

BAIN MUSC 525
Post-Tonal Theory

SYLLABUS

Instructor

Dr. Reginald Bain, Professor
Composition and Theory

Contact Information

E-mail: rbain@mozart.sc.edu
Voice mail: (803) 777-8183
Office: Music Building, R227
Office Hours: MW 1:00-2:00 pm, and by appointment

Course Information

Term: Fall 2026
Location: Music Building, R213
Format: MW 12:00-12:50 pm, B3WEB¹
Blackboard: <https://blackboard.sc.edu>
Website: <https://reginaldbain.com>

COURSE MODULES

1. Pitches, Intervals & Motives (Ch. 1)
2. Pitch-Class Sets (Ch. 2)
3. Set Properties & Relationships (Ch. 3)
4. Centricity & Referential Collections (Ch. 5)
5. Advanced Topics (Ch. 4)
6. Serialism (Ch. 6)

Prerequisite

Undergraduate Students: C or better in MUSC 215; Graduate students: passing score on the Music Theory portion of the Music Graduate Diagnostic Exam or a grade of C or better in MUSC 523.

Description

Study of the theory and analysis of post-tonal music with a focus on pitch-class set theory and twelve-tone serialism.

Required Textbook

Joseph N. Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*, 4th ed. (New York: Norton, 2016); printed copy, or e-book.

Learning Objectives

Students will learn how to:

- Critically interpret a wide array of post-tonal literature.
- Analyze post-tonal music, with an emphasis on theoretical problem solving in pitch-class set theory, scale theory, transformational theory, and twelve-tone serialism.
- Compose post-tonal music.
- Use electronic resources for post-tonal theory including analytical media and software for computer-aided analysis

500-Level Course & SCHC H-Option Requirement

As required by SACS, graduate students taking the course will be evaluated on a more rigorous basis and will be required to complete an instructor-mentored analysis project which is due at 11:59 pm on the university-scheduled final exam date. Guidelines for the project are available on the course website. The project will count as 10% of your Assignments grade.

Technical Requirements

A computer, Web access, and a university-provided Blackboard account are required to access the course materials and complete the online assignments/activities in Blackboard. If you run into technical difficulties at any point in the course, please e-mail me immediately to let me know. For a more detailed explanation, see *Links for Students > Blended Course Information* on the course website.

¹ Blended/Hybrid Up to 49% web. Course that is taught both face-to-face and online with 49% or less of the course offered online. Course meets in-person on Monday/Wednesday and assignments/activities are completed asynchronously online by students in lieu of a Friday meeting.

BAIN MUSC 525
Post-Tonal Theory

Course Requirements

Weekly reading, score study, listening/analysis, and assignments/activities as listed in the *Daily Schedule* and Blackboard. There will be three online exams: Exam 1 (Ch. 1-2), Exam 2 (Ch. 3-5), and a Final Exam (Ch. 6). There will also be a final composition project.

Course Format & Policies

This course is being offered as a blended course. The course meets face-to-face (f2f) twice per week (Mondays and Wednesdays). Typical activities in the f2f classroom include lecture, interacting with your instructor and classmates, analytical discussions, open Q & A sessions, review sessions, etc. Assignments/activities are completed asynchronously by students in lieu of a Friday meeting. Most of the work for the course will occur online in Blackboard. The learning modules in Blackboard are organized into weekly assignments/activities that include links to videos, recordings, scores, analyses, quizzes, software, etc. Online activities and in-class activities are designed to build on each other. Weekly assignments/activities will be posted on Wednesday and are due the following Monday at class time (unless otherwise stated). Completion of the online assignments/activities in a timely manner and active participation in class are critical to success in this course. Late work cannot be accepted – except in the case of an *excused absence*. Work that is not submitted is averaged into the student's grade using a score of zero. For more information, see *Links for Students > Blended Course Information* on the course website.

Attendance Policy

This course will follow the university's attendance policy which is available online at:

https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_affairs/student-services/academic_success/ombuds_services/our_services/class_absences/

Attendance will be taken at every face-to-face meeting and the attendance record posted in Blackboard. It is the student's responsibility to sign the daily *attendance sheet*. Attendance is subject to the university's "5% Rule." If the student exceeds the threshold, the instructor may exact a one-letter grade penalty.

University Policies

As described on the university's *Carolinian Creed*, *Honor Code* and *Center for Teaching Excellence* websites, students are expected to practice the highest possible standards of academic integrity and classroom etiquette. For more detailed information, see *Links for Students* on the course website.

GenAI Policy

This course will follow the university's GenAI use, which is available online at:

https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/teaching_resources/generative_ai/genai_teaching_guidelines/

Student Services

Information about *Graduate Student Opportunities and Support*, *Wellness at the School of Music*, and other student services is also available on the course website under *Links for Students*.

Student Disability Resource Center

If you are registered with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC), please make sure I receive a copy of your accommodation letter by the first day of class so I may work with you (and with SDRC, as necessary) to make sure your accommodations are met. The SDRC is located in Close-Hipp, Suite 102. You may reach the SDRC via e-mail sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu, or phone (803) 777-6142.

Classroom Policies

I am committed to making each day we meet a safe, active, focused, positive, and distraction-free learning environment for everyone in the class. I expect all students to follow the university guidelines for classroom *safety* and *acceptable conduct*, as well as the *classroom etiquette* guidelines explained on the first day of class.

Grading Scale

100-90 A	89-85 B+	84-80 B	79-75 C+	74-70 C	69-65 D+	64-60 D	59-0 F
----------	----------	---------	----------	---------	----------	---------	--------

Grade Distribution

20% - Assignments
15% - Activities

20% - Exam 1
20% - Exam 2

15% - Final Exam
10% - Composition Project