Course Announcement Spring 2012

MUS-T418 Music and Ideas (3 cr.), Course 33694
MUS-N399 Honors Seminar in Music (3 cr.), Course 33698

Music, Ideas, and Performance Contemporary Culture

Instructor: Professor Marianne Kielian-Gilbert

An introduction to the philosophy of music and problems of music aesthetics. Can music express ideas? Can music express emotions? If so, how? This course brings together work on music philosophy and aesthetics, cultural theory, and music analysis to explore connections between music and ideas, experience and performance in contemporary culture. Performance studies challenges listeners to think about what music does rather than what it is — the dramatic character of music, movement and the use of the body, temporally experiential aspects of everyday life, and material dimensions of context become tangibly present in experience.

Selected topics:
• interactions of aesthetic beauty (art for art's sake) and social function
• connections between technical and figurative descriptions of music
• roles of the listener and particular listening practices
• relationships among the arts
• musical temporality; continuity and discontinuity in a musical work
• intertextuality and composer's relationships to musical tradition and history
• meaning and subjectivity, esp. in contemporary music; the portrayal of voice and character (film, opera, musical theater, popular music)
• music and the body; dance, movement, performativity /performance


Course limit (12). Requirements: readings, class discussion, reaction papers on issues arising from the readings, midterm project and final paper, class presentations of research. Prerequisite: junior standing, MUS-T252 or consent of instructor; N399 requires section authorization.