplete. This grade may be recorded only when a student is unable to complete primary course requirements on time due to illness or other compelling circumstances. An Incomplete may not be given primarily to allow a student to raise his or her grade to a passing grade for the course, ensemble, or lessons in question. Incomplete work must be remedied by the end of the subsequent semester. (Spring incompletes must be remedied by the end of the subsequent fall semester.) Students may petition the instructor and the Registrar to extend the make-up period for the incomplete by one semester. An "F" will be recorded for courses remaining incomplete after one semester or after petitioned extensions have expired.

**Guidelines / Suggestions on writing for Dr.Evans** (in no particular order)

- 1) The paper must reflect original thinking on part of the student:  
**Plagiarism: Copying papers off the internet or from anywhere else is strictly prohibited and will result in a failing grade!!!**  
The citation of other's work can be used as a building block within your own paper, but cannot constitute the entirety or an abnormally-large percentage of your paper.  
Citations must be done in an academically-accepted style, see:  
MLA (parenthetical reference) **Bakalar call number LB 2369 G53 2003**  
Chicago (footnotes) **Bakalar call number Z253 C57 1969**  
Bedford Handbook **Bakalar call number PE 1408 H277 2002**  
Irvine's Writing about Music **Bakalar call number ML3797 I79 1999**
- 2) Consultation with PJE is encouraged at all times.  
Early drafts, paper or e-mail, are most appreciated and will help in the long run.
- 3) For writing issues (clarity, usage, grammar) see *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk and E.B. White, **Bakalar call number E 1408 .S8 1979**.
- 4) Avoid any vague qualifiers, be specific and direct in your choice of language.  
e.g. do not use the word 'very' in your paper, or any type of academic writing.
- 5) Provide music examples, either within the text (preferred method) or at the end of the paper.  
Clearly label all examples  
Make examples neat by using pen and ruler or computer  
Use arrows, colors, annotations to make example crystal clear to the reader
- 6) State your point and purpose clearly at the beginning of your paper, and constantly refer to your initial statements as you continue.
- 7) Proofread for spelling and grammar before submitting your paper or draft.
- 8) Specifications: **Body:** 1-inch margins on all four sides, Include page numbers in upper r-h corner.  
**Font:** Times New Roman, 12 pt, double-spaced
- 9) Wikipedia is not an acceptable bibliographic source—online sources should be used sparingly and only as a last resort.
- 10) Papers will be evaluated with the highest academic standards. Students should submit work that reflects the course methodology. Dr. Evans reserves the right to ask for re-writes or to refuse papers based on content, approach, grammar, style, etc.
- 11) Creative presentation is always appreciated, and perhaps even graded more leniently, as long as the above stipulations are met.