

Music 201

HISTORY OF THEORY I

Ideas, Myths, and Systems of Traditional Musical Discourse

Course # 41209

Tuesdays, 9:00 AM — 12:00 PM

Music Center 245

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Office Hours, Music Center 146: Mondays 12:00 - 1:45 PM, or by appointment

Course description (a work-in-progress):

Survey of systems, ideas, and theories of a range of traditional musics, with an emphasis on treatises and transcriptions of courtly musics in the Mediterranean, North Africa, Central Asia, and South Asia before 1450.

More about the Course:

This course is titled “History of Theory,” but it is more a survey than a history, and more of *systems* than of theories. Parallel to this survey of musical systems, however, is a theoretical concern: a challenge to myths and presuppositions about the development of music and an examination of how a specific cluster of agendas and ideologies—racial ideologies, civilizational and colonial ideologies—inform the chronologies we assemble in order to construct a history of composing.

Mesopotamian origins of Aristoxenus' theories just as strongly to South Asia as to Greece, and trace the impact of Byzantine interpretations of Greek modes on Turkish Maqam systems. Further east (or west?), we'll hear from four scholars of Pacific Islander music, as a way of deliberating on whom to recruit as the newest member of our composition faculty, and we'll hear from our own Dard Neuman in order to connect two last dots; or maybe we'll just imagine them connected—Indian musics converse with their pasts in Babylonian musics, and with their diasporas/futures in the Hindustani legacies of Indonesia. We'll see some disconnections too, and those will be just as interesting.

It also aims to resuscitate theory, rescue it from music theorists, by enabling the actual theorization of music. Those aims are a little big for the britches of a 10-week course, so let's return to the subtitle: Ideas, Systems, and Myths of Traditional Musical Discourse. *Ideas* are abstractions, decidedly not (yet) practices, but might orbit them; *systems* are interplays of factor and process that might, like formulae, embrace variable inputs¹; *myths* are narratives that structure beliefs. (Not

¹See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Pantheon, Knopf/Doubleday 1970, p. 15. [Translation of *Les Mots et les Choses*, Paris: Editions Galliard, 1966: “In the wonderment of this taxonomy, the thing we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fable, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking that.”]

myth in the sense of “false belief”; *no* narrative is a complete truth, but all are *made of* truths; a narrative becomes a “myth”² when it becomes the constraining and enabling framework in which we ask questions and take action.) This course experiments with ideas, systems, and myths, working toward a broader view of global antiquity. I hope to look critically at “the history of music theory” as one of many retrospective histories by which we artificially imagine the dubious coherence of our own origins and our own musics.

Learning outcomes:

1. Gain familiarity with problems in the theory and history of ‘art’ musics, or ‘learned’ musics.
2. Critically examine historical music theories as generative features of contemporary narratives and origins stories for music, and particularly for music composition and improvisation.
3. Comprehend the basics of modal pitch systems, tuning systems, and rhythm systems in a range of traditions.

Course expectations:

1. Attendance at every class is required; successful participation requires that you are here the full duration.
2. *Prepare materials to distribute* on each of the meetings when you’re among those assigned to present on weekly readings.
3. On alternating meetings (when you are not a presenter) bring questions typed or written out, with page numbers associated with passages relevant to your question.
4. Each seminarian will present about three times to the seminar in the manner described in point 2; in at least *one* of those presentations—this is your “mid-term” presentation—offer a *brief analysis or composition* related to, inspired by, or imagined around, a relevant tradition. An *analysis* would entail a detailed description of a historical composition (or composition-improvisation-system manifested in contemporary performance); a *composition* would entail about a minute of music adapting or “troubling” a traditional system or theory.
5. Your **Final analytical or compositional presentation** (in weeks 9 and 10) should build on your work described above in point 4. Include audio, text translations, and ample musical notation where appropriate, with paper copies ready for distribution to all classmates. *The final presentation* is roughly the equivalent of a 20-minute presentation you might eventually make at a conference (if scholarly) or when speaking about your music to a funding or curating organization, or seminar (if creative).
 - If scholarly, consider making about five figures or diagrams that illuminate or interrogate aspects of a recording, score, or musical practice, and connect it to one or more concepts in the course readings.

²See Nasrullah Mambrol, “Roland Barthes’ Concept of Mythologies”, in Literary Theory and Criticism, retrieved 12 Nov 2016 at <literariness.org>.

- If creative, in contrast with the scholarly approach, the creative work is the core of the submission, but consider supplementing your work with about three figures or diagrams that illuminate how your work connects to aspects of the course readings.

A brief paragraph explaining each figure, and quoting one or more of the course texts in MLA format, should be sufficient prose in either case, possibly with an additional reflection about how they fit together; your prose does *not* need to morph into a full-blown argument or essay. Doing the exercise of MLA format and quotation integrated into prose is a step which might further your own ongoing process toward a QE topic or an aspect of a dissertation prospectus.

Grades:

Bi-weekly assignments (5):	40%
In-class participation:	10%
“Mid-term” analytic or composition presentation:	20%
Final analytic or composition presentation:	30%

Course Outline:

Unit I — Beginnings; Ancient Mesopotamia, Greece, and China

January 10:

Possible topics: Introductions / Music, Language, and Violence / Observation-Theory distinction / Pythagorus

January 17:

Reading:

Rankine, Patrice. 2011. [“Black Apollo? Martin Bernal’s Black Athena... and Why Race Still Matters.”](#) In *African Athena: New Agendas*. Series: Classical Presences. London: Oxford University Press.

{ [Context / Assignment 1](#) }

Each of the three folders linked below contain **2 required readings** (linked to the assignment page above), where you’ll find a more detailed prompt), one on an ancient tuning system and another offering brief, and oblique, testimony to a contemporary culture linked to that tuning system — in brief, those systems are (1) Akkadian tablets on lyre tuning in Mesopotamia ca. 1900 BCE; (2) a large and well documented two-toned bell

orchestra given to the Marquis of Yi in 5th-c. BCE China; (3) 4th-1st-c. BCE testimony to the development of Pythagorean tuning and modal systems.

In addition, each folder contains further scholarship in archaeology and in mainstream journalism, regarding those systems. In addition to the 6 brief required readings, choose one system to explore in greater detail, and be prepared to lead question-driven discussion on the nature of our evidence into those systems and musical practices contemporary to them.

[~19th-c. BCE [Mesopotamia](#)]

Read just pp. 218 ("Tuning") - 224 of David Wulstan, "The Tuning of the Babylonian Harp." In *Iraq*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Autumn 1968), pp. 215-228.

Excerpts from A. L. Oppenheim, trans./ed., *Letters from Mesopotamia*

[5th-c. BCE [China](#)]

Excerpts of Confucius' *Analects*

von Falkenhausen, Lothar. *Suspended Music: Chime-Bells in the Culture of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993).

[4th-1st-c. BCE [Greece](#)]

Read pp 114-top of 128 of Thomas Mathisen's "[Greek Music Theory](#)". (In Christensen, ed. *Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*...)

Plato's *Timaeus* [Excerpts], and *Republic* [Book III]

Plato. [Republic](#).

In case of extra time, begin this additional reading due February 7:

Cook, Nicholas — pp. 78-85 of "[Epistemologies of Music Theory](#)". In Christensen, ed.

Cambridge History of Western Music Theory. **Read pp. 78-85 only.** You might like to scan my [notes](#) on the article before beginning.

Unit II: Indonesia & Polynesia

January 24:

Tuesday, 9:00 - 10:20 AM, rm 130 — Brian Baumbusch

The Gamelan [Chapter 10 of William Sethares' *Tuning, Timbre, Spectrum, Scale*.]

Baumbusch [Lecture notes/slides](#)

Thursday, 9:00 -10:20 AM, rm 130 — Jay Afrisando

1. Jay Afrisando, "[Music-Making in Aurally Diverse Communities](#): An Artist Statement, 2023". In John Drever and Andrew Hugill, eds., *Aural Diversity*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2022. [Book chapter, 12 minutes reading]
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jzVQzfKkPN6N89Xje4Gc-Zkvr6ii65fp/view?usp=share_link>
2. Jay Afrisando, "[Listening is Aural, Visual, and Vibrational](#): Advancing the Notions of Aural Diversity through Music Composition", forthcoming 2023 (book chapter, 23 minutes reading)
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zCkn8uUZc5v_bNAjG17eqseMy9yBJQtk/view?usp=share_link>

Questions here, preferably by Monday at 5
[Baumbusch Questions](#)

Questions here, preferably by Wednesday at 5
[Afrisando Questions](#)

January 31: Lena Netfield, Andrew Faleatua

Unit III: Classical Greece, Syria, Persia, Rome

February 7:

Topics: introduction to problems in history and theory; Plato, neo-Platonism, the harmonicists, and Aristoxenus

If you haven't already, read pp 114-top of 128 of Thomas Mathisen's "[Greek Music Theory](#)". (In Christensen, ed. *Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*...)

Reading 1: Cook, Nicholas — pp. 78-85 of "[Epistemologies of Music Theory](#)". In Christensen, ed. *Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*. **Read pp. 78-85 only.** You might like to scan my [notes](#) on the article before beginning.

February 14:

Topics: Greek theory, continued; Boethius, Al Faradi, & the transmission of Greek theory

After completing Mathisen chapter (from last week's readings and earlier), read

1- Excerpts of Nicomachus of Gerasa (c. 60 - c. 120 CE). [Manual of Harmonics](#), translated with commentary by Flora R. Levin.: read at least Ch. 3 & Commentary 3 (45-57), Ch. 11 & commentary 11 (153-169). Ch. 6 is fun.

2- pp. 259-262 of Calvin Bower's "[The Modes of Boethius](#)" (480-524 CE) in the *Journal of Musicology* Vol. 3, No. 3 (Summer, 1984), pp. 252-263.

3- Then extend the above in *one* of the following two directions:

1. OPTION ONE:

Anonymous (attr. variously to **Cleonides**, **Euclid**, or multiple late-Classical Greek authors, ca 200s BCE-200s CE): "[Division of a Monochord](#)" [annotated translation] in *Journal of Music Theory*. Vol. 19, No. 2 (Autumn, 1975), pp. 236-258 (23 pages). Consider this a post-Pythagorean text that *represents what Aristoxenus decried/criticized in the "Harmonicist" tradition.*

A good "final project" to extend from this foundation might be to return to the Mathisen in its latter sections, detailing Aristoxenean theory, and extrapolating Aristoxenus into a contemporary approach to microtonality.

2. OPTION TWO - transitioning to Medieval/Renaissance uses of Greek Modes; read excerpts of Severinus **Boëthius (480-524 CE)**, [De institutione musica](#) (Fundamentals of Music, ca. 510 CE): Book 1, chapters 2, 3, 9, 10, 11; Book 3, chapters 1, 2, 6, 7; Book 4, chapter 14. (*Total about 16 pp.*), and the rest of Bower's "[The Modes of Boethius](#)"

Additional resources:

Fournier, Michael. "[Boethius and the Consolation of the Quadrivium](#)." *Medievalia et Humanistica*, New Series, No. 34. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.

Unit IV (two weeks): Modal improvisation and monody—Bingen and Byzantium, Mughal & Hindustani India February 21:

I. Byzantine Music

1. *For context on the problem of attempting to understand chant, especially medieval chant, through a contemporary lens:*
 - i. Ivan Moody "[Assuming Identities](#)", in *Early Music* Vol. 41, No. 1 (February 2013), pp. 49-51.
2. **Byzantine Song**

- i. Dimitrios Skrekas, "[Byzantine Song in the Early Centuries: From Kantakion to the Canon](#)", in *Hymns and Hymnody, Volume 1: From Asia Minor to Western Europe*, 2019, pp. 64-80.
- ii. Diane Touliatos-Banker, "[Women Composers of Medieval Byzantine Chant](#)", in *College Music Symposium*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Spring, 1984), pp. 62-80.
- iii. LISTEN: Romanos the Melodist (late 5th-century): "[Kontakion on the Nativity](#)" (this is mentioned in the Skrekas article above: plus see more recordings below)
- iv. LISTEN: Kassia (aka Kassiana, 9th-century Constantinople): "[The Five-stringed Lute and Fivefold Lamp](#)"
 1. [Overview](#)
 2. [[Transcription](#)/Score (Western notation)]
 3. Recording: [Kammerkoret Musica](#), 2016
 4. [Further materials](#) on the "Five Stringed Lute and Fivefold Lamp"

Additional resources:

- 1- More recordings of Byzantine liturgy from the [Metropolitan Cantor Institute](#)
- 2- Oxford Music Online entry on [ekphonic notation](#) (section 3 of this article concerns Byzantine notation), and on [Byzantine Chant](#) in general (section 2 concerns ekphonetics)]

[[Substantive Questions on Byzantine Music](#)]

II. Persian and Ottoman Music Theory — extending from Aristoxenus and Plato, and forming a crucial link to Hindustani modal theory:

1. Deniz Ertan, "[Cycles and Peripheries: An Ottoman "Kitāb el-Edvār"](#)", in *Asian Music*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Winter - Spring, 2007), pp. 31-60.
2. Excerpts on rhythm (with commentary) from Al Farabi's [Kitāb al-mūsīqī al-kabīr](#) ("Grand Book on Music")
3. Seydi, *Book on Music* (ca. 1450)—In [Seydi's Book on Music: a 15th-century Turkish Discourse](#), trans. & ed. By Eugenia Popescu-Judetz (Frankfurt am Main : Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, 2004)

[[Substantive Questions on Persian and Ottoman Music Theory](#)]

Other reading:

[Overview of Al Farabi](#) (870-943) in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Excerpts of Aristoxenus' [Elementa rhythmica](#): Introduction (xxiii-liv)

Ali Anooshahr. "[Science at the court of the cosmocrat: Mughal India, 1531–56](#)". University of California /

February 28:

Topics: Mughal and Moslem impact on Hindustani Music. (Guest: Dard Neuman.)

Jairazbhoy, Nazir. [Excerpts](#) pp 3-15, 32-45 of *The Rāgs of North Indian Music: Their Structure and Evolution*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1995 [First Edition London: Faber & Faber, 1971.]

Wade, Bonnie. [Excerpts](#) of *Music in India: The Classical Traditions* New York: Prentice-Hall, 1979; reprinted Riverdale/Simon and Schuster, 1987; second edition, Manohar, 1997.

LISTEN: [Shujaat Khan](#) (sitar) and Partho Saraty (Sarod)
[... [fourteen more examples](#)]

[[Jairazbhoy & Wade \(Substantive Questions\)](#)]

Additional reading:

Bhatkhande, Visnu Narayan. 1910. [1930-1931]. *A Comparative Study of Some of the Leading Music Systems of the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries*. Bombay: Bhalchandra Sitaram Sukthankar. Undated reprint (post-1940). [Includes discussion of Sanskrit treatises. Originally published Lucknow: Sangeef, 1910.]

March 7:

Four “in-progress” project discussions - please see email Feb. 24

I will update this space with readings specific to your presentation plans

FOR OHAL'S PRESENTATION:

Reading: (1) **The [Origin and Power of Music According to the 11th-Century Islamic Philosopher Ibn Sīnā](#)** | (2) **[SING ME TO SLEEP: ŞAFĪ AL-DĪN AL-URMAWĪ, HÜLEGÜ, AND THE POWER OF MUSIC](#)**

Listening: Halim El Dabh - [Leiyla and the Poet](#) | Viewing: Eames - [Power of Tens](#)

Hildegard, *Ordo Virtutum*: (video info includes credits, link to text and translation, link to score)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnYu0Wjsuog>

Optional additional reading

1. Lee-Suan Chong. "Tibetan Buddhist Vocal Music: [Analysis of the Phet in Chod Dbyangs](#)" in *Asian Music*, WINTER/SPRING 2011, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 54-84.
 2. Meier, Bernhard, and Geoffrey Chew. "[Rhetorical Aspects of the Renaissance Modes](#)." In the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 115, No. 2 (1990), pp. 182-190.
 3. Philippe Canguilhem, "[Singing Upon The Book According to Vicente Lusitano](#)." In *Early Music History* Vol. 30 (2011), pp. 55-103.
 4. Excerpts from Zarlino, Gioseffo, [Istitutioni Harmoniche](#) ... (1558)
- ... or see me if you need further options to help frame your project.

Synthesis and Epilogue

March 14:

Judd, Cristle Collins — "[The Dialogue of Past and Present](#): Approaches to Historical Music Theory". In *Intégral*, Vol. 14/15 (2000/2001), pp. 56-63.

Return to one or more of the discourses in weeks 1-8, reflecting on their relationships to either the Foucaultian epistemes or the Dahlhaus framework, in Cook, Nicholas — pp. 78-85 of "[Epistemologies of Music Theory](#)". In Christensen, ed. *Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, or in Judd's reflection ("Dialogue of..." p 61) on how the word *dialogue*, in academic discourse, might be "misconstrued," placing a "false sense of mutuality over the enterprise and suggest that a divider between two artificial worlds of past and present is easily or arbitrarily defined and somehow neutral." Judd argues that dialogue:

"offers... a point of mediation (of which our ownership is beyond dispute) that shifts as various historical and theoretical perspectives are encountered and examined, highlighting the imaginative background against which dialogic meaning is configured."

What potential does that claim open up in your engagement of one or more of our course practices?

FINAL — Wednesday, March 22, 1-4 PM

Music Center 245. Final Presentations + treats.

OTHER INFORMATION:

Academic Integrity and Honesty:

Be careful to distinguish borrowed ideas and language from your own ideas and language. Plagiarism is the misuse of others' material, representing someone else's thoughts or observations as your own. We spend our time in class entering an ongoing intellectual conversation. When you write or speak, you join this conversation. So when you use ideas that you learn from others, you need to be sure you honor the ideas and where they come from by telling us about your sources. We

expect students to do their own work, and to seek credit only for work they themselves have researched and created. Your development requires this. If you read ideas that are interesting to you, make sure we know where you found them: use quotation marks, use footnotes, and use parentheses. This goes for articles, books, web sources, interviews you conduct, and any other features of your expression in this course. Anyone who attempts to take credit for the work of others, or tries to use work that is not theirs to bolster their evaluation, will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include failing the class and/or a notation on your academic record. In accordance with the [academic integrity policy](#) of the UCSC Graduate Division, very serious violations, or repeated findings of academic dishonesty may lead to suspension or expulsion. When in doubt, ask.

Students with Learning Differences:

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a learning difference, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to your core teacher, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. Contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089, or by email at drc@ucsc.edu for more information.