

18th Century Counterpoint // Spring 2019 // Syllabus
Duquesne University // Mary Pappert School of Music
Dr. Paul V. Miller, instructor

1. Course Description

The practice of 18th century counterpoint is essential for understanding the fundamental structure of tonal music, and embraces a wider range of styles than many realize. We will learn counterpoint through methods that rely on figured bass realization and partimento. Primarily an invention of practical musicians rather than theorists, these pedagogies have significant value for performers, improvisers, teachers and composers because they involve both improvisation and written composition. Exercises are drawn from historical sources such as G. F. Handel, the Langloz manuscript and Gjerdingen's *Monuments of Partimento*. Students will be expected to complete weekly assignments as well as acquire some basic keyboard skills. Two larger projects are also part of our curriculum: first, a prelude composition and second, a short fugue realization in the style of Handel. By the end of the semester, students will be able to realize figured bass in a variety of styles and contexts, compose (and possibly improvise) short pieces in the style of Bach and Handel, and grasp an essential stream of musical pedagogy in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

2. Course Information

MUSC 549 02: Topics in Music Theory and Analysis

MUSC 426 02: Topics in Music Theory and Analysis

Meeting times & location: Thursdays, 5:15 – 6:55pm, Room 107, Mary Pappert School of Music

My Office: Mary Pappert School of Music, room 201 // Email: millerp3@duq.edu

Office hours: Monday, 9:00am – noon or by appointment (please use email only)

Final exam: Your final project will be the final exam (see below)

3. Materials

All materials are on Blackboard. The main ones are as follows:

1. Handel's Lessons for Princess Anne in Throughbass and Fugue. Both Ledbetter and Mann editions are scanned for you and available on Blackboard.
2. Anonymous, *The Langloz Manuscript*, ed. William Renwick. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
3. Sanguinetti, Giorgio. *The Art of Partimento: History, Theory and Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

You will also need staff paper and several pencils for each class meeting. There is staff paper on Blackboard that you can print out for free!

4. Workload

The workload in this course consists of the following:

1. Weekly written assignments
2. Written midterm project: a keyboard prelude
3. Written final project: a short keyboard fugue
4. Two videos of you realizing any Handel exercise at the keyboard

5. Grading policies and rubric

1. Weekly written assignments
 - a. Weekly written assignments are due at the **beginning** of class.
 - b. Please complete your assignments in pencil on staff paper (recommended) or write them in a music notation program such as Finale or Sibelius. In my experience, students who write their assignments out on staff paper generally do better, because they tend to work at the keyboard instead of in front of the computer. This tends to result in a more idiomatic realization.

- c. Whether you work your assignment out on staff paper, or do it on the computer, **please submit a hard copy**, since I do all my grading at the keyboard. Do not email me your work – I will not grade it.
 - d. Late assignments will not be graded or counted towards your grade. If an assignment is late, I won't grade it.
 - e. Illegible assignments can't be graded.
 - f. Each counterpoint exercise will be evaluated according to the following simple rubric (Note that sometimes there is more than one exercise assigned each week).
 - i. Correctness (3 points). *Correctness* means that you *demonstrate in your writing an understanding of the technical means of writing counterpoint*. Writing parallel or direct fifths, parallel or direct octaves or incorrectly realizing figures are both examples of incorrect counterpoint.
 - ii. Style (2 points). *Style* means that your writing is plausible within the historical confines of the 18th century. Rhythmic elements contribute greatly to this aspect, as do chord doublings, choice of register and spacing of the right hand. If your work is impossible to play on the keyboard, it is not stylistic. Many large leaps in the right hand also count against style. Using unwieldy intervals (augmented seconds, diminished fourths) are unusual in the 18th century and not part of the everyday style.
 - iii. Beauty (1 point). *Beauty* means that your counterpoint has a quality about it that makes an experienced listener want to play or hear it again. Well-crafted melodic lines are beautiful. Voicing suspensions in the best possible configuration make counterpoint beautiful. A leap or two here or there is also beautiful. Although beauty is inherently subjective, I will award this point based on my expert understanding of 18th century aesthetics.
2. Written midterm and final projects
- a. These assignments are longer than the weekly assignments, and count for two (midterm) or three (final) assignment grades. They will be evaluated according to the same rubric as your weekly assignments.
 - b. Both projects will be for the keyboard. The first will be a Prelude and the second a Fugue. Both will be given as partimenti.
3. Videos
- a. On Blackboard, please upload two videos of you realizing counterpoint on the keyboard before the end of the semester.
 - b. There is no fixed due date to this; upload your videos when you feel ready.
 - c. You **absolutely may not under any circumstance** play from a realized part on your video.
 - d. In your video, the music must be clearly visible so that it is obvious that you are not playing from a realized part. Position the camera in such a way that I can see what you are reading from. A friend can hold the camera for you as you play. If I cannot see the music you are playing from, I cannot grade your video.
 - e. You may realize any two exercises you wish – short or long – simple or complex – but please choose from Handel's exercises.
 - f. Your performances will be evaluated according to the following rubric.
 - i. Correctness (3 points)
 - ii. Style (2 points)
 - iii. Beauty (1 point)
 - iv. Fluency the keyboard (3 points). *Fluency at the keyboard* means that you adhere to a steady tempo, play the correct notes, and generally do not fumble through the exercise. You can choose a slow tempo, but it should be steady and musical.

6. Attendance and Class Participation

Particularly as a result of having only one class meeting per week for two hours, attendance is crucial to your success in this class. If you cannot make it to class, please let me know at least a day ahead of time. If for some reason you must miss class, all our class notes are scanned and available on Blackboard – please avail yourself of this valuable resource.

7. Final Grades

Your final grade will be calculated in the following way: Weekly assignments: 50%; Two videos: 10% each; Midterm and Final: 10% each; Class attendance and participation: 10%.

Here is how your number grades convert to letter grades. Please note that Duquesne does not offer C-, D+ or D- as grades.

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	F
High	100	93.9	89.9	85.9	83.9	79.9	75.9	69.9	59.9
Low	93.9	90	86	83.9	80	76	70	60	0

8. Weekly schedule and calendar

Week	Date	Topics	Assignment
1	1/10	Root position: Handel, nos. 1-3	Handel: Nos. 4 and 5
2	1/17	Handel, nos. 6, 7 and 9: 6 chords	Handel: No. 8 and Langloz: No. 55
3	1/24	Handel, No. 10: 4-3 suspensions Handel, No. 11: 6/4 chords	Miller partimenti
4	1/31	Handel: No. 12: 6/5 chords Handel: Nos. 13-14: 4/2 chords	Handel: No. 14
5	2/7	Handel: Nos. 15-16: 7-6 suspensions and 7 chords	Langloz: No. 48
6	2/14	Handel: Nos. 17-18: 9 suspension	Handel: No. 19 and Langloz: No. 53, opening
7	2/21	Handel: Nos. 20 and 21: 9/7 and 9/4 suspensions	Langloz: No. 54
8	2/28	No class	Please work on your videos
9	3/14	Handel: Nos. 22-23: practice pieces J. S. Bach: BWV 1021	Handel #24 – Prelude Midterm
10	3/21	Handel: Fugue Exercises 1-2	Langloz: Fugue No. 11 in d minor
11	3/28	Handel: Fugue Example & Exercise 3	Langloz: Fugue 41 in C major
12	4/4	Handel: Fugue Exercise 4	Langloz: Fugue 61 in G Major Bonus: Prelude 61
13	4/11	Handel: Fugue Example & Exercise 5. Double fugue	Work on final fugue project
14	4/25	Handel: Fugue Example & Exercise 6 Double fugue; augmentation and diminution in fugue	Work on final fugue project

9. Bibliography. All these titles are scanned and available on Blackboard

- Anonymous. *The Langloz Manuscript*, ed. William Renwick. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Bach, C.P.E. "Improvisation," from *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, tr. William Mitchell. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1949, pp. 430 – 445.
- Bach, Johann Sebastian. *J.S. Bach's Precepts and Principles for Playing the Thorough-Bass or Accompanying in Four Parts*. Tr. Pamela L. Poulin. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- Fux, Johann Joseph. *The Study of Counterpoint from Johann Joseph Fux's Gradus ad Parnassum*. tr. Alfred Mann. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1971.
- Gasparini, Francesco. *The Practical Harmonist at the Harpsichord*. Tr. Frank S. Stillings, ed. David L. Burrows. New York: Da Capo Press, 1980.
- Gjerdingen, Robert. *Monuments of Partimento*.
- Ledbetter, David. *Continuo Playing According to Handel: His Figured Bass Exercises*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Mann, Alfred. *The Great Composer as Teacher and Student: Theory and Practice of Composition*. New York: Dover Publications, 1994, pp. 7 – 39.
- Sanguinetti, Giorgio. *The Art of Partimento: History, Theory and Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Works analyzed include:

- J. S. Bach: *Die Kunst der Fugue*, BWV 1079, Contrapuntus 6, Contrapuntus 10 and Ricercar à 6
- J. S. Bach: Organ Trio Sonata BWV 526, second movement
- J. S. Bach: *Das Wohltemperirte Clavier*, books 1 and 2, selections
- J. S. Bach: Sonata for Solo violin in a minor, BWV 1003, Allegro
- J. S. Bach: Invention in f minor, BWV 780
- J. S. Bach: Violin Sonata in G Major, BWV 1021
- Handel: *Messiah*, HWV 56, "He Trusted in God" and "Let all the Angels"
- Handel: *Utrecht te Deum* HWV 278, "All the Earth doth Worship Thee"
- Handel: *Saul*, HWV 53, "In Sweetest Harmony"
- Pergolesi: *Stabat Mater*, opening

Other representative works, as needed

10. Academic integrity

Students are expected to adhere to and uphold the highest standards of ethical behavior in this course. Any academic or intellectual dishonesty usually results in the failure of the course. Please read Duquesne's policy on academic integrity, which can be found by doing a web search on the terms "duquesne university academic integrity policy". More specific information on academic integrity will be found in the individual class descriptions below. Read this carefully, please.

In our class, it is absolutely crucial to understand that each assignment must be your own work, and nobody else's. Occasionally I will ask you to work together on assignments. If this specific instruction is not given, you should work on your own. There are other specific instances of academic integrity violations, particularly in the aural skills area. These are listed below in the appropriate syllabus.

11. Students with Disabilities: official university statement and policy

Duquesne University is committed to providing all students with equal access to learning. In order to receive reasonable accommodations in their courses, students who have a disability of any kind must register with the Office of Freshman Development and Special Student Services in 309 Duquesne Union (412-396-6657). Once a disability is officially documented, the office of Special Student Services will meet with you to determine what accommodations are necessary. With your permission, your instructors will receive letters outlining the reasonable accommodations they are required to make.

Once I have received this letter, you and I should meet to coordinate the way these accommodations will be implemented in this course. For more information, go to www.duq.edu/special-students

12. Statement on health and wellness

The Mary Pappert School of Music recently adopted a set of Health and Safety Recommendations for Musicians. It can be summarized as follows:

The Mary Pappert School of Music attends to the health and safety of musicians; the suitable choices of equipment and technology for specific purposes; the appropriate and safe operation of equipment and technology; and the acoustic and other conditions associated with health and safety in practice rehearsal, performance, and facilities.

For the full document, please visit:

<https://www.duq.edu/assets/Documents/music/Duquesne-University-Health-and-Safety.pdf>

13. Respect

Students are expected to demonstrate a high level of respect, sensitivity and support towards themselves and their peers as we all collectively struggle to assimilate difficult concepts. Stress levels are higher in aural skills classes. I seek to foster a supportive, cooperative and healthy classroom spirit where one can always learn from one's mistakes. If a student feels disrespected in any way, please see me and I will try to resolve the situation as equitably as possible.

14. Cell phone policy

Please do not use your cell phone at all during class. It is disruptive both to your own learning process, and to others. On the grounds that your cell phone use disturbs others, you will be politely asked to turn your phone off during class. If you feel you must use your phone during class time, kindly exit the classroom for the benefit of others around you.