

FU/BEST Program

Name: Dr. Luc Döbereiner

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Course title: Music in the Digital Age

Course number: FU-BEST 29

Language of instruction: English

Contact hours: 45

ECTS-Credits: 5 **U.S. semester credits:** 3

Course description

Digitalization has significantly transformed and affected musical practices and aesthetics. New means of recording, processing, analysis and reproduction have profoundly changed the ways in which music is composed, produced, performed, disseminated and consumed. Sound synthesis and computational methods of structure generation have opened up new compositional possibilities. In this course, we will examine the development of electronic, computer music and sound art as well as more general shifts in the consumption and production of music. Through specific case studies, we will tackle the following questions: How have digital technologies enabled unprecedented modes of making, using and perceiving music? In what ways has digital mediatization shaped our experiences with musical content and style? How have technological developments influenced and challenged musical aesthetics and ideas of sound? And how do we reconcile the long-established connections between music, performance and liveness in an era when the paradigm of reproduction seems to be omnipresent?

In the first five sessions, we will consider the impact of digital technologies on the composition and production of music. After examining how analog and digital technologies have influenced musical practices, we will look at concrete examples and aesthetic developments in order to understand the influence of digital technologies both on the creative process of music making and on its aesthetic reflection.

The second half of the course will focus on a number of broader implications of digitalization related to listening and performance practices, as well as music-related genres such as sound art and virtual reality audio.

FU/BEST Program

At the end of the semester, we will extend the scope and consider cultural issues that arise by digital possibilities of sharing, disseminating and consuming music. In particular, we will discuss the intertwining of digitization and commodification.

Student profile

Second-semester sophomore or above

Prerequisites

Note: previous training in music is not a prerequisite for this course, although students with an ability to read music may find this skill advantageous from time to time.

Course Requirements

Midterm exam: 25%

Term-Paper: 25%

Final exam: 25%

Class participation (includes 1 Independent Project report): 25%

Literature

Photocopied course reader with texts drawn from scholarly sources.

Course schedule

Sessions	Topics, Readings, etc.
Session 1	<p>Introduction; overview of the course Transformations of musicianship in the digital age</p> <p>Reading: Andrew Hugill, <i>The Digital Musician</i> (2012), pages 221-257.</p>
Session 2	<p>Art and digital media</p> <p>Reading: Chapter 1 from Cat Hope and John Ryan, <i>Digital Arts: An Introduction to New Media</i> (2014)</p> <p>Johanna Drucker, "Art", from W.J.T. Mitchell and Mark B. Hansen, <i>Critical Terms for Media Studies</i> (2010)</p> <p>Chapter 3 from Dan Laughey, <i>Key Themes in Media Theory</i> (2007)</p>
Session 3	Post-war electronic music

FU/BEST Program

	<p>Reading: Chapter 11 from Joseph Auner, <i>Music in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries</i> (2013)</p> <p>Chapter 2 and 3 from Peter Manning, <i>Electronic and Computer Music</i> (2004)</p>
Session 4	<p>A short history of computer music</p> <p>Reading: Thom Holmes: <i>Electronic and Experimental Music</i> (2012), pages 271-318.</p> <p>Chapter 2 from <i>The Oxford Handbook of Computer Music</i> (2009)</p>
Session 5	<p>Microsound, noise and digital aesthetics</p> <p>Reading: Kim Cascone, “The Aesthetics of Failure: ‘Post-Digital’ Tendencies in Contemporary Computer Music”, from <i>Computer Music Journal</i> (2000), Vol. 24/4</p> <p>Phil Thomson, “Atoms and errors: towards a history and aesthetics of microsound”, from <i>Organised Sound</i>, Vol. 9/2 (2004)</p> <p>John Latartara, “Laptop Composition at the Turn of the Millennium: Repetition and Noise in the Music of Oval, Merzbow, and Kid606”, from <i>twentieth-century music</i>, Vol. 7/1 (2010)</p>
Session 6	Midterm Exam
Session 7	<p>Algorithmic composition and generative music</p> <p>Reading: Karlheinz Essl, “Algorithmic Composition”, from Nick Collins and Julio d’Escrivan, <i>The Cambridge Compendium to Electronic Music</i> (2017)</p> <p>Jon McCormack, Alice Eldridge, Alan Dorin, and Peter McIlwain, “Generative Algorithms for Making Music: Emergence, Evolution, and Ecosystems”, <i>The Oxford Handbook of Computer Music</i> (2009)</p>

FU/BEST Program

<p>Session 8</p>	<p>Impacts of digitalization I: Listening</p> <p>Reading: Michael Chion, “The Three Listening Modes”, from Jonathan Sterne, <i>The Sound Studies Reader</i> (2012)</p> <p>Raphaël Nowak, “Music Listening Activities in the Digital Age”, from <i>Leonardo Music Journal</i>, Vol. 26 (2016)</p> <p>Chapter 4 from Andy Hamilton, <i>Aesthetics & Music</i> (2007)</p>
<p>Session 9</p>	<p>Impacts of digitalization II: Liveness and Live-Electronics</p> <p>Reading: Atau Tanaka, “Sensor-Based Musical Instruments and Interactive Music”, from <i>The Oxford Handbook of Computer Music</i> (2009)</p> <p>Suk-Young Kim, “Liveness, Performance of Ideology and Technology in the Changing Media Environment”, from <i>Oxford Online Encyclopedia of Literature</i> (2017)</p> <p>J. Mulder, “Live sound and the disappearing digital” from Angela Cresswell Jones/Rebecca Jane Bennett, <i>The Digital Evolution of Live Music</i> (2015)</p> <p>Nicolas Collins, “Live electronic music” from <i>The Cambridge Compendium to Electronic Music</i> (2017)</p>
<p>Session 10</p>	<p>Digital extensions of music I: sound art</p> <p>Reading: Hoesen/Perrotte, "Sound Art: New Only in Name" from Feiereisen/Hills, <i>Germany in the Loud Twentieth Century</i> (2011), pages 141-154.</p> <p>Andra McCartney, “Soundwalking: Creating Moving Environmental Sound Narratives”, from Sumanth Gopinath and Jason Stanyek, <i>The Oxford Handbook of Mobile Music Studies Vol. 2</i> (2014)</p>

FU/BEST Program

	<p>Alan Licht, "Sound Art: Origins, development and ambiguities", from <i>Organised Sound</i>, Vol. 14/1 (2009)</p>
Session 11	<p>Digital extensions of music II: spatial sound and virtual reality</p> <p>Reading: Chapter 8 from Curtis Roads, <i>Composing Electronic Music</i> (2015)</p> <p>Chapter 3 from Tom Garner, <i>Echoes of Other Worlds: Sound In Virtual Reality</i> (2018)</p>
Session 12	<p>Copyright and sharing music in the digital age</p> <p>Reading: Excerpts from Matthew David, <i>Peer to Peer and the Music Industry: The Criminalization of Sharing</i> (2010)</p> <p>Daphne Keller, "The Musician as Thief: Digital Culture and Copyright Law" from <i>Sound Unbound</i> (2008)</p> <p>David Arditi, "Digital Subscriptions: The Unending Consumption of Music in the Digital Era", from <i>Popular Music and Society</i>, January 2017</p>
Session 13	Final Exam