Good evening.
Welcome to Difficult Listening Hour.
The spot on your dial for that relentless and impenetrable sound of
Difficult Music.

So sit bolt upright in that straight-backed chair,
button that top button,
and get set for some
difficult music

Ooola.
Seminar Leader: Paul Festa  
Credits: 8 ECTS, 4 U.S. credits  
Course Times: Mondays, 14:00 – 17:15  
Email: p.festa@berlin.bard.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment—probably the hours directly before and after class.

Requirements
Passing the course requires submission of all assigned work.

Academic Integrity
Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance, etc.
- The class meets in person, as of this writing, and a combination of common sense, good will, open communication, and flexibility will help us navigate exceptions. Obviously don’t come to class if you feel at all ill. If you are well enough to join us virtually, Zoom in. If not, take the absence—ways to make it up below.
- Two 90-minute absences, no penalty. Each additional absence, 0.3 is deducted from the semester course grade unless excused by leave of absence from the registrar or made up as described below.
- You may make up as many as three unexcused absences by giving a ten-minute presentation at your subsequent appearance that covers the assigned material. The presentation should cover the basics of the material along with your own take on it, and you’ll answer questions from the group. Credit is awarded on a scale of 0.0 – 0.3: a score of 0.3 cancels the absence, and 0.0 leaves the penalty intact.
- Eight and a half 90-minute absences—excused, made-up, or otherwise—amount to more than 30 percent of the course, and Bard does not award credit. Consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.
- These policies apply equally to sessions missed during the add-drop period.
- Lateness is billed in 30-minute increments (so 5 min. late = 1/3 attendance).
- Lack of required texts—paper copies—equals 1/2 attendance.
- Phones powered off or in airplane mode.
Assignments
- Regular brief quizzes for your own self-assessment and preparation for the two exams. We will go over these in class but I will not collect them. You will be asked to identify music from the syllabus (current and prior weeks), answer questions about the reading, give basic information about the composer’s life and work, and briefly contextualize the excerpt \( 0 \text{ percent} \).
- Weekly responses to assigned material. Include timecode in all writing. These are informal notes on listening, not polished essays, may be read in class, and are counted with your class participation \( 25 \text{ percent} \).
- Midterm exam testing your ability to recognize works from the syllabus and situate them stylistically and historically \( \text{Week 7, Oct. 12, 25 percent} \).
- A ten-minute film, probably under the headings of documentary and criticism and almost certainly not music video; or your choice of two of the following challenges (group projects encouraged—\( 25 \text{ percent} \)):
  - a semi-staged scene from *Doktor Faustus*
  - lip-synch for your grade (to an atonal aria)
  - interpretive dance to difficult music (props, costumes, concept)
  - difficult(-)music video (live or video)
  - narrate a piece of difficult music (live or video)
  - multimedia report on your visit to St. Burchardi Church in Halberstadt on *Organ2/ASLSP (As Slow as Possible)* by John Cage, which is scheduled to be completed in 2640 (double credit).
  - a challenge of your own devising, subject to class approval
- Final Exam \( \text{Completion Week, Dec. 14, 25 percent} \)

Policy on Late Submission of Work
Student Handbook rules on the submission of essays applies to all assigned work: essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Library and Book Purchase Policies

Required texts
- Alex Ross, *The Rest Is Noise*

Packet
- Syllabus
- Composer timeline
- Readings
Schedule

WEEK 1 — Monday, 31 August
Words to music; musical notation; the harmonic series; plainchant to the Renaissance

**MUSIC**

**Hildegard von Bingen** (Bermersheim vor der Höhe, 1098 - 1179, Bingen)
- Rubor sanguinis
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDeR9MeGNPg

**Léonin** (probably French; fl. 1150s — d. 1201 [?])
- organum duplum
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngCRm7uLirA

**John Taverner** (English; c. 1490 – 1545)
- Dum transisset sabbatum
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUBF7kNVibY

**Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa** (Venosa, 1566 – 1613 Gesualdo)
- “Moro, lasso al mio duolo,” Madrigals, Book VI, Nr. 17
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvwzrtgCBdU

**Sir John Kenneth Tavener** (London, 1944 – 2013, Dorset)
- The Lamb
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIMUquOdDT4
- God Is with Us
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loSi0Q4AEko

**TEXT**

Wayne Koestenbaum
- *The Queen’s Throat*, “The Unspeakable Marriage of Words and Music"

Paul Festa
- *Apparition of the Eternal Church* (film transcript, 2006)

Wikipedia
- Harmonic series (music)

Hugh M. Miller

WEEK 2 — Monday, 7 September
The Baroque, Bach, contrapuntal music

**MUSIC**

**Johann Sebastian Bach** (Eisenach 1685–1750 Leipzig)
- The Art of the Fugue, BWV 1080
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9OUfBDIGhw
● Sonata #3 in C major for violin alone, BWV 1005
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oNBtYlGgQ&vl=en

TEXT Hugh M. Miller
● History of Music: the Baroque (81 – 85), Instrumental Music (100 – 105)

Christopher Wolff
● The New Grove Bach Family (4 – 5, 159 – 172)

Yehudi Menuhin and Curtis W. Davis
● The Music of Man (128 – 137)

Arnold Schoenberg
● Style and Idea: “Bach” (393 – 397)

WEEK 3 — Monday, 14 September
Against difficulty and back again: the classical period and its disruptor

MUSIC Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (Weimar 1714 – 1788 Hamburg)
● Sonata for flute and obbligato harpsichord in C Major, Wq. 149, H. 574
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUdTVzzU1Sw

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Salzburg 1756 – 1791 Vienna)
● String Quartet No. 19 “Dissonance,” K. 465
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcfDxgfHs64

Ludwig van Beethoven (Bonn 1770 – 1827 Vienna)
● Symphony no. 3 in E flat major “Eroica,” op. 55
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZfzQ8L39dl
● Grosse Fuge, Op. 133
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAgdd2VqLVc

TEXT Hugh M. Miller
● History of Music: The Classical Era (1750 - 1820): General Considerations (115 – 119); Instrumental Music (120 – 125)

ART Adolph von Menzel (1815 – 1905)
● “Flötenkonzert Friedrichs II. in Sanssouci,” oil on canvas, 1850 – 1852
Alte Nationalgalerie, Room 1.05
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/64/Adolph_Menzel_-_Fl%C3%B6tenkonzert_Friedrichs_des_Gro%C3%9Fen_in_Sanssouci_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

WEEK 4 — Monday, 21 September
The Romantic Period: virtuosity; tonality on the rocks

MUSIC Niccolò Paganini (Genoa 1782 – 1840 Nice)
● Caprice 5
  o Leonidas Kavakos  
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fijI_fyRwik
  o Alexander Markov  
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLgBejh5TLA
  o Augustin Hadelich  
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JY5Km0c8YmE
  o Sumina Studer  
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jXXWBt5URw

● Caprice 6
  o Yehudi Menuhin  
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnxK9EVwxms
  o Augustin Hadelich  
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1aTVxebY6Zg
  o Paul Zukovsky

● Caprice No. 24
  o Jascha Heifetz  
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPcnGrie__M

Franz Liszt (xxxx – xxxx)
  ● Bagatelle Sans Tonalité

Richard Wagner (xxxx – xxxx)
  ● Tristan & Isolde

TEXT  
  Ross, i – xviii, 1 – 15, 339 – 341

WEEK 5 — Monday, 28 September
Strauss and Mahler

MUSIC  
  Richard Strauss (Nationality, date – date)
    ● Also Sprach Zarathustra
    ● Elektra
    ● Ariadne (Majordomo’s announcement through Zerbinetta’s aria)

TEXT  
  Gustav Mahler (Nationality, date – date)
    ● Sixth Symphony

TEXT  
  Ross, 15 – 35

WEEK 6 — Monday, 5 October
A Faustian Bargain

MUSIC  
  Claude Debussy (Nationality, date – date)
    ● Preludes
Arnold Schoenberg (Nationality, date – date)
- *Verklärte Nacht*
- *Gurrelieder* (opening)
- *Pierrot Lunaire*
- *Fünf Klavierstücke, Op.23*
- *Moses & Aron* (scenes)

**TEXT**
Ross, 36 – 66

**ART**
Claude Monet
- *Waterlilies*

William Turner (Nationality, date – date)
- *Work*, Info

Arnold Schoenberg (Nationality, date – date)
- *Self-portrait*

**WEEK 7 — Monday, 12 October**
The Second Viennese School

**MUSIC**
Alban Berg (Nationality, date – date)
- *Lulu*
- *Violin Concerto*

Anton Webern (Nationality, date – date)
- *Six Bagatelles*
- *Six Pieces for Orchestra*

**TEXT**
Ross, 67 – 79, 211 – 232

**EXAM**
Midterm

**WEEK 8 — Monday, 26 October**
France

**MUSIC**
Erik Satie (Nationality, date – date)
- *Le Fils des Étoiles, Prelude*
- *Gymnopedies*

Edgar Varèse (Nationality, date – date)
- *Amériques*

Maurice Ravel (Nationality, date – date)
● Bolero

**Olivier Messiaen** (Nationality, date – date)
● *Le Banquet Celeste*
● *Nativity Suite*
● *Quartet for the End of Time*

TEXT Ross, 80 – 116, 148 – 149, 390 -391, 483 – 505

**WEEK 9 — Monday, 2 November**
Postwar Messiaen

**MUSIC**

Olivier Messiaen
● *Vingt Regards de l’Enfant Jesus* (1 – 6)
● *Couleurs de la Cité Celeste*
● *Canyons* (excerpts)
● *Organ Book* (excerpts)
● *Illuminations from the Beyond* (excerpts)

TEXT Ross, 80 – 116, 148 – 149, 390 -391, 483 – 505 (review)

**WEEK 10 — Monday, 9 November**
Russia

**MUSIC**

Igor Stravinsky (Nationality, date – date)
● *Sacre du Printemps*

Dmitri Shostakovich (Nationality, date – date)
● *Violin Concerto #1 in a minor*

Alfred Schnittke (Nationality, date – date)
● *Concerto Grosso*

Sofia Gubaidulina (Nationality, date – date)
● *Offertorium*

TEXT Ross, 84 – 120 (some review), 575 – 578

**WEEK 11 — Monday, 16 November**
Eastern Europe

**MUSIC**

Bela Bartok (Nationality, date – date)
• String Quartet #4
• Violin Concerto in B major

Gyorgy Ligeti (Nationality, date – date)
• Lux Aeterna
• Grand Macabre

TEXT  Ross, 88 – 122 (mostly review), 505 – 514

WEEK 12 — Monday, 23 November
The International Style

MUSIC  Pierre Boulez (Nationality, date – date)
• Piano Sonata No. 1

Karheinz Stockhausen (Nationality, date – date)
• Gesang der Jünglinge (1955/1956)

Toru Takemitsu (Nationality, date – date)
• Piano distance (1961)

Iannis Xenakis (Nationality, date – date)
• Khoai (1976)
• Analogique A Et B (1958-59)

Philip Venables
• Numbers 76-80

TEXT  Ross, 386 – 396, 424 – 434, 562 – 575

WEEK 13 — Monday, 30 November
America the Difficult

MUSIC  Ruth Crawford Seeger (Nationality, date – date)
• Chant 3, Info

Aaron Copland (Nationality, date – date)
• Fanfare for the Common Man
• Connotations (1961/1962)

Charles Ives (Nationality, date – date)
• Concord Sonata

John Cage (Nationality, date – date)
● Chorals for violin solo

**Morton Feldman** (Nationality, date – date)
- *Rothko Chapel*

**Elliott Carter** (Nationality, date – date)
- *Duo for violin and piano*

**David Rakowski** (Nationality, date – date)
- *Piano Etudes*
  - 25, *Fists of Fury*
  - 30, *A Gliss is Just a Gliss*
  - 43, *Wiggle Room*
  - 53, *Cell Division*

TEXT Ross, 284 – 313, 386 – 417, 434 – 442

**WEEK 14 — Monday, 7 December**
Against masochism again—and back again: minimalism

**La Monte Young** (Nationality, date – date)
- *For Brass*
- *String Trio*

**Terry Riley** (Nationality, date – date)
- *In C*

**Philip Glass** (Nationality, date – date)
- *Einstein on the Beach* (excerpts)

**Steve Reich** (Nationality, date – date)
- *Variations for Winds, Strings, and Keyboards.* (1979)

**Louis Andriessen** (Nationality, date – date)
- *De Staat, Info*

TEXT Ross, 515 – 573

**COMPLETION WEEK — Monday, 14 December**

**FINAL EXAM**