Proseminar in Medieval Music
(184b, Fall 2019)

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Class meets Tuesday, 9:30am-12:30pm, Seminar Rm
Office Hours: T, Th 1-2pm or email for appt. Rm 222, Slosberg

This proseminar focuses on three topics: 1) music as/and language; 2) the first ‘writing down’ of polyphonic music in the medieval West; 3) the medieval motet. Through listening and studying lots of music (and thinking about how it was made, disseminated, and recorded), and reading writings by medieval theorists and modern scholarly articles, we consider concepts central to the study of music in general, such as: the role of the composer and performer; institutional and cultural contexts for the performance and composition of music; the relationship of theory to practice; intertextuality; technological developments in the transmission of music; the art of memory; music and meaning.
Learning Outcomes

- An in-depth knowledge of the content, style, and techniques of specific medieval repertories, and the related technical vocabulary;
- Familiarity with some of the key writings of medieval music theory;
- Familiarity with some of the key musicological scholarship and trends in the subdiscipline of medieval music, including orality/literacy, the role of memory, manuscript studies, and critical editing;
- An introduction to an interdisciplinary approach to the study of music using approaches and materials from history, literature, art history, etc.

Required Work

Discussion of Weekly Readings. A major element of this class is your participation in the in-class discussion of reading and listening assignments. Each class member will have responsibility for leading the class discussion at least twice during the semester. Citations of course readings and compositions are expected to be included in your final research paper. In order to facilitate full participation in seminar discussions, you will be asked each week to submit answers to Teaching Questions (TQs) through an online form. If you are responsible for leading the class discussion you should source full scores of music examples discussed in the readings, and bring copies to class for discussion.

Participation. Attendance at seminars is required. Partial attendance is also required at the Brandeis Workshop ‘Exploring the Listener’s Experience of Late Medieval Music’ on October 29-30, and you are also required to attend the Blue Heron concert in the Berlin Chapel on October 30, 2019 at 7pm: details will discussed in class.

Final Research Paper and Presentation. 2,400 words (the word count does not include footnotes or bibliography). This is equivalent to a 20-minute paper, delivered orally. You will be expected to deliver this paper orally as a presentation in our final class. The final paper must be also be submitted as a formal research paper, proofread carefully, with correct formatting and referencing, and include any pertinent images, music examples, tables, and a bibliography. Please make an appointment to meet with me early (preferably the first week in November) to discuss your research paper topic, and to hand in paper outline, a draft of your opening paragraph that includes your thesis, your bibliography, and the specific examples you plan to discuss.
Success in this 4-credit-hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, discussion preparation, researching your final paper, etc.).

Textbook

There is one required textbook for this class: Margot Fassler’s *Music in the Medieval West: Anthology* (New York, 2014). This is available in the library on reserve and it is acceptable to scan the scores needed, but you may find it easier to purchase a copy: there are many used copies available on amazon.com. The scores in Fassler will be supplemented in class with extra scores and translations: please keep everything in one binder and bring the music scores to every class. If your knowledge of basic medieval music history is patchy, I recommend reviewing a good textbook such as Fassler, *Music in the Medieval West* (New York, 2014), or Richard Taruskin, *Music from the Earliest Notations to the Sixteenth Century*, vol. 1 of *The Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford, 2009).

Doing the readings (or how to fake it)

Grad school tip! Classes have a lot of readings. For each seminar you might be assigned between 100-200 pages of dense reading per week. If you don’t have time to read all of it in detail, you can fake it by making sure you understand the gist of it, and read at least one analysis closely.

- Articles typically begin with situating their work amongst that of other scholars—this often won’t be that interesting to you, and because it’s up first, it can discourage you. Skim through all of that. But do think about where this author situates their work in relation to others, and be on the look out for thesis statements.
- As you should see citations becoming less frequent, you’ll find more about the author’s own contributions—don’t skim *that*!
- When you get to the analysis section of the article, start reading more carefully. Look out for the analytical technique and make sure you understand how it works before proceeding.
- Always check the music examples—pictures often contain the most important information (same goes for tables and figures/illustrations).
- First skim all the analyses and understand why they’re there, and then pick one or two to read closely.
- Finally, jump to the conclusion and read that closely.

This list of tips on grad school readings is paraphrased from the excellent list included in a tweet by Megan Lavengood (@meganlavengood), August 8, 2019, 5:37 PM.
Resources

PDFs for any readings not available through JSTOR readings will be provided on Latte. Audio and video files will also be posted on Latte. I encourage you to browse the Naxos library on the Brandeis Library website and YouTube to broaden your knowledge of the medieval repertories we are studying. In addition to modern editions of medieval music, we will also look at a lot of images of the original music manuscripts, and you will gradually learn how to read their contents. The following list may be useful in this regard:

The DIAMM database is indispensable for its images of manuscripts of polyphony: http://www.diamm.ac.uk

Dominique Gatté’s website is another database of medieval music manuscript links: http://musmed.eu/

Elizabeth Eva Leach’s blog includes a number of posts that list of medieval music manuscripts, including:
- MSS sources for the 13th-century motet: https://eeleach.wordpress.com/2012/07/03/manuscript-sources-for-the-thirteenth-century-motet/
- Troubadour and Trouvère Sources: https://eeleach.wordpress.com/2012/01/17/the-wonders-of-gallica-some-troubadour-and-trouvere-sources/

Rob Wegman provides translations of several medieval theorists and important modern articles on medieval music on his academia.edu page: https://princeton.academia.edu/RobCWegman/Translations

Online versions of Latin theory texts (including edited texts and manuscript transcriptions) are available the Thesaurus Musicarum Latinarum is invaluable: http://boethius.music.indiana.edu/tml/

Twitter handles to follow for postings about medieval manuscripts:
@erik_kwakkel   @Discarding_imgs   @SexyCodicology

Finally, here are links to digital projects of mine:
- Measuring Polyphony (Digital encodings of medieval music)   http://www.measuringpolyphony.org
- Ars musicae (Digital encodings of medieval theory)   http://www.arsmusicae.org
- Ars musicae Blog   http://www.arsmusicae.org/wordpress/
Brandeis Policies

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS - Library guides.

Course Topics and Schedule

I. Music and/as Language

Week 1. Tue., Sep. 3. Introduction to the Study of Medieval Music (Chronologies, Genres, Functions, Narratives).

Emma Hornby, Medieval Liturgical Chant and Patristic Exegesis: Words and Music in the Second-Mode Tracts (Woodbridge, 2009), excerpts from chapters 2 and 3.

Bruce Holsinger, Music, Body and Desire in Medieval Culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer (Stanford, 2001), 108-122.
Week 4. Tue., Sep. 24. **Song and Expression.**

*NO CLASS Oct 1 (Brandeis Holiday)*

II. First ‘Writing Down’ of Western Polyphony

Week 5. Tue., Oct. 8. **Early polyphony**

*NO CLASS Oct 15 (Brandeis Monday)*

Week 6. Tue., Oct. 22. **Discant theory and practice.**

Week 7. Tue., Oct. 29. **Workshop: The Listener’s Experience of Medieval Music, with Blue Heron**
Readings: Pre-circulated workshop materials (to be distributed).

Week 8. Tue., Nov. 5. **Contrapunctus theory and practice.**

### III. The Medieval Motet


#### Week 12. Tue., Dec. 3. The Aesthetics of *Ars nova.*


**Week 13. Tue., Dec. 10. PAPER PRESENTATIONS.**