



## SUNY-GENESEO

### Music 331, section 01 The Piano and the Avant-Garde

Fall Session, 2016  
Tuesday/Thursday-1:00 pm-2:15 pm  
Brodie Hall, Room 208

Dr. Brooke McCorkle—[mccorkle@geneseo.edu](mailto:mccorkle@geneseo.edu)  
Office: Brodie Hall, 120  
Office Hours: Wednesday 12-2 pm or by appointment

#### **Required Texts:**

*The Avant-Garde: A Very Short Introduction*, David Cottington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

*Essays Before a Sonata*, Charles Ives

Additional reading materials posted to the MyCourses site.

#### **Course Description:**

The piano is a mechanical instrument loaded with socio-cultural baggage. It was the primary instrument of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven. In the nineteenth century, pianos populated many a Western drawing room, with many young women hoping to turn their skills at the keyboard into a marital selling point. The idea of keyboard performance as both cultural capital and means of musical expression extended well into the twentieth century. This course will explore composers' and musicians' engagement with the instrument as metaphoric medium through the lens of avant-gardism. In this class, students will read and respond to academic texts, analyze twentieth-century keyboard works, and complete a final project. Through these various approaches students will gain a working knowledge of the history of the piano and its major literature, the avant-garde as a cultural movement, and musical challenges to instrumental hegemony. An ability to read music is required.

#### **Structure:**

##### **Reading and Listening**

Students will complete reading and listening assignments in preparation for each class—this means doing the reading and listening BEFORE the class in which they are discussed. The assignments are listed in the schedule below, under the date on which they are due. The listening examples are available on the mycourses site under course documents. You will also read several articles from Grove Music Online, which was recently acquired by the Milne Library. You will become familiar with this resource and use it both in your weekly work and final projects. Reading the assigned excerpt is critical to understanding issues on piano and the avant-garde— we will be discussing the readings on a regular basis and preparation is essential to lively talk.

### **Group Discussion**

We will regularly devote a class period for group discussion on the music as well as relevant article. Each student must lead one discussion. In order to do so effectively, students are required to circulate a list of 4-6 questions regarding the assigned article and music AT LEAST 24 hours prior to the class.

### **Take-Home Midterm Analysis**

In lieu of a mid-term exam, students are assigned a take-home essay project in which they will analyze a piece work and discuss how it exemplifies the theories and history of the avant-garde. Drawings and other images may be included. The essay should be approximately 4 double-spaced pages not including images.

### **Project, Abstract, and Annotated Bibliography:**

In lieu of a final exam, students will submit a final project in which they generate a seminar paper or creative project. The final project provides each of you with a chance to investigate more closely aspects of the avant-garde that interest you. Let me suggest five general types of projects you here:

1. *A reception history:* This project would focus on a performance of the work and its relationship to the time and place in which it was created and performed.
2. *An analytical study:* This project would focus on a given work and draws on theory, philosophy, etc. in order to analyze musical components.
3. *A biographical study:* This project would focus on a famous avant-garde composer, performer, or patron and discuss how they contributed to the movement.
4. *A comparative study:* This project would compare and contrast two different works that have something in common. This shared trait could be: the same composer, the same time period, the same patron, or perhaps both works include quotations from the same piece.
5. *A creative project:* This project would focus on a creative work that engages with the concept of the piano in avant-gardism in a significant manner. Some ideas for this include editing a silent film to music from a given work, a performance art work, or composing your own piece. If you choose this project, you must also write a 300-500 word essay explaining its relevance to the course topic.

I encourage you to be very creative in your choices and welcome any ideas on approaches and topics. Whatever type of project you choose to pursue, you should begin to formulate your ideas for the final project during the first two to three weeks of the semester. I will be interested to hear all your ideas and will be available to assist you in any way that I can. You will be working on this project throughout the semester. On **October 18<sup>th</sup>** a formal abstract outlining the project (250-300 words) is due. Final approval of your project is required. If any of you choose to write a paper that I have not approved, you will receive a failing grade for that portion of the course. On **November 17<sup>th</sup>** you must submit an annotated bibliography of at least four sources that you will draw on for the final project. **One of the sources MUST be an article from Grove Music Online.** Final papers should be approximately 10 pages in length. I am happy to read over any rough drafts prior to submission. During the last week of class you will present these projects to the class.

### **Attendance and Participation**

Attendance and participation in class is integral to the learning experience of this course. We will engage in several class discussions. Except in cases of serious illness or emergencies, students missing more than four classes will have their grade lowered. \*\*\*\*\***Laptop and cell phone use is not permitted during class.**

### **Extension Policy**

Except in cases of serious illness or emergencies, extensions will not be granted.

### **Plagiarism Policy**

Suspected cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and will result in failure of the assignment in question.

### **Accommodation**

SUNY Geneseo will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented physical, emotional, or cognitive disabilities. Accommodations will be made for medical conditions related to pregnancy or parenting. Students should contact Dean Buggie-Hunt in the Office of Disability Services ([tbuggieh@geneseo.edu](mailto:tbuggieh@geneseo.edu) or [585-245-5112](tel:585-245-5112)) and their faculty to discuss needed accommodations as early as possible in the semester.

### **Grading**

Class Participation	10%
Leading Group Discussion	15%
Mid-Term Analysis	25%
Proposal for Final Project	15%
Bibliography for Final Project	10%
Final Project	25%

**Course Scale:** 93.5-100 A; 89.5-93.4 A-; 86.5-89.4 B+; 83.5-86.4 B; 79.5-83.4 B-; etc.

**NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT A DOCTOR'S NOTE!**

## **Course Schedule**

### **Course Introduction**

8.30: What is Avant-Gardism?

9.1: Theories of Avant-Gardism

Reading: *A Very Short Introduction*, Introduction; Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 1-15

9.6: Music and the Avant-Garde

Reading: Mike Sell, "Resisting the Question, 'What is an Avant-Garde'"  
Grove Music Online, "The Piano;" "Avant-Garde"

### **Section I: Why the Piano? A History**

9.8: The Piano's Shadow

Reading: Richard Taruskin, *Oxford History of Western Music: Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, "C-minor Moods"  
Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 42-59  
Listening: Beethoven, Piano Sonata No. 8

9.13: Piano and Gender

Reading: Jeffrey Kallberg, "The Harmony of the Tea Table: Gender and Ideology in the Piano Nocturne"  
Listening: Chopin, Nocturne in G minor  
Wieck, *Notturmo* from *Soireés Musicales*, op. 6  
Hensel, *Notturmo* in G minor

9.15: Piano and Social Class

Reading: Richard Leppert, "Four Hands, Three Hearts: A Commentary"

9.20: **Section II: Origins of the Avant-Garde**

The Early Avant-Garde  
Reading: *A Very Short Introduction*, Ch. 1

9.22: Scriabin

Reading: Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Music in the Early Twentieth Century, pp. 197-227  
Listening: *Vers la flamme*

9.27: Paris and Avant-Gardism at the Turn of the Century

9.29: Erik Satie

Reading: Grove Music Online, "Satie, Erik"

Allan M. Gillmore, "Erik Satie and the Concept of the Avant-Garde"

Listening: *Gymnopedies*, No. 1; *Desiccated Embryos*

10.4: Satie's Vexations

Reading: Steven M. Whiting, "Serious Immobilities: Musings on Satie's 'Vexations'"

Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Music in the Early Twentieth Century, pp. 561-78

Listening: Excerpt from *Vexations*

10.6: Avant-Garde or Modern?

Reading: *A Very Short Introduction*, Chapter 2; Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Music in the Early Twentieth Century, pp. 303-325

Listening: Arnold Schoenberg, *Sechs kleine Klavierstücke*, Op. 19, no. 1

10.11: **NO CLASS-FALL BREAK**

10.13: Avant-Garde or Kitsch?

Reading: *A Very Short Introduction*, Chapter 3

Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch"

T.W. Adorno, "Kitsch"

10.18: **Final Project Proposal DUE**

Charles Ives

Reading: *Essays Before a Sonata*

Listening: The Concord Sonata

10.20: Henry Cowell

Reading: Cowell, "New Musical Resources"

Listening: *The Banshee*

10.25: Conlon Nancarrow

Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 130-147

Listening: *Study #8 for Player Piano*

10.27 John Cage

Reading: Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Music in the Late Twentieth Century, pp. 55-76

11.1: Cage and the Piano

Reading: Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Music in the Late Twentieth Century, pp. 76-98

Listening: *Suite for Toy Piano*

11.3: **Library Research Consultation with Tracy Paradis-Meet at Milne**

11.8: Morton Feldman

Reading: Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Music in the Late Twentieth Century, pp.98-101

Listening: *Piece for Four Pianos*

11.10: Avant-Garde and Social Revolutions

Reading: *A Very Short Introduction*, Chapter 4

Grove Music Online, "Fluxus"

11.15: Annea Lockwood

Reading: Michael Lee, "Annea Lockwood's Burning Piano, Scuffed Stones, and Noble Snare: Feminist Politics and Sound Sources in Music"

Listening: *Burning Piano*

11.17: **Bibliography for Final Project Due**

Piano and the Jazz Avant-Garde

Reading: Robin D.G. Kelley, "New Monastery: Monk and the Jazz Avant-Garde"

Listening: Thelonius Monk, TBD

11.22: Minimalism: A Popular Avant-Garde?

Reading: Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Music in the Late Twentieth Century, pp. 351-378

Listening: Steve Reich, *Piano Phase*

John Adams, *Phrygian Gates*

11.24: **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

11.29: Brenda Hutchinson

Reading: TBD

Listening: Excerpt from "How Do You Get to Carnegie Hall?"

12.1: Is the Avant-Garde Dead?

Reading: Peter Bürger, "Avant-Garde and Neo-Avant-Garde: An Attempt to Answer Certain Critics of *Theory of the Avant-Garde*"

Viewing: Watch *Ludwig Van* (Kagel, 1969)

12.6: Art Intersection: In-class discussion of *Ludwig Van* (Kagel, 1969)

12.8: Presentation of Final Projects

12.20: **FINAL PROJECTS DUE BY NOON**

### ***Student Resources***

#### **Grove Music Online**

Oxford Music Online is available to students via the Milne library fine arts homepage. It offers combined access to the Encyclopedia of Popular Music, the Oxford Dictionary of Music, the Oxford Companion to Music, and Grove Music Online. Grove Music is an especially valuable resource, offering concise and reliable information on all aspects of the music covered in this course.

**The Writing Center:** [http://www.geneseo.edu/english/writing\\_center](http://www.geneseo.edu/english/writing_center)

**Library Resources:** <http://www.geneseo.edu/library>; <http://libguides.geneseo.edu/filmstudies>; <http://libguides.geneseo.edu/c.php?g=67383&p=435305>

#### **Library Research Help:**

If you need assistance finding information for this assignment, Milne Librarians may be able to help. You can speak with the reference librarian on duty between 10am and closing time most days (ask for help at the service desk) or chat with a librarian online by clicking the "Chat is online" button on the library website (<http://www.geneseo.edu/library>).

You can also contact Milne Library's Fine & Performing Librarian, Tracy Paradis, by emailing her directly ([paradis@geneseo.edu](mailto:paradis@geneseo.edu)) or requesting an in-person meeting (<http://intranetlib.geneseo.edu/DataPortal/Requests/Consultation.aspx> ).

**Kanopy Streaming Services provided through Milne Library offer access to several films, including the Criterion Collection**

**Music Streaming**

SUNY Geneseo subscribes to Naxos streaming audio services, which can be accessed from the music library homepage. Students can also browse Youtube, Spotify, etc. for course-related repertoire.