

Syllabus
Writing in Music
MUSC 305-001
2 credits

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Text: *Writing in Music: A Brief Guide (Brief Guides to Writing in the Disciplines) 1st Edition*

Authors: Lynne Rogers, Karen M. Borrage, Sara Haefeli

- ISBN-13 : 978-0190872724

Commented [SC1]: Required text provides an overview of "expectations for writing in the discipline" (EWIM Practice Standard)

Course Objectives: This course engages students in a critical analysis of the discourse within the field of music by exploring the methods, resources, and communication styles that shape this discipline. Students will practice conducting research, evaluating the perspectives and types of knowledge included and excluded in music scholarship, and develop competency in various forms of music writing. Through practical assignments, students will refine their writing skills and deepen their understanding of the complexities of communication in the field of music.

Commented [SC2]: Students "explore the most common genres of the major/field" (EWIM Practice Standard)

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- Develop and apply research skills by identifying, accessing, and utilizing key resources in the field of music.
- Demonstrate competency in various music-specific writing forms, such as annotated bibliographies, program notes, and chapter outlines.
- Enhance and refine your writing skills through practical assignments, effectively communicating research findings and critical perspectives in music.

Commented [SC3]: Discipline-specific learning outcomes related to writing.

Written Assignments:

There will be several short written assignments for this course, including:

- Chapter outlines/comments
- Annotated bibliography
- Abstract vs. Summary assignment
- Concert Review
- Points of View assignment
- Program notes assignment
- Reference sources assignment
- Web site assignment
- Blog post

Commented [SC4]: Students practice writing in a variety of genres. "explore the most common genres of the major/field" EWIM Practice Standard

Note: All work must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. Late work will be graded down; anything more than a full week late will not be accepted except in extraordinary circumstances about which I will have been kept informed.

Reading assignments: Do the reading assignment BEFORE the date it is listed on the schedule. You will turn in a brief outline of the week's reading each class that there is a reading

assigned. You will use this outline for discussion. You should include any questions you have about the reading in this outline.

Commented [SC5]: low-stakes writing

Grading: Approximately 20% in-class participation; 80% writing assignments

STUDENTS REQUESTING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are a student with a disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc) and think that you might need special assistance or a special accommodation(s) in this class or any other class, call Disabled Student Services, Wilson Hall, 572-5676

Class Schedule

(I have listed both the Tuesday and Friday dates)

Commented [SC6]: Writing is spread throughout the semester. "This course spreads writing assignments throughout the semester, providing students with opportunities to practice writing regularly." (EWIM Practice Standard)

Week 1: January 26/29	What is this class about?
Week 2: February 2/5	Discussion of Chapter 1 Hand out Reference Sources assignment
Week 3: February 9/12	Discussion of Reference Sources assignment (due)
Week 4: February 16 Feb 18/19	–Follow Monday schedule, so Tuesday class meet Thursday this week Discussion of Chapter 2 Hand out concert review assignment
Week 5: February 23/26	Discussion of Chapter 3 Hand out "4 points of view" assignment
Week 6: February March 1/4	Discussion of Chapter 4 Hand out annotated bibliography assignment
Week 7: March 8/11	Discussion of "4 points of view" assignment (due)
SPRING BREAK : MARCH 14-18	
Week 8: March 22/25	Discussion of Concert review assignment (due)-peer review Hand out Program notes assignment
Week 9: March 29/April 1	Discussion of Chapter 5 Hand out Summary and Abstract assignment
Week 10: April 5/8	Discussion of Program notes assignment(due) - peer evaluation Hand out blog post assignment
Week 11: April 12/15	Discussion of Chapter 6 Discussion of Summary and Abstract assignment (due)
Week 12: April 19/22	Discussion of Chapter 7 Rewritten program notes due

Commented [SC7]: Students participate in peer review
"Students will be expected to incorporate regular in-process feedback on their writing from faculty and peers and to revise their work by implementing substantial and holistic changes, proofreading, and editing." (EWIM practice standard)

Week 13: April 26/29	Discussion of Chapter 8 Discussion of blog post assignment (due) Hand out Website analysis assignment
Week 14: May 2	Discussion of Website analysis assignment (due) Annotated Bibliography assignment (due) Wrap-up

Assignment: Program Notes 50 points

Purpose: To put into practice your research skills and writing.

Audience: Educated, with decent musical knowledge (your peers and teachers)

Commented [SC8]: Students conduct research to learn "how research is conducted in the discipline" (EWIM Practice Standard)

Choose a total of two different pieces of music for which to write program notes, one for each assignment. For the purposes of this assignment a "piece" of music should be about 10 to 30 minutes long. You will need to acquire both a score and a recording of the pieces. Naxos <http://wscmass.naxosmusiclibrary.com/> and the IMSLP <http://www.imslp.org/> are great places to find this kind of music.

Program note #1:

Vocalists: choose a piece that features 1 or 2 voices in a small scale work (i.e. motet, sacred concerto mvt, solo monody, etc.) **not** from a large scale work (like an opera, cantata, or oratorio)

Instrumentalists: choose a piece that is small scale (suite, trio sonata, prelude, etc) **not** large scale (like a concerto, concerto grosso, oratorio mvt, etc)

Program note #2

Vocalists: choose either an instrumental solo concerto or concerto grosso that has at least 3 movements

Instrumentalists: Choose 3 contiguous movements from a cantata or oratorio

How to do the assignment: While there are many different ways to approach structuring a program note, for the purposes of this assignment please include the following sections:

1. a section on biography of the composer—This does not have to be a complete summary of the composer's life, especially if she/he is a well-known composer (although it is probably a good idea if the composer is particularly obscure). A short discussion of the composer's life at the time of the composition of this work may be the best thing. You will have to decide how much to include, keeping in mind the goal of teaching something to your audience.
2. a section on the history of the composition of the piece, and anything interesting about its circumstances, or first performers, or whatever.

3. a section of analysis or musical description. This is tricky. Avoid too technical terms or concepts. Avoid boring play-by-play ("First the oboes enter with the theme, followed by a violin solo. Next the flutes pick up the theme."). On the other hand, pointing out ways to recognize the major sections of a piece can be very helpful to an audience.
4. if the piece has a text, provide a translation. In your analysis or description of the music, include information on how the music reflects the text (or doesn't). **Note:** the number of words in the translation **does not count** towards the total length of your program note.

Each program note should be between 350 to 500 words (use the word count feature on your word processor).

Grading:

1. The quality, uniqueness, and depth of your written insights and observations about the music and the performance. (20 points)
2. How well you deal with the terms and stylistic concepts that have learned in your coursework as music majors. (20 points)
3. How well the appropriate information is organized and presented in a 350-500 essay (this includes proper and correct use of grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.). PROOFREAD! (10 points)

Annotated Bibliography Assignment 25 points

Commented [SC9]: Students learn "how research is conducted in the discipline" (EWIM Practice Standard)

Background:

This assignment is designed to sharpen your research and evaluation skills as discussed in Chapter 6 of the Bellman book. An annotated bibliography not only presents a selected list of books and articles on a particular topic, it offers a short description of the contents of each article and book and a brief evaluation of the usefulness of the source.

Assignment:

Choose a topic for an imaginary research paper. You will **not** have to write the paper, but you **will** have to write a thesis statement and include it above the bibliography. Why? So I can see how your items relate to the main point of your paper.

Compile a bibliography of 5 annotated items.

Include at least one book and one encyclopedia entry in your bibliography. For each item, you will complete two tasks, in the following order:

1. Answer the questions below to provide the material for your annotations **and**
2. Write an annotation explaining the resource and how it will support your thesis.

Format: Make sure your citations are in the format given in Bellman, including indentation and punctuation. Your project must be typed.

Details: When you turn in your assignment structure it the following way:

- 1st part : Title of Paper
Thesis statement
5 Annotations (Proper citation of item followed by annotation)
- 2nd part: The answers to the questions.

N.B. In order to write a description of each source included in your bibliography, you will have to skim your articles and at least scan your books.

Questions to answer to gather material to write the annotation for each item in your bibliography (Not all questions are relevant to all sources)

1. How/Where did you find the book/article and why did you select it?
2. What is the main thesis of the book/article? Summarize its conclusions in a couple of sentences.
3. Who is the author? Has s/he written other articles or books?
4. Does the article or book include a substantial bibliography? If so, did the bibliography lead you to additional discoveries? Give an example.
5. For *books*: You might want to find a book review (if available). Cite the review along with the book [e.g., "Reviewed in *Theological Studies* 67. 2 (June 2006): 411-14."]. How did the review help you assess the book?
6. Did the book/article help you in trying to narrow the focus of your research? If so, how?
7. Did the book/article assume a substantial knowledge of the field or topic's background, or did it summarize this for the reader?
8. Is the book/article exclusively about your topic or were only parts of it relevant for you? (Were other passages helpful or educational anyway?)
9. What is the scope of the book/article? Does it present a broad overview? Does it zero in on a very specific topic?
10. If you included an older book/article (e.g., from the 1970s or earlier): why did you select it? Was it the only one available? Was it cited (critiqued, praised) in more recent publications?

Two Sample Annotated Entries:

Topic: *Chants et motets* (1733): Nivers, Clérambault, and Changing Musical Style at the *Maison royale de Saint-Louis* at Saint-Cyr

1. Anthony, James. *French Baroque Music from Beaujoyeux to Rameau*, rev. ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 1978.

This is the best single volume history of French Baroque music written in English. It provides valuable information about the *petit motet* and includes a short discussion of Nivers's *Motets à voix seule*.

2. Beechey, Gwilym. "Guillaume Gabriel Nivers (1632-1714) and his *Litanies de la Sainte Vierge*." *Recherches sur la musique française classique* XV (1975), 80-90.

A study of the *Litanies de la Sainte Vierge*, contained in Nivers' *Motets à voix seule* (1689). The appendix of the article gives a table of contents for the entire collection, and reprints Nivers' opening *Observations*, which contains remarks on the performance of the motets.

Assignment: Reference Sources

Commented [SC10]: Students learn "how research is conducted in the discipline" (EWIM Practice Standard)

The purpose of this assignment is to become acquainted with some of the most important basic musical reference sources available in our library. Put your answers in writing to turn in **and** be prepared to discuss your findings in class.

Find the following reference sources:

1. New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians
2. New Grove Dictionary of American Music
3. New Grove Dictionary of Opera

Think of a subject word or name (either a composer, performer, term, or even a place) to look up in all of the sources listed above. If your subject word or name does not appear in all the sources, choose another until you find one that appears in all the sources. NOTE: You must look in ALL of the sources listed above.

For each of your subject words or names, compare and contrast the entries in the sources in which it appears. Compare them by **1)** answering the following questions and **2)** describing the contents in a few paragraphs:

1. length of the article. Are they the same?
2. content of the article. Are they exactly the same? Are they mostly the same?
3. length of the list of works (if you look up a composer).
4. number of items in the bibliography.
5. earliest source listed in the bibliography.
6. most recent source listed in the bibliography.

A. Put each of the articles you found in proper citation form. (see last chapter of book for proper citation styles)

Outline of Research Topic assignment

50 points

Background: One of the major faults I have found in student research papers is a lack of organization. Every research paper should begin as an outline; when presenting a large number of facts about a topic, a clear and easy-to-follow order is essential for following the author's argument.

Assignment: Organize the information you have found about your research topic into a clear outline, from which you could easily write a well-organized paper.

Steps:

1. Do your research: find your sources of information and take notes.
2. Consider the kinds of categories into which your information may fall: historical background, composer biography, musical sources, chronology of composition, chronology of published sources, analysis of music, etc.
3. Decide on an order for your categories of information; while one order may work better than another, there is usually no single correct way to go about this.
4. Organize your information within your categories. Some people use index card to do this, while others put it directly into an outline.

5. Construct your outline by ordering the larger categories of information and listing the facts below.

You will not have to include every fact that you have found about your topic, but don't expect to be able to do create your outline without reading all your articles and skimming all the books. Take notes.

Consult the example on pp. 76-77 in the textbook for form (even though the example is for an essay and not a research paper). I will also provide you with another example of a research paper

Different Kinds of Writing—Who is your audience? Assignment

- For this assignment you are going to practice writing about the same piece of music from 4 different points of view/kinds of writing.
- Each response should be 1 page typed. (I do not expect a full analysis, biography, etc) The idea is to get the flavor of each kind of writing.
- You can use any of the resources at the library to do some of the research for the responses- just make sure to cite your sources in bibliographic form. For example, when you do your historical/biographical response you might need/want to look up information about the composer. New Groves is always a good place to start, but you also might want to practice using the computer to search out other books, encyclopedias, etc.

The piece you are writing about is: *Petrushka: the Second Scene* by Igor Stravinsky. I have given you a score and recording. (the recording lasts only 4 minutes).

The 4 kinds of writing are:

1. Biographical/historical
2. Style study
3. Reaction Paper
4. Cultural Criticism

Examples of all these kinds of writing can be found in Chapters 1 and 2 in the Bellman book.

Different Kinds of Writing Rubric

Writer's name:

Criteria	poor/ missin g	weak	fair	good	stron g
Biographical/Historical <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there biographical information about the composer or choreographer? Is there socio-historical context?					
Style Study: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Musical materials are the basis for the writing• Is there a goal to the paper? (In other words, is there a thesis?)					
Reaction Paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The writers opinion and reaction is clear• The opinion is backed up with evidence					

Cultural Criticism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does this writing examine <i>Petrushka</i> from a cultural standpoint? Is there a recognizable perspective? Is the music used as evidence? 					
Terms and Concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well did writer deal with terms and stylistic concepts learned in coursework as music major? 					
Usage and Clarity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spelling Writer has proofread Grammar Word choice Sentence structure Capitalization Proper punctuation 					

Commentary:

1 thing writer did well:

1 thing writer needs to work on:

Assignment: Website Evaluation—The Good, Bad, and Horrible
15 points

Due:

Purpose: to practice searching the internet and evaluating what you find.

Requirements:

1. Choose a topic or research question that interests you. (It could be the one you are using for your annotated bibliography that is due next week... ☺)

2. Find **3** websites that relate to your topic. Find one that you think is good for academic purposes, one that is “meh”, and one that is downright horrible.

3. Print out a copy of the front page of each web-site and write out in prose your answers to the following questions:

1. What is the intended audience of this site?
2. Does this site (and its links) offer anything that can't be found elsewhere?
3. Is the site commercial? Can ads be distinguished from content?
4. What is the date of the material? When was the site last updated? Does it seem that keeping the information up-to-date is important to the author?

5. Is the name of the author clearly given, with a way to contact him/her? Does he/she give any credentials or biographical information?
6. Does the author give the source of his/her information?
7. Put the web site in proper citation form (see p. 167 as a guide).

4. Be prepared to discuss your findings with the class so we can get a sense of the value of the internet in our kind of research.

Grading: 5 points for each website. Did you answer the questions? Did you print out the front page of each site and include it in your packet? Did you staple everything together?