

Point Loma Nazarene University
Dr. Bill Clemmons
SP2017
Post Tonal Theory – MUT410

Syllabus for MUT410 – Post Tonal Theory

Course Description

Our course this semester is devoted to the music of the twentieth century and beyond. We will review a bit by looking at some music from the end of the nineteenth century, and the implications contained in that music. We then move through the music of several composers who have greatly influenced our views about music and music making. We end by looking at some current trends in art music of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

Texts and accompanying materials

We will not always use a text, since most of what we do this semester involves listening to and analyzing music. However, for at least half of the semester we will refer to the ideas found in a great little text:

Straus, Joseph. *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall.
First ed., 1990. 3^d ed., 2004. 4th ed., 2016.

In addition, I highly recommend picking up a copy of:

University of Chicago Press. *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Chicago: Chicago Univ.
Press. Several editions. Current edition is the 15th. 2003.

Or, its smaller cousin:

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. Chicago:
Univ. of Chicago Press. Curr ed., 6th. 1996.

Both of these are available on abebooks.com for only a few dollars. Please do not go out and retail a \$100 copy! They are also available in the reference section of our library and circulating copies are on the shelves. You may be able to find an earlier edition of the Straus text. However, please do not purchase the first edition. There were substantial changes made between the first and second editions.

Class Times

Our class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays 830 to 945a. We have a lot to cover so please be on time and ready to learn.

Final Exam

There will be a written final for this class in addition to the final project. The final is scheduled for Thursday, 4 December at 7:30 AM. Please check your schedule and make your travel arrangements now as I will not make changes to the schedule after March 1.

In addition to the final exam there is a final presentation and a paper due.

Course Objectives – What I Hope to Accomplish

This semester we will cover:

- Impressionism, modality, and Debussy's contributions
- Expanded tonality in the music of Stravinsky and Bartok
- Serial, or 12-tone music in the works of the second Viennese school
- The analysis of atonal music through the eyes of pitch-class set theory
- Composing with electronic media
- More recent trends in the composition of art music
- Improvisation as a means of exploring a variety of these items

Learning Outcomes – What I Expect you to Accomplish

The material in this course forms part of the Program Outcomes for the PLNU Department of Music under the heading of "essential competencies in musicianship skills." I am going to assess the growth of your musicianship skills through a number of activities in and out of class, but a few of these assignments will be "signature assignments," which are items that will form a part of your portfolio.

- You will demonstrate your mastery of the material in the class by writing four papers. The papers will be of increasing length and complexity. The first paper will be closely supervised. The next two less so.
- The final paper will present an original analysis of a composition from this past century that reflects a post-tonal approach. You will choose a composition within your performance area. You will analyze the piece throughout the semester, perform it in class at the end of the semester, then present your work as a written analysis for the final paper.
- You will complete one annotated bibliography of a composition by
 - generating a research list from RILM,
 - working with your colleagues to read the literature, then create abstracts of the articles and books.
- You will compose one soundtrack to a short film clip that reflects an advanced practice.

Grading and Evaluation

We will be involved in a series of projects and exercises which will have the following weight:

Unit Tests (3)	25%
Unit Papers (4)	25%
Compositions	15%
Homework	10%
The final paper, analysis and performance	25%

We will not have a great deal in the way of regular homework assignments, usually we will listen to music, work through some ideas, all of which will lead to an analytical paper. The papers are graded and corrected until done.

Unit Tests and Listening Lists

There is a good deal of listening involved with this class (we will have listened to well over two hundred compositions by semester's end!) and the listening will regularly appear as part of the testing. All of the listening has been posted on the course website accessible through Canvas, generally as Youtube links.

The Final Project

The final project is a major part of the final grade and will be graded more strictly than any other assignment. You are asked to speak with your applied teacher at the beginning of the semester about adding a composition that is firmly in the atonal repertory. That is, a piece of twentieth-century music that does not work with tonal materials. You should be working on this piece with your teacher during the semester, we will work on creating an analysis of the work in our class. At the end of the semester you will perform for the class, present an analysis of the work to the class, then write up the analysis as a final paper.

Please consult with me about the music that you will be working on. I will need to know what piece it is by the second week of the semester. Music by such composers as Bernstein, Copland, and Barber may, or may not be suitable, in spite of the fact that they were written in the twentieth century. You must get my approval for all repertory. It should be a recital-level composition that is actively studied during the course of the semester, and performed during the last week of the course.

The assignment consists of a performance of your piece in class, including a small presentation about the piece, then a full analysis of the piece submitted as the final paper.

Compositions and the Final Composition

During the semester there will be several compositions assigned which are prepared and performed in class. These will arise directly out of our class discussions and analyses. There will also be a single composition that will be due and performed at the end of the semester. As with the papers, it is expected that the composition submitted, corrected, and resubmitted. The composition should be in a recognizable form, and should be about 3 minutes in length. It should be firmly in the atonal repertory and be scored using extended instrumental and compositional practices.

The Section Papers

There are six different sections that are covered during the course of the semester. The sections are:

- Debussy and Impressionism
- Stravinsky
- “Free” Atonality and Set Theory
- Serialism and the Second Viennese School
- Technology and Electro-Acoustic Compositions
- Current Trends

For four of these sections we will complete papers containing an analysis of a composition. Learning to write clearly and effectively about our field is critically important to us as a branch of the humanities. During the course of the semester we will not only study musical ideas that have become important during the last century, but will also learn how to communicate these ideas in prose. You will receive a great deal of help on the first papers, then receive progressively less help as the semester progresses. I expect that you will purchase or consult a copy of the style manual listed at the front of the syllabus.

Academic Accommodations

All students are expected to meet the standards for this course as set by the instructor. However, students with learning disabilities who may need accommodations should discuss options with the Academic Support Center during the first two weeks of class. The ASC will contact professors with suggested classroom needs and accommodations. Approved documentation must be on file in the ASC prior to the start of the semester.

FERPA Policy

In compliance with federal law, neither PLNU student ID nor social security number should be used in publically posted grades or returned sets of assignments without student written permission. This class will meet the federal requirements by (each

faculty member choose one strategy to use: distributing all grades and papers individually; requesting and filing written student permission; or assigning each student a unique class ID number not identifiable on the alphabetic roster.). Also in compliance with FERPA, you will be the only person given information about your progress in this class unless you have designated others to receive it in the “Information Release” section of the student portal. See Policy Statements in the undergrad student catalog.

Grading Scale

The grading scale for this class is liberal and as follows:

100–93	A
92–90	A-
89–87	B+
86–83	B
82–80	B-
79–77	C+
76–73	C
72–70	C-
69–67	D+
66–63	D
62–60	D-
59–0	F

Office Hours

I maintain an open office policy, meaning, if my door is open you are always welcome to walk in and chat. Generally, I tend to leave about 300p.

Bibliography

Cumulative bibliographies are presented with each section that we cover.