MUSC109 Introduction to Experimental Music
T, Th 2:40 – 4:00PM
CFA Cinema
Professor Ronald Kuivila

Basic course information

Instructor: Ronald Kuivila  
Office hours: Monday 9:00 – 10:00 or by appointment

Teaching assistants:
Daniel Fishkin
Cecilia Lopez
Peter Blasser

Books to acquire at the book store:
Michael Nyman,  
Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond
John Cage,  
Silence

Additional course materials are placed on Moodle

Classes meet from 1:10PM to 2:30 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There will be a special end of the year meeting on Thursday, December 4 to perform a Music Circus. Additionally, you will be asked to attend and write brief reports on four concerts over the semester. The first concert, on Thursday September 4 at 8PM in Memorial chapel, is mandatory. You may pick any three of the six concerts listed below:

Tuesday, September 23, 2014 at 9:00 PM World Music Hall: Sidrazzi Gamelan
Tuesday, October 7, 2014 at 9:00 PM World Music Hall Getting to Know You
Tuesday, October 28, 2014 at 9:00 PM World Music Hall: Transcriptions
Tuesday, November 11, 2014 at 9:00 PM World Music Hall: Whataya Talk?
Tuesday, November 18, 2014 at 9:00 PM World Music Hall: The View from Nowhere
Friday, December 5, 2014 at 9:00 PM World Music Hall: 'All' means 'necessary'

Grading:
10%: Concert reports
10%: Class participation (including in class performances)
20%: Quiz 1
20%: Quiz 2
20%: Quiz 3
10%: Final Exam
MUSC109 Introduction to Experimental Music
M, W 1:10 – 2:30
Fall Semester, 2014
Rehearsal Hall 003
Syllabus

PART I: Origins

I: Experimental Music, Composing, Performing, and Listening
Reading: Nyman Chapter 1
9/1: Noise, Soundscape, and Music as a way of listening
9/3: Towards (a definition of) Experimental Music
assignment: concert report on Reinier Van Houdt (8PM, September 4, Memorial Chapel)

II: Backgrounds and John Cage
Reading: Nyman Chapter 2
9/8: The historical avant-garde in music and art
9/10: Sounds as Themselves: Chance, Indeterminacy, and Silence

III: The “New York School”
Reading: Nyman Chapter 3
9/15: Morton Feldman: sculpting sound
9/17: Earle Brown and Christian Wolff: Mobile form and contingency

IV. Round-up
9/22: Performances of prose pieces
9/24: Quiz

PART II: Responses: Fluxus, Electronics, and Performance

V: Fluxus
Reading: Nyman Chapter 4
9/29: Event Scores and Fluxus: Brecht, Young and Ono
10/1: Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman: inventing video and performance art

VI: From Indeterminacy to Installation
Reading: Nyman, Chapter 5
10/6: Tape and Live Electronics: Williams Mix, Cartridge Music
10/8: Runthrough, Vespers, EAT, Max Neuhaus

VII: Improvisation, Electronics
Reading: Nyman pp 126 - 138
10/13: MEV, AMM, and the tie between Free improvisation and Experimental music
10/15: Live Electronic Performance: Michel Waisvisz, Gordon Monahan, Maryanne Amacher

VIII: Technology and gender
10/22: Laurie Anderson, Laetitia Sonami, Diamanda Galas

10/27: Quiz
10/29: Performance of Distance or Cartridge Music

PART III: Minimalism and Mass Culture
X. Musical “Minimalism”
Reading: Nyman, Chapter 7
11/3 California Minimalism: LaMonte Young and Terry Riley
11/5 Tony Conrad, Rhys Chatham, Arnold Dreyblatt

XI: New York Minimalism
Jonathan Bernard, The Minimalist Aesthetic in the Plastic Arts and in Music
Brooks McNamara, Vessel: The Scenography of Meredith Monk
11/10 Steve Reich
11/12 Phillip Glass

XII: Responses
11/17: Dance/Theater: Robert Wilson and Meredith Monk
11/19: Minimalism reconfigured: Morton Feldman, Eliane Radigue, Tom Johnson

XIII: Just a quiz
11/24: QUIZ

PART IV: Music Circus
12/1: presentations of Music Circus contributions, part 1
12/3: presentations of Music Circus contributions, part 2
12/4: Special noontime performance of Music Circus

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE BY THE LAST DAY OF READING WEEK