Special Problems: 20th-Century Tonality (6900)

David Heetderks
2 credits
Meeting time and location by appointment

Goals
By the end of the semester, we will have a better understanding of contemporary and historical analytical approaches to 20th-century tonal music. We will study this topic through weekly readings, written responses, and discussions. The readings will consist of observations from composers on their own music, historically important theoretical articles, and new analytical approaches to the repertory.

Expectations
Each week, the student will have an assigned reading and a weekly meeting on a date and time to be determined. One day before the meeting, the student will give a response to each reading that consists of the following:

For articles:
- A 1-paragraph summary of the article's primary argument. What problem or issue does it address, and what solution does it propose?
- 1–2 paragraphs explaining the argument in greater detail, either through unpacking its ideas or through showing how the argument works in a particular analytical example.
- 1 paragraph of questions. The questions can deal with areas that you found unclear or unconvincing, or they can deal with other pieces that you think the article might illuminate in interesting ways.

For book excerpts:
- A 1-paragraph summary of the book's primary argument. What problem or issue does it address, and what solution does it propose?
- 1–2 paragraphs explaining each chapter greater detail, either through unpacking its ideas or through showing how the argument works in a particular analytical example.
- 1 paragraph of questions. The questions can deal with areas that you found unclear or unconvincing, or they can deal with other pieces that you think the book might illuminate in interesting ways.

During the final two weeks, we will discuss pieces or issues related to the articles that came up over the previous semester.

Assessment
The student will be assessed on the article summaries and weekly discussions.
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics and Readings</th>
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| 1 (Aug 24–29) | **Perceptual approach to centricity:**  
Stanley Kleppinger, “Reconsidering Pitch Centricity”                                                                                                        |
| 2 (Aug 31–Sep 4) | **20th-Century Composers on Tonality:**  
Anton Webern, “The Path to New Music”  
Aaron Copland, "On A-Tonal Music" (review of Rene Leibowitz)  
Bela Bartók, "The Problem of New Music"  
Francis Poulenc, "In Praise of Banality"                                                                 |
| 3 (Sep 8–11) | **Octatonicism and Centricity:**  
Arthur Berger, "Problems of Pitch Organization in Stravinsky"                                                                                             |
| 4 (Sep 14–18) | **Is Prolongation Possible? What is Prolongation, Anyway?**  
Joseph Straus, “The Problem of Prolongation in Post-Tonal Music”  
Michael Buchler, “Ornamentation and Gesture in Atonal Music”                                                                                       |
| 5 (Sep 21–25) | **The tonal axis:**  
Joseph Straus, “Stravinsky’s Tonal Axis”  
Stephen Brown, “Axis Tonality and Submediant in the Music of Shostakovich”                                                                                |
| 6 (Sep 28–Oct 2) | **Hindemith on Composition:**  
Paul Hindemith, *Craft of Musical Composition*, Book 1, Chapters 1–3                                                                                     |
| 7 (Oct 5–9) | **More Hindemith on Composition:**  
Paul Hindemith, *Craft of Musical Composition*, Chapters 4–6                                                                                               |
| 8 (Oct 12–16) | **Form in Hindemith:**  
| 9 (Oct 19–23) | **Harmonic function:**  
Daniel Harrison, *Harmonic Function in Chromatic Music*, Chapters 1–3                                                                                   |
| 10 (Oct 26–30) | **Function and motivic repetition:**  
Deborah Rifkin, “A Theory of Motives in Prokofiev’s Music”                                                                                                        |
| 11 (Nov 2–6) | **Function and fluctuation:**  
Daniel Harrison, *Pieces of Tradition*, Chapters 1–3                                                                                                      |
| 12 (Nov 9–13) | **The scalar tradition:**  
| 13 (Nov 16–20) | free discussion                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 14 (Nov 23–27) | Thanksgiving Break                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 15 (Nov 30–Dec 3) | free discussion                                                                                                                                                                                                 |