

MTHC 789: Analyzing Modern Rock Music Syllabus—Spring 2014

Instructor Dr. Brad Osborn (Assistant Professor of Music Theory)
Meetings TR, 11:00-12:15, Murphy 123
Office 332 Murphy
Hours Tuesday and Thursday 9:00–10:00, or by email-scheduled appointment
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DESCRIPTION: This seminar will address the compositional complexities of modern rock music (defined broadly as rock music released in or after 1990), with a secondary focus on *experimental* rock (e.g., Björk, Radiohead, Dirty Projectors) rather than Top-40 artists. Four primary units of the class will address 1) song form; 2) rhythm and meter; 3) harmony and voice-leading; and 4) timbre in this genre. Students will have the opportunity to transcribe and analyze these elements from recorded music, will read a great deal of scholarly work written about this music, and will give a presentation and write a final paper analyzing music of their choice from this genre.

ATTENDANCE: As per the 2013–14 SOM Handbook, absences in excess of the number of credit hours in the course (3) may result in the student being withdrawn from the course by the Dean.

ASSIGNMENTS: Bi-weekly readings, transcriptions, and analyses.

GRADING:

10% Weekly Assignments/Preparation/Discussion Participation
40% Expert Presentations
50% Final project (presentation and short paper)

SCALE:			94-100	A	90-93	A-
	88-89	B+	82-87	B	80-81	B-
	78-79	C+	72-77	C	70-71	C-
	68-69	D+	62-67	D	60-61	D-
			0-59	F		

WITHDRAWAL POLICY: Students may withdraw from this course without penalty during the first drop period, which ends on **February 10**. When withdrawing during the second drop period (**February 11–April 21**), “a student seeking to withdraw from a course must first obtain a drop form signed by the instructor...the instructor must mark the course “W.” **The last day to drop a class is April 21, 2014.**

DISABILITY STATEMENT The Academic Achievement and Access Center (AAAC) coordinates academic accommodations and services for all eligible KU students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted the AAAC, please do so as soon as possible. They are located in 22 Strong Hall and can be reached at 785-864-4064 (V/TTY). Information about their services can be found at <http://www.disability.ku.edu>. Please contact me privately in regard to your needs in this course.

TENTATIVE SEMESTER SCHEDULE (check Bb for accurate schedule/dates):
 Each unit will comprise two class periods. You'll generally be given a shorter first reading preparation for Thursday (e.g., 1/30), then given until the following Tuesday (e.g., 2/4) to complete a second reading, as well as an analysis project that builds upon one or both readings.

Week	Topics	Readings
1–2 (1/21,23,28)	Introductions	Walser 2003
2–3 (1/30,2/4)	Harmony I	Everett 2004, 2007
3–4 (2/6,2/11)	Form I	Summach 2011, Doll 2011
4–5 (2/13,18)	Rhythm I	London 2004 [Part I], London 2004 [Part II]
5–6 (2/25)	Timbre I	Blake 2012
6–7 (2/27,3/4)	Harmony II	Nobile 2011, Burns 2007
7–8 (3/6,11)	Form II	Spicer 2004, Osborn 2013
8–10 (3/13,25)	Rhythm II	Taylor 2011, Osborn 2014
SPRING BREAK (3/17–21)		
10–11(3/27,4/1)	Timbre II	Clarke 1999, Moore 2012
11–13 (4/3,8,10,15)	Harmony III	TBA, Capuzzo 2004, TBA, Schultz 2012
13–14(4/17,22)	Form III	Capuzzo 2009, Osborn 2011
14–15(4/24,29)	Rhythm III	Pieslak 2007, Osborn 2010
15 (5/1)	Timbre III	Leydon 2012
16 (5/6,5/8)	Student Presentations	

Thurs, 2/20: I'm away at UMKC as invited colloquium presenter
Thursday 4/3: Dr. David Thurmaier (Associate Professor of Music Theory, UMKC) visits
Week 12 (4/7–4/11) I'm presenting at Sonic Signatures Symposium, Aalborg, Denmark

Bibliography

- Blake, David. 2012. "Timbre as Differentiation in Indie Music." *Music Theory Online* 18, no. 2.
- Burns, Lori. 2007. "Analytical Methodologies for Rock Music: Harmonic and Voice-Leading Strategies in Tori Amos's "Crucify." In *Expression in Pop-Rock Music*, edited by Walter Everett, 213–246. New York: Routledge Press.
- Capuzzo, Guy. 2004. "Neo-Riemannian Theory and the Analysis of Pop-Rock Music." *Music Theory Spectrum* 26, no. 2: 177–199
- . 2009. "Sectional Tonality and Sectional Centricity in Rock Music." *Music Theory Spectrum* 31, no. 1: 157–174.
- Clarke, Eric. 1999. "Subject-Position and the Specification of Invariants in Music by Frank Zappa and P.J. Harvey." *Music Analysis* 18, no. 3: 347–374 [skip Zappa pp. 354–362]
- Doll, Christopher. 2011. "Rockin' Out: Expressive Modulation in Verse- Chorus Form." *Music Theory Online* 17, no. 3.
- Everett, Walter. 2004. "Making Sense of Rock's Tonal Systems." *Music Theory Online* 10, no. 4
- . 2007. "Pitch Down the Middle." In *Expression in Pop-Rock Music*, edited by Walter Everett, 111–174. New York: Routledge Press.
- London, Justin. 2004. *Hearing in Time: Psychological Aspects of Musical Meter*. New York : Oxford University Press. [PART I=pp. 3–6, 27–38; PART II=pp. 60–78, 100–115]
- Leydon, Rebecca. 2012. "Clean as a Whistle: Timbral Trajectories and the Modern Musical Sublime." *Music Theory Online* 18, no. 2.
- Moore, Allan. 2012. *Song Means: Analysing and Interpreting Recorded Popular Song*. Ashgate. [Read only Chapter Two: "Shape," ~pp. 20–48]
- Nobile, Drew, 2011: 'Form and Voice-Leading in Early Beatles Songs', *Music Theory Online*, 17, no. 3.
- Osborn, Brad. 2010. "Beats that Commute: Algebraic and Kinesthetic Models for Math Rock Grooves." *Gamut* 3, no. 1.

- . 2011. “Understanding Through-Composition in Post-Rock, Math-Metal, and Other Post-Millennial Rock Genres.” *Music Theory Online* 17, no. 3.
- . 2013. ‘Terminally Climactic Forms in Recent Rock Music’, *Music Theory Spectrum*, 35, no. 1: 23–47.
- . 2014. “*Kid Algebra*: Euclidean and Maximally Even Rhythms in Radiohead.” *Perspectives of New Music* (in press).
- Pieslak, Jon. 2007. “Re-casting Metal: Rhythm and Meter in the Music of Meshuggah.” *Music Theory Spectrum* 29, no. 2: 219–245.
- Schultz, Robert. 2012. “Tonal Pairing and the Relative-Key Paradox in the Music of Elliott Smith.” *Music Theory Online* 18, no. 4.
- Spicer, Mark. 2004. “(Ac)cumulative Form in Pop-Rock Music.” *twentieth-century music* 1: 29–64.
- Summach, Jason. 2011. “The Structure, Function, and Genesis of the Prechorus.” *Music Theory Online* 17, no. 3.
- Taylor, Stephen. 2011. “Rhythm Necklace and Hemiola: Hidden Meter in Radiohead, Björk, and the *Aka*.” [Unpublished manuscript—only read pp. 1–21].
- Walser, Robert. 2003. “Popular Music Analysis: Ten Apothegms and Four Instances.” In *Analyzing Popular Music*, edited by Allan F. Moore. Cambridge University Press: 16–38.