

MAM: Literature and Materials: 20th-Century American “Classical” “Analysis”

Course MA 513, Spring 2017

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MAM Literature and Materials Statement of Intent:

The Literature and Materials classes are the academic component of the Modern American Music (MAM) curriculum at the Longy School of Music. MAM Literature & Materials is 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.

Therefore, MAM Literature & Materials 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 mostly chronologically 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 chronologically through the scores and transcriptions of the actual music via an open-ended analytical framework that is comparative and connective in nature, a 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 in MAM Literature and Materials students will need:

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

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

Primary Texts on Reserve at Bakalar Library:

Sonic Design: The Nature of Sound and Music by Robert Cogan and Pozzi Escot, MT6.C63.S6
an open-ended, inclusive and connective approach to analysis---a true groundbreaker
New Images of Musical Sound by Robert Cogan, MT6.C63.N5, 1984.
...analysis as a mapping...

The Collected Works of Dr. Peter J. Evans found within *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” Spring 2013.

“Notes on a Textual Apprenticeship with Robert Cogan: An Extrapolative Variorum” 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.

Online Resource: www.peterjevanstheorist.com**General Workflow & Analytical Maps:**

Each week will involve at least one analytical assignment, with discussion in class. Students should do the work and be prepared to contribute to the conversation and submit materials to the instructor for informal evaluation. Students will be asked to choose among these assignments and submit their work at least twice over the course of the semester,

Students are expected to think about connections while engaged in each week’s assignment. Classroom activities, lectures, handouts, etc., will often involve map-making conjecture and article-cross-referencing. Students will be asked to participate in these types of conversations on a regular basis.

For spring semesters, it is not OK simply to say, for instance, that *Bitches Brew* is connected to Edgard Varèse, which we know historically since Teo Macero both studied with Varèse and produced for Miles, but now we must demonstrate connections through transcriptions, diagrams and a consistent use of analytical language.

Students will have two chances to do so in the manner of a formal assignment, once at the mid-term, and once at the Final. Final Projects can further develop mid-term maps. Final Projects can also include compositions and performances of ‘meta-compositions’... More details will be forthcoming as students show progress over the course of the semester...

Course Outline:)compositions and ordering subject to change(

Jan. 20 Week 1 - William Billings “Jargon” A.P. Heinrich “Avance et Retraite”

Jan. 27 Week 2 - homework sheet due in class! Transcription AND Analysis

various songs by Bad Brains from either the “Black Dots” sessions or “The Yellow Tape”

BEFORE BREAK

- Reich: *Music for Pieces of Wood*
- Cowell “The Banshee” and “Fabric”
- Ives: Psalm 24 and “Farewell to Land”
- Varèse: *Nocturnal*
- Zappa “Oh No” and **Interlude** from “St. Alfonzo’s Pancake Breakfast”

Mar. 10 Week 8 - Analytical Mid-term due,

transcription / analysis of Frank Zappa’s “Plastic People” from *Apostrophe*

Mar. 17 AND FORWARD (Mar.24 SPRING BREAK)

- Varèse: *Ionisation* or *Hyperprism*
- Crawford-Seeger: *String Quartet 1931, mvmt.4*
- Atonal/12-tone worksheet; Babbitt: *Semi-Simple Variations*
- Composing with CHANCE worksheet; Cage: *Imaginary Landscape no.5*
- Ives: *General William Booth Enters Heaven*
- Zappa: *Lumpy Gravy*

Exam Period Apr.28 - Final Presentations / Performances ????

GRADED Assignments

I) Jan. 30 - Bad Brains!!!

II) BY Feb. 24

- student analysis of 2 pieces from “BEFORE BREAK” (time limits given on hand-outs)

III) MID-TERM!!! Mar.13 Analytical Mapping of a “Plastic People” with super-brief in-class presentation. *THIS IS A MID-TERM!!!* STUDENT MUST DEMONSTRATE FULL

“MASTER’S LEVEL” EFFORT AND DETAIL IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FULL CREDIT!!!

IV) Mar. 31 - brief proposal of final ‘map/score’

VI) BY Apr. 21 - one worksheet **and** two analyses of pieces from “MAR.17 FORWARD”

VII) Apr.28 - CLASS CONCERT THAT NIGHT—WHAT!!!

VIII) May 5 - Final version of papers, etc., due in PJE mailbox by NOON

THE FINAL PROJECT HAS TWO-PARTS

- 1) Every student is responsible for composing one minute of music for the MAM L&M Ensemble concert**
- 2) Analytical Mapping of your choice of a piece of music by Ives, Cowell, Varèse, Crawford-Seeger, Cage, Nancarrow, Partch, Zappa**

Every good analysis must include discussions of...

Musical Language: scales / chords / harmonic context

Musical Time: form / phrase / speed / rhythms

Musical Space: register / contour / texture / voicing

Musical Color: instrument / dynamic / doublings / articulation / bright--dark

dissonant / consonant
fast / slow
acute / grave
dense / sparse
sound / silence
loud / soft
bright / dark

steady / changing growth / decay gradual / sudden

and **MAPPING** their progress / change / development over the course of the tune(s)

→→→→ **DESIGN / STRUCTURE / FORM**

----- **NUEME** ----- smallest initial melodic / dynamic / rhythmic / linguistic unit
(from Charles Seeger and Ruth Crawford-Seeger)

Analytical Thoughts from “Introduction” to Thousand Plateaus

“...as in all things, there are lines of articulation of segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, or acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an assemblage.” (3–4)

“Music has always sent out lines of flight, like so many transformational multiplicities,’ even overturning the very codes that structure or arborify it; that is why musical form, right down to its ruptures and proliferations, is comparable to a weed, a rhizome.” (11–12)

“Make a map, not a tracing. What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented towards an experimentation in contact with the real. It fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency The map is open an connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, ripped, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group or social formation.” (12)

Attendance Policy:

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.

Written assignments should be handed in when due, failure to do so will result in a grade of '0' ('zero'). Assignments handed in within a week will result in a grade one letter lower, work handed in after one week will be graded two letters lower.

The instructor will adjust the semester grade according to the number of classes missed. 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 8% per each absence.

Prior consultation with professor can yield limited exceptions.

Absence on dates of presentations will result in a grade of '0' ('zero') that cannot be made up.

The instructor reserves the right to un-enroll or fail students with multiple absences.

The instructor reserves the right to immediately un-enroll or fail students with multiple consecutive absences.

Attendance Policy also applies to guest lecturers.

Grading Rubric:

Attendance / Participation 30%

Assignments 25 %

Mid-Term Analysis Map 15 %

FINAL PROJECTS 30%

10% — one meaningful minute of music for the class concert

20% — Analytical Mapping of composition

Graded work handed in late will receive at least a one-letter grade deduction per week.

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

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

Regarding Academic Honesty (from the Conservatory Catalog):

Academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism and cheating, may result in automatic failure on the work in question and will be reviewed by the Conservatory Academic Council, which will make a recommendation for action to the Dean of the Conservatory. Depending on the nature and severity of the infraction, the student will be placed on Academic Probation or be recommended for Suspension or Dismissal.

Regarding Incompletes (from the Conservatory Catalog):

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. An "F" will be recorded for courses remaining incomplete after one semester or after petitioned extensions have expired.

