
Term Information

Effective Term Spring 2026

General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area Music
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org School Of Music - D0262
College/Academic Group Arts and Sciences
Level/Career Graduate
Course Number/Catalog 7733
Course Title Analysis of Timbre
Transcript Abbreviation Anlys Timbre
Course Description Timbre has become increasingly important as an organizing and expressive principle of musical works but can prove to be difficult to define. The seminar confronts the challenges of defining and conceptualizing timbre through an overview of scholarship on the theory and analysis of timbre.
Semester Credit Hours/Units Fixed: 3

Offering Information

Length Of Course 14 Week
Flexibly Scheduled Course Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component? No
Grading Basis Letter Grade
Repeatable No
Course Components Lecture
Grade Roster Component Lecture
Credit Available by Exam No
Admission Condition Course No
Off Campus Never
Campus of Offering Columbus

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites Graduate Standing
Exclusions
Electronically Enforced Yes

Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 50.0901
Subsidy Level Doctoral Course
Intended Rank Doctoral

Requirement/Elective Designation

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

Course Details

Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Students will understand and remember foundational ideas in the field of timbre analysis.
- Students will develop their critical thinking and metacognition skills, evaluating and responding to concepts and claims.
- Students will develop their creative thinking and analytical listening skills, creating original analyses of works highlighting timbre and clearly expressing them for different audiences.
- Students will know how to use various software programs for music analysis.
- Students will make connections between various readings, musical works, and analytical concepts or techniques.
- Students will appreciate the real-world issues relating to timbre and its role in society.

Content Topic List

- Introduction to Timbre
 - Vocal Timbre
 - Small scale Analysis Presentations
 - Instrumental Timbre
 - Future of Timbre
 - PechaKucha Presentations
 - Final Analysis Project Presentations
- No

Sought Concurrence

Attachments

- MUSIC 7733-Analysis of Timbre Proposed Syllabus.docx: Proposed syllabus
(Syllabus. Owner: Banks,Eva-Marie)

Comments

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Banks,Eva-Marie	10/28/2025 11:39 AM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	COSTA-GIOMI,Eugenia	10/28/2025 12:54 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	10/29/2025 04:31 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Jenkins,Mary Ellen Bigler Neff,Jennifer Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal Steele,Rachel Lea	10/29/2025 04:31 PM	ASCCAO Approval

MUSIC 7733: Analysis of Timbre
Spring 2026 – 3 credit hours

Format of instruction: in-person lecture and discussions with active participation

Location: Timashev Family Music Building

Class Meeting Schedule: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:20 – 3:40 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Sasha Drozzina

- Email: Drozzina.1@osu.edu
- Telephone number: 260-481-0675
- Office: Timashev Music Building Room N484
- Office hours: Tuesday 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Course Description

Timbre has become increasingly important as an organizing and expressive principle of musical works but can prove to be difficult to define. The seminar confronts the challenges of defining and conceptualizing timbre through an overview of scholarship on the theory and analysis of timbre. The course bibliography includes music theory, musicology, music cognition, and sound studies. Students will learn and apply strategies for analyzing timbre in various genres (such as classical, pop, and others). Coursework includes weekly readings, listening and analysis, short written assignments, in-class presentations (individual and group), and a final analytical paper. The ultimate goal in this seminar will be to embrace the concept of timbre in all its complex parameters.

Required Materials

All required materials, including links to readings and recordings of require pieces for listening, will be provided by the instructor on CarmenCanvas.

Learning Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes

Goal	Learning Outcomes
(A) Students will understand and remember foundational ideas in the field of timbre analysis.	1. Students will be able to explain important terms in the field such as brightness/darkness, the singer's formant, envelope, intonation, and others. 2. Students will be able to describe common methodologies for analyzing timbre.
(B) Students will develop their critical thinking and metacognition skills, evaluating and responding to concepts and claims.	1. Students will be able to discuss and debate scholarly readings in oral and written form, reflecting on the relevance and/or appropriateness of methodologies and findings.

	2. Students will be able to test the logic and validity of musical analyses. 3. Students will be able to provide constructive feedback to peer analyses. 4. Students will be able to self-assess, reflect on, and revise their own analyses.
(C) Students will develop their creative thinking and analytical listening skills, creating original analyses of works highlighting timbre and clearly expressing them for different audiences.	1. Students will be able to create clear, meaningful analytical arguments about timbre from various time periods and genres. 2. Students will be able to clearly present their analyses in oral and written formats with various degrees of formality, including conference-style presentation and an academic paper.
(D) Students will know how to use various software programs for music analysis.	1. Students will be able to create accurate analytical diagrams representing various timbral aspects of the music, including but not limited to, annotated spectrograms. 2. Students will be able to convert audio and visuals to various file formats, incorporating them into presentations and papers.
(E) Students will make connections between various readings, musical works, and analytical concepts or techniques.	1. Students will be able to identify various elements of timbre in different music genres from various time periods. 2. Students will be able to discuss similarities and differences between scholarly readings from various authors and time periods. 3. Students will be able to discuss similarities and differences between works within and across artist's and composer's outputs from various time periods and genres. 4. Students will be able to appropriately cite and incorporate ideas from scholarly readings into their own analyses.
(F) Students will appreciate the real-world issues relating to timbre and its role in society.	1. Students will be able to discuss various roles and purposes of timbre in contemporary society.

	2. Students will be able to describe and discuss the perspectives of various individuals, demographic groups, and creative roles (such as performers, composers, scholars, and listeners) related to timbre.
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Grading and Assignments Overview

All assignments for this class will be submitted via CarmenCanvas. Assignments are to be completed independently, not collaboratively with peers.

For most classes, students will be assigned particular roles to help run each seminar. These roles will be graded as part of Attendance and Participation and will rotate during the semester.

These roles are:

The **KICKSTARTER**: Each week, one/two students (this might vary depending on the size of the seminar) will be designated as “kickstarters”; by noon on Monday, each Kickstarter will post a short reading response to the reading on our Canvas site. This should include a comment on the readings, either examining one reading closely or doing some comparison across readings, and *at least two* questions for discussion. Everyone who is not a Kickstarter is expected to read the responses and post *at least one* comment by 8:00 a.m. the day of seminar (Tuesday/Thursday).

The **SEEKER**: A good exercise in seminar is to apply what we’ve been thinking and talking about to something new. To this end, the Seeker will be responsible for bringing in an object that relates to the discussion at hand, beyond what is assigned in the syllabus. This could be any kind of object: a musical work, an image, a quote, an instrument, a film clip, or a sound recording. Film and sound clips should be under five minutes (ideally shorter). You should be prepared to talk about your object for a few minutes and have a couple of questions for us. You do not need to pre-circulate your object or your questions: part of the exercise for us is the improvisatory work of thinking through the chosen object on the spot. Students will be the Seeker at least once throughout the semester.

The **GATHERER**: Each class, one student will be our note taker for the session. The Gatherer’s job is to keep track of the main points that arise in discussion and include references to other interesting texts and objects that arise in discussion. For texts, you will need to track down the complete bibliographic reference (this might involve emailing seminar participants after the class to track down information). All notes will then be posted to our collective OneDrive folder.

The **LISTENER**: Each class, one student will be our guide in listening for the session. The Listener’s job is to select *at least two* music examples from the assigned readings and study them in detail. During the seminar, you will be responsible for explaining the

selected examples' important and analytical approaches involved within each example.

Grading:

Reading Responses/Comments: 10%
Summative Reading Responses: 10%
Class Presentations: 10%
Attendance and Participation: 10 %
Small-Scale Analysis: 10%
PechaKucha Article Presentation: 15%
Final Analysis Paper: 35%

Semester Grading Scale

A (93-100%)	B+ (87-89%)	C+ (77-79%)	D+ (67-69%)	E (0-62%)
A- (90-92%)	B (83-86%)	C (73-76%)	D (63-66%)	
	B- (80-82%)	C- (70-72%)		

Reading Responses/Comments (10%). Starting in Week 1, each student will write a response to the weekly readings, published to a discussion board in CarmenCanvas. These are due by 12:00 p.m. on Monday (if you are the Kickstarter for that week) and 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday/Thursday for everyone else, so that there is time for everyone to read the response before class and be ready for in-class discussion. There will be no "weeks off" from writing these.

Responses/comments should be 250–500 words total. The content should include some mix of the following: something you liked or did not like about a reading, a summary of something you learned, a summary of an argument the author made, something that surprised or interested you, a question or thought you had as you read and/or listened, a question you have for others in the class or for the instructor, or something that you were reminded of (feel free to include a link). Include citations for each reading and any other sources you reference, using the Chicago Manual of Style author-date system. Each response will be graded out of 10, based on completing the criteria above for sufficiently addressing each reading, as well as the clarity of writing, including spelling, grammar, punctuation, and citations.

Summative Reading Responses (10%). Two times during the course, each student will write a summative reading response. These will be slightly longer than usual responses (500–750 words approx.). These responses will be graded for understanding of concepts and arguments from multiple course readings, connections between readings, and writing style.

Class Presentations (10%). Each student will do one presentation on an assigned reading. This presentation is meant to be as a more detailed/extended version of your weekly reading response on CarmenCanvas. Each presentation will be approximately 25–30 minutes long and involve leading the class in discussion. Start the presentation with providing some background on the authors, then share your own thoughts and summary. Ask discussion questions and be prepared to discuss other people's reading

responses posted on CarmenCanvas. You will be at the front of the class presenting with audio and visuals on a screen (i.e. showing the reading, parts of analysis, or people's posts). Before class, you will submit a copy of your presentation notes and/or slides on CarmenCanvas. Each presentation will be graded out of 100 based on completing the criteria above, demonstrated knowledge about the reading, and effective use of time leading the class discussion.

Attendance and Participation (10%). Each week, students are expected to be prepared to discuss all readings and listed works for listening, as well as fulfill their assigned roles for the week. Students will receive a grade out of 5 in attendance, participation, and preparation of assigned role duties for every class. You will receive full points if you arrive on time, actively participate in discussion, participate fully in analytical class activities, and have completed your assigned role duties. Points will be deducted for a lack of participation or for not completing the assigned role duties.

Small-Scale Analysis (10%). In Unit 1, Students will complete a small-scale analysis of a vocal work focusing on its unique timbral qualities, using analytical approach and technique learned from the first half of the course. The following are required components of the analysis:

1. A visual representation of the music, such as score or score excerpts, lead sheet, or DAW file.
2. An audio file (must be an .mp3, m4a, or .wav) with a performance of the music.
3. A short presentation during class that explains your analytical approach and how it relates to course readings and/or class discussions from Unit 1.

More details will be in the assignment description on CarmenCanvas.

PechaKucha Article Presentation (15%). Students will complete one PechaKucha presentation during class on a reading (article/book chapter) of their choice that is part of their bibliography for the final analysis paper and is not covered in the course. More details will be in the presentation description.

Final Analysis Paper (35%). The end-of-semester project will involve each student writing an analytical paper on a topic of their choosing. It can be a detailed analysis on one piece, or a discussion of similar aspects in different works, or some other idea for an analytical essay. The following are required components of the final analysis paper:

1. A one-page proposal for the paper, to be submitted in Week 8 before Spring Break. This should explain a bit about the piece(s), what particular aspects of the piece(s) you will analyze, and what the thesis of the paper will be (even if it changes later during your research and writing process). The proposal must include a starting bibliography (and your bibliography will continue to add works cited during your research).
2. A conference-style abstract. More details will be in the project description.
3. A conference-style presentation during class meeting. More details will be in the

project description.

4. A final paper due during exam week. The paper must be at least 5,000 words for graduate students, in addition to analytical diagrams, and in addition to footnotes and bibliography. More details will be in the project description.

Attendance Policy

- Each student is entitled to two “free” unexcused absences. After that, each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a 0 for that class in terms of the attendance and participation grading category.
- If you miss class for any reason, please email the instructor before or after the class session to check in. Emailing the instructor ensures that they can tell you about what you missed in class and any work you should do to catch up.
 - If your absence is due to illness, emergency, or professional opportunity, the instructor may grant you an excused absence if notified by email. If an excused absence is granted, then it will not affect your grade. The instructor may or may not also grant an extension on assignment deadlines depending on the circumstances.
 - If your absence is unexcused (including your “free” unexcused absence), homework assignments (such as the reading responses) are still due at their regular times.

Late Assignments Policy

Since we only meet twice per week, it is imperative that assignments are submitted on time. Therefore, late assignments will NOT be accepted for credit in this class. However, the instructor may grant an exemption if there are extenuating circumstances such as illness or emergency.

Instructor Feedback and Response Expectations

Students will receive grading and feedback on assignments on CarmenCanvas within one week of the assignment deadline. The instructor will respond to emails within 24 hours during the semester (apart from holidays).

A Work on Respect in the Classroom

Our class meetings must be a space in which all students feel comfortable speaking their opinions, trying challenging things, and learning from others. You owe your classmates not only your full attention when they have the floor, but also your patience and—if appropriate—help when things prove difficult. There can be no tolerance for any disrespectful or denigrating comments or behavior directed at your fellow students or the instructor. In a supportive and respectful environment, an individual's success is also a success for the whole group.

Course Schedule

Course materials for the following week will be made available on CarmenCanvas by the end of the last class of the current week. This schedule is subject to change.

Dates	Topics	Tuesday	Thursday
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Week 1 (1/7 & 1/9)	Introduction to Timbre	Course Syllabus Introduction to course material and terminology No assigned readings	Required Reading: Dolan and Rehding (2020) Bring: one vocal work, where you respond strongly to timbre (positively/negatively)
Week 2 (1/14 & 1/16)	Unit 1: Vocal Timbre	Readings: - Kiesgen (2006) - Heidemann (2016)	Readings: - Blake (2012) - Duguay (2022)
Week 3 (1/21 & 1/23)	Unit 1 continued	Readings: Knight and Marchand (2020) Watch: <i>Them</i> opera excerpts	Readings: Hardman (2022) Listen and Watch: Tanya Tagaq interviews and concerts
Week 4 (1/28 & 1/30)	Unit 1 continued	Readings: - Kalbag & Lerch (2022) - Drozzina (2021)	Readings: Williams (2018) In-class discussion of “noise”
Week 5 (2/4 & 2/6)	Unit 1 continued	Reading: Eidsheim & Whelden (2019)	Readings: - Nobile (2022) - https://www.thedartmouth.com/article/2023/10/trends-whisper-signing
Week 6 (2/11 & 2/13)	Small-scale Analysis Presentations	Individual presentation in-class	Individual presentation in-class Due 2/13: Final Project proposal & bibliography
Week 7 (2/18 & 2/20)	Unit 2: Instrumental Timbre	Reading: Adorno (2021)	Reading: Rifkin (2018) Listen: Prokofiev, <i>Peter and the Wolf</i> Watch: Schnittke, <i>Glass Harmonica</i>
Week 8 (2/25 & 2/27)	Unit 2 continued	Readings: - Ewell (2014) - Drozzina	Reading Mirka (2000)

		(2020)	
Week 9 (3/4 & 3/6)	Unit 2 continued	Reading: Strauchen-Scherer (2020)	Reading: - Morrison (2021)
Week 10 (3/11 & 3/13)	Spring Break	No class meeting No work assigned	No class meeting No work assigned
Week 11 (3/18 & 3/20)	Unit 2 continued	Guest Speaker: Lindsey Reymore	Guest Speaker: Yiqing (Mitty) MA Due 3/20: Final Project complete draft
Week 12 (3/25 & 3/27)	Unit 3: Future of Timbre	Reading: Willoughby (200)	Reading: Momii (2024)
Week 13 (4/1 & 4/3)	Unit 3 continued	Reading: Renihan (2024)	Reading: Wallmark & Kendall (2018)
Week 14 (4/8 & 4/10)	PechaKucha Presentations	Individual presentations in-class	Individual presentations in-class
Week 15 (4/15 & 4/17)	Final Analysis Project Presentations	Individual presentations in-class	Individual presentation in-class
Week 16 (4/21 – last class)	Finals Week	No class meeting	No class meeting Due 4/24: Final Analysis Project

Selected Bibliography

- Adorno, Theodor W. 2021. "The Function of Timbre in Music (1966)." In *The Oxford Handbook of Timbre*, eds. Emily I. Dolan and Alexander Rehding, 124–170. Oxford University Press.
- Blake, David K. 2012. "Timbre as Differentiation in Indie Music." *Music Theory Online* 18 (2).
- Dolan, Emily I., and Alexander Rehding. 2018. "Timbre: Alternative Histories and Possible Futures for the Study of Music." In *The Oxford Handbook of Timbre*, eds. Emily I. Dolan and Alexander Rehding, 2–20. Oxford University Press.
- Drozzina, Aleksandra. 2021. "IC3PEAK Whispers and Screams po-Russki (in Russian)

of Cultural

Downfalls in Russia Today.” In *Currents in Music Research*, Issue no. 1: “Music and Protest/Demonstration.”

_____. 2020. “Schnittke, Gubaidulina, and Pärt: Religion and Spirituality during the Late Thaw

and Early Perestroika.” PhD diss., Louisiana State University.

Ewell, Philip A. 2014. “The Parameter Complex in the Music of Sofia Gubaidulina.” *Music Theory*

Online 20 (3).

Hardman, Kristi. 2022. “The Continua of Sound Qualities for Tanya Tagaq’s Katajjaq Sounds.”

In *Trends in World Music Analysis*, eds. Lawrence Beaumont Shuster, Somangshu Mukherji, Noé Dinnerstein, 85–99. Routledge.

Heidemann, Kate. 2016. “A System of Describing Vocal Timbre in Popular Song.” *Music Theory Online*

22 (1).

Kalbag, Vedant, and Alexander Lerch. 2022. “Scream Detection in Heavy Metal Music.”

Kiesgen, Paul, and Richard Dean Miller. 2006. “Registration.” *Journal of Singing: The Official Journal of the*

National Association of Teachers of Singing, Inc. 62 (5) (May-June).

Lavengood, Megan L. 2020. “The Cultural Significance of Timbre Analysis: A Case Study in 1980s Pop

Music, Texture, and Narrative.” *Music Theory Online* 26 (3).

Malaway, Victoria. 2014. “‘Find out What it means to be me’: Aretha Franklin’s gendered re-authoring

of Otis Redding’s ‘Respect’.” *Popular Music* 33 (2): 185–207.

Marchand Knight, Juanita, and Crystal Marchand. 2020. “Them and the Timbre of Gender.” *The Gender-*

Diverse Lens. York University.

Mirka, Danuta. 2000. “Texture in Penderecki’s Sonoristic Style.” *Music Theory Online* 6 (1).

Momii, Toru. 2024. “Performing Te: Gesture and Timbre in Fujikura Dai’s *neo* for Solo Shamisen.”

Music Theory Spectrum 46 (2): 185–207. <https://doi.org/10.1093/mts/mtae002>.

Pisanski, Katarzyna, and Gregory A Bryant. 2019. “The Evolution of Voice Perception.” In *Oxford*

Handbook of Voice Studies, eds. Nina Sun Eidsheim and Katherine Maizel, 269–300. Oxford University Press.

Renihan, Colleen. 2024. “Of Sense and Sirens: *Ana Sokolović’s* *Svadba* and *Six Voix Pour Sirènes*.” In

Contemporary Opera in Flux, ed. Yayoi U. Everett. University of Michigan Press.

- Nobile, Dres. 2022. "Teleology in Verse—Prechorus—Chorus Form, 1965–2020." *Music Theory Online* 28 (3).
- Rifkin, Deborah. 2018. "Visualizing Peter: The First Animated Adaptations of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*." *Music Theory Online* 24 (2).
- Stelzner, Chuck. "Death Metal/Throat Vocal Analysis."
- Strauchen-Scherer, Elizabeth Bradley. 2020. "Technology and Timbre Features of the Changing Instrumental Soundscape of the Long Nineteenth Century (1789–1914). In *The Oxford Handbook of Timbre*, eds. Emily I. Dolan and Alexander Rehding, 404–432. Oxford University Press.
- Wallmark, Zachary, and Roger A. Kendall. "Describing Sounds: The Cognitive Linguistics of Timbre." In *The Oxford Handbook of Timbre*, eds. Emily I. Dolan and Alexander Rehding, 578–608. Oxford University Press.
- Williams, Gavin. 2018. "Futurist Timbres: Listening Failure in Milan, 1909–1914." In *The Oxford Handbook of Timbre*, eds. Emily I. Dolan and Alexander Rehding, 321–343. Oxford University Press.
- Willoughby, Heather. 2000. "The Sound of Han: P'ansori, Timbre and a Korean Ethos of Pain and Suffering." In *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, Vol. 32: 17–30. Cambridge University Press.
- <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3185241>.

Syllabus Policies and Statements

Please see the following link below for standard syllabus statements on Academic Misconduct, Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity, Religious Accommodations, Disability Statement (with Accommodations for Illness), Intellectual Diversity, Grievances and Solving Problems, and Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct.

<https://ugeducation.osu.edu/academics/syllabus-policies-statements/standard-syllabus-statements>