

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. Chorale
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 canons and fugues
- Explain how analysis may inform contemporary performance
- Navigate online resources for Bach scholarship
- Engage in, and lead, an analytical discussion
- Plan, research, develop and present an analytical oral presentation with supporting documentation that includes musical examples and diagrams

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 digital media. Three asynchronous projects: 1. *Bach & Friends*, 2. *Special Topics*, and 3. *Fugue Presentation Reflections*. See the *Daily Schedule* 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 via e-mail sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu, or 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 projects (10% ea.)
- 15% - Chorale Project
- 20% - Canon Project
- 25% - Fugue Project

COURSE OVERVIEW

Calendar

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

The university scheduled final exam day is July 11.
Asynchronous days are indicated in italics.

Daily Schedule

Week 1	June 23-26	Topic	Reading
	Mon., 6/23	<i>Introduction</i>	Fux 1725, 19-23; Gauldin 2004, A14-25
	Tues., 6/24	<i>Chorale</i>	Benjamin 2003, Appendix 1: Harmony; Dahn 2021; Remeš 2019
	Wed., 6/25	<i>Canon</i>	Benjamin 2003, Ch. 6 Imitation: Canon
	Thurs., 6/26	<i>Activity #1: Bach & Friends</i>	
Week 2	June 30 & July 1-3		
	Mon., 6/30	CHORALE PROJECT DISCUSSIONS <i>Canon (cont.)</i>	Kennan 1999, Ch. 9 Canon
	Tues., 7/1	<i>Fugue</i>	Turek, 1995, Fugue Benjamin 2003, Ch. 10 Fugue 1
	Wed., 7/2	<i>Fugue (cont.)</i>	Benjamin 2003, Ch. 11 Fugue 2
	Thurs., 7/3	<i>Activity #2: Special Topics</i>	
Week 3	July 7-9		
	Mon., 7/7	CANON PROJECT DISCUSSIONS Fugue Project Consultations	Kerman 2015
	Tues., 7/8	FUGUE PRESENTATIONS	
	Wed., 7/9	<i>Activity #3: Fugue Presentation Reflections</i>	

References:

- Benjamin, Thomas. 2003. *The Craft of Tonal Counterpoint*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.
- Dahn, Luke. 2021. The Four-Part Chorales of J.S. Bach. Available online at: <<https://www.bach-chorales.com>>.
- Fux, Johann Joseph. 1725/1965. *The Study of Counterpoint from Johann Joseph Fux's Gradus ad Parnassum*. Translated and edited by Alfred Mann. New York: Norton.
- Gauldin, Robert. 2013. *A Practical Approach to Eighteenth-Century Counterpoint*, Revised Edition. Long Grove: IL, Waveland Press.
- _____. 2004. "An Introduction to Species Counterpoint," in *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*, 2nd ed. New York: Norton, pp. A14-25.
- Kennan, Kurt. 1999. *Counterpoint*, 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ. Prentice Hall
- Kerman, Joseph. 2015. *Art of Fugue: Bach Fugues for Keyboard, 1715-1750*. Berkeley: U. of California Press.
- Remeš, Derek. 2019. *Realizing Thoroughbass Chorales in the Circle of J.S. Bach*. 2 vols. Cazenovia, NY: The Leupold Foundation.
- Turek, Ralph. 1995. "Fugue," in *The Elements of Music*. New York: McGraw Hill.

WORKS FOR STUDY

The Four-Part Chorales of J.S. Bach (Dahn 2021)

Canons, BWV 1072-78, BWV 1086, BWV 1079 & BWV 1087

Goldberg Variations (1741), BWV 988

Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1 (1722), BWV 846-869; Book 2, BWV 870-893 (c. 1740)

Musical Offering (1747), BWV 1079

The Art of Fugue (c. 1750), BWV 1080

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The complete course bibliography is available online at:

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