

The Canons & Fugues of J. S. Bach

SYLLABUS

Instructor

Dr. Reginald Bain, Professor
Composition and Theory

Contact Information

E-mail: rbain@mozart.sc.edu
Phone/Voice mail: (803) 777-8183
Office: Music Building, R227
Office Hours: MTW 3:50-4:10 pm, or by appointment

Course Information

Term: Summer 2025, 3-Week Session III (3S5)
Dates: June 23 - July 9¹
Meets: MTW: 4:10-7:40 pm, R214
Format: B3WEB²
Website: <<https://reginaldbain.com/vc/musc726c/>>
Blackboard: <<https://blackboard.sc.edu>>

COURSE MODULES

1. Introduction
2. Counterpoint & Harmony
3. Canon
4. Fugue

Description

Analysis of the contrapuntal music of J.S. Bach with a focus on canon and fugue

Course Materials

Reading assignments, digital scores, and analytical media will be made available in electronic format via Blackboard.

Instructional Methods

This course will be taught using multiple instructional methods that include lecture, group discussion, and student-centered learning approaches (e.g., active learning exercises, flipping, and online activities). Students will complete analysis, listening, and score reading exercises that focus on model analyses of major works illustrating the main topics of the course. The capstone project for the course is an instructor-mentored student presentation with associated critical discussion.

Course Goals and Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze tonal counterpoint
- Analyze chorales, canons, fugues and related literature by J.S. Bach
- Explain how analysis may inform contemporary performance
- Navigate online resources for Bach scholarship
- Utilize web-based media resources for analysis
- Engage in, and lead, an analytical discussion
- Plan, research, develop and present an analytical oral presentation with supporting documentation that includes structural diagrams and musical examples

¹ The university-schedule Final Exam date is July 11.

² 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/Tuesday/Wednesday and assignments/activities are completed asynchronously online by students in lieu of a Thursday meeting.

Technical Requirements

A computer, Web access, and a university-provided Blackboard account are required to access the digital course materials and submit work via Blackboard. Microsoft Word (.docx), Excel (.xlsx), and PowerPoint (.pptx) are the preferred document creation formats. These programs are available for free to all USC students. For more information, see *Links for Students > Blended Course Information* on the course website.

Course Requirements

Daily reading, analysis, score study and listening. Daily participation in the in-class exercises and class discussions. Daily use of the course Blackboard page and website to access digital course materials. Two analysis projects (1. *Chorale Project*, and 2. *Canon Project*), and a final oral presentation (*Fugue Presentation*) with supporting documentation. Three asynchronous activities: 1. *Bach & Friends*, 2. *Special Topics*, and 3. *Fugue*. See the class website and Blackboard for due dates/times.

Course Format & Policies

This course is being offered as a blended course. The course meets face-to-face (f2f) three times per week (Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays). Typical activities in the f2f classroom include lecture, interacting with your instructor and classmates, analytical discussions, open Q & A sessions, review sessions, student presentations with associated critical discussion, etc. Assignments/activities are completed asynchronously by students in lieu of a Thursday meeting. Most of the work for the course will occur online in Blackboard. The learning modules in Blackboard are organized into assignments/activities that include links to videos, scores, recordings, analyses, quizzes, exercises, software for computer-aided analysis, etc. Online assignments/activities and in-class activities are designed to build on each other. 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 a documented 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.

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 information, see *Links for Students* on the course website.

Student Services

Information about **Graduate Student Opportunities and Support, Wellness at the School of Music, and other student services** is 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 by e-mail sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu, or by phone (803) 777-6142.

Attendance Policy

This course will follow the university's *Attendance Policy* which is available online at:

<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations/>

Attendance will be taken at every meeting and the record posted in Blackboard on a daily basis. 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 this unexcused absence threshold, the instructor may exact a one letter-grade grade penalty.

Grading Scale & Distribution

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

- 10% - Daily attendance, course engagement, preparation, and interaction with colleagues
- 30% - Three asynchronous activities (10% ea.)
- 15% - Chorale Project
- 20% - Canon Project
- 25% - Fugue Presentation

COURSE OVERVIEW

Calendar

	M	T	W	Th
June	23	24	25	<i>26</i>
June/July	30	1	2	<i>3</i>
July	7	8	<i>9</i>	

Asynchronous days are indicated in italics.

Daily Schedule

Week 1	June 23-26	Topic	Reading
	Mon., 6/23	<i>Introduction</i> <i>Species Counterpoint</i>	Fux 1725; Gauldin 2004
	Tues., 6/24	<i>Thoroughbass</i>	Gauldin 2013; David & Mendel 1966
	Wed., 6/25	<i>Harmony</i>	Benjamin 1986a; Dahn 2019
	Thurs., 6/26	ACTIVITY #1: <i>Bach & Friends</i>	
Chorale Project Due: Fri., 6/27, 11:59 pm			
Week 2	June 30 & July 1-3		
	Mon., 6/30	CHORALE PROJECT DISCUSSION <i>Canon</i>	Randel 2003; Wolf 2001; Smith 1996a; Smith 1996b
	Tues., 7/1	<i>Fugue 1</i>	Walker 2001; Mann 1987; Turek 1995
	Wed., 7/2	<i>Fugue 2</i>	Benjamin 1986b; Smith 1996c
	Thurs., 7/3	ACTIVITY #2: <i>Special Topics</i>	
Canon Project Due: Sat., 7/5, 11:59 pm			
Week 3	July 7-9		
	Mon., 7/7	CANON PROJECT DISCUSSION <i>Fugue 3</i> <i>Fugue Project Consultations</i>	
	Tues., 7/8	FUGUE PRESENTATIONS	
	Wed., 7/9	ACTIVITY #3: <i>Fugue</i>	
Fugue Presentation Reflections & File Submission Due: Fri., 7/11, 11:59 pm			

References

- Benjamin, Thomas. 2003. *The Craft of Tonal Counterpoint*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.
- _____. 1986. *Counterpoint in the Style of J.S. Bach*. New York: Schirmer.
- Dahn, Luke. 2019. *The Four-Part Chorales of J.S. Bach*. Available online at: <<https://www.bach-chorales.com>>.
- Fux, Johann Joseph. 1965/1725. *Study of Counterpoint: From Johann Joseph Fux's 'Gradus Ad Parnassum' (Gradus)*. Translated and edited by Alfred Mann. New York: Norton.
- Gauldin, Robert. 2013/1995. *A Practical Approach to 18th Century Counterpoint*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- _____. 2004. *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*. New York: Norton.
- Kerman, Joseph. 2015/2005. *Art of Fugue: Bach Fugues for Keyboard, 1715–1750*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Mann, Alfred. 1987/1958. *The Study of Fugue*. Mineola, NY: Dover.
- Prout, Ebenezer. 1910. *Analysis of J.S. Bach's Forty-Eight Fugues*. London: Ashdown.
- Remeš, Derek. 2024. *Compendium of Voice-Leading Patterns from the 17th and 18th Centuries to Play, Sing, and Transpose at the Keyboard*. Lucerne, Switzerland: Music Hochschule. Available online at: <<https://derekremes.com/research/>>.
- Shaffer, Kris. “Harmonic Functions.” In *Open Music Theory*, v1 (OMT1). Hybrid Pedagogy Publishing.
- Smith, Tim. 1996a. “Anatomy of a Canon,” from *The Canons and Fugues of J.S. Bach*. Available online at: <<https://www.kunstderfuge.com/theory/smith/canon.htm>>.
- _____. 1996b. “Why did Bach write Canons,” from *The Canons and Fugues of J.S. Bach*. Available online at: <<https://www.kunstderfuge.com/theory/smith/canon.htm>>.
- _____. 1996c. “Anatomy of a Fugue,” from *The Canons and Fugues of J.S. Bach*. Available online at: <<https://www.kunstderfuge.com/theory/smith/anatomy.htm>>.
- Turek, Ralph. 1995. *The Elements of Music*, Vol 2. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Walker, Paul M. 2001. “Fugue.” *Grove Music Online*. New York: Oxford University Press.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The complete course bibliography is available online at:

<https://reginaldbain.com/vc/musc726c/pub/biblio.html>

WORKS FOR STUDY

Chorales (see Dahn 2019)
Canons, BWV 1072-78, BWV 1086, BWV 1079 & BWV 1087
Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1 (1722), BWV 846-869
St. Matthew Passion (1727), BWV 244
Goldberg Variations (1741), BWV 988
Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2 (1742), BWV 870-893
Musical Offering (1747), BWV 1079
Art of Fugue (c. 1750), BWV 1080