

MUTH 301 Bibliography Project

Due Monday, February 15

This assignment models the first phase of studying a piece of 20th-century music, in which you gather relevant information about the piece and the style in which it is written. This information will provide a foundation for your own analytical investigations (modeled by the final analysis paper).

The purposes of this assignment are:

to give you experience finding and using analytical literature on 20th-century music;

to allow you to work on the analysis of a work of your choice from outside of the repertoires covered in the course;

and to allow you to reflect critically on the kinds of questions being addressed by analysis and the kinds of questions that matter to you.

The project consists of the following:

- 1) Choose a piece of 20th-century Western art music that is not from one of the repertoires covered in the course. Email your instructor by Friday of week 2 to let him or her know what piece you have chosen. Wait until your choice is confirmed before beginning extensive research.
- 2) Locate and document as much relevant literature as you can (more detail below). Begin your literature search right away once you receive confirmation of your chosen piece, so that ILL materials arrive before the project due date. Ideally, you would place your ILL requests in the first half of week 3.
- 3) Prepare a list of the sources you have found (again, more detail below). For each of your sources you should write a brief assessment of the relevance of your source to the particular sorts of questions that you are interested in.
- 4) From among your sources, choose a few to receive more detailed attention. Choose at least three sources, with a total of at least 100 pages that are relevant to your topic. (If some of your better sources are short, you may need more than three.) Write a brief report on these selected sources, in which you address the following:
 - a) What kinds of analytical techniques are used (e.g. pitch-class set theory, motivic analysis, identification of collections, etc.)?
 - b) What aspects of the music are addressed (e.g. pitch, rhythm, timbre, form, etc.)?
 - c) Is the analysis more focused on the small scale or the large scale?
 - d) Are Forte's criteria of completeness, consistency, and testability satisfied by the analysis?
 - e) How does the analysis relate to Nattiez's three categories of poietic, neutral, and esthetic?
 - f) Where does the discussion fall on the continuum from description to analysis to interpretation?

Note that it is not necessary for you read this material in great detail. I am looking for a sense of the general approaches used and the kinds of questions asked.

- 5) Write a paragraph addressing the following. Thinking of this project as the first stage of a larger project, to what extent are the questions that matter to you answered by the existing literature, and to what extent would you need to do original research in order to answer those questions?

Further details on the components of the assignment:

- 1) Choose a piece of 20th-century Western art music that is not from one of the repertoires covered in the course. For repertoires covered, see second page of the syllabus; because we will spend relatively little time on minimalism, you may do your project on a minimalist piece.

- 2) Locate and document as much relevant literature as you can.

Two important points: 1) to be relevant, the source does not necessarily have to address your piece directly; and 2) you do not have to actually look at every source on your list – here “locate” means “discover the existence of”.

Depending on the piece you choose, there may not be anything written about your piece, or even anything analytical written about any music by the composer of your piece. If this is the case, you may need to do historical research to find out what other works by the same or other composers would be similar enough to make analyses of those works relevant, part of a helpful foundation for your examination of the score.

In doing your literature search, you are primarily looking for analytical, as opposed to historical or biographical, information. But bear in mind that at least some history and biography will be important for providing context; furthermore, historical discussions of composers will frequently include some analytical discussion, so it is very much worth skimming historical treatments, especially if the analytical literature is thin.

A good place to start looking for sources is the guide to further reading in the back of Robert Morgan’s *Twentieth-Century Music* (on reserve in the library), as this includes only the most important sources; but bear in mind that minor composers may not be included and that the book is almost twenty years old. Another good source is the bibliographical listings at the end of the articles on *Grove Music Online*.

Probably your most important source, though, will be RILM, an online guide to literature on music. This is found on the library’s resources page. Ask a librarian for help if you are not an experienced user of RILM; as you may imagine, care with search terms will be very important for getting the fullest results. Once you have some sources, you may want to try to find what articles have cited those sources – this is a good way of finding additional sources. Google Scholar (*not* regular Google) is one way of doing this; again, ask a reference librarian for help if you haven’t used this before.

As soon as you identify particularly relevant sources, check to see if they are available at the library or if you will have to order them by Interlibrary Loan; if you need to use ILL, place the requests immediately. It can take a few weeks for these requests to be filled, and you want to be sure to have time to look at them before the project is due. Also, order more than you think you will need, since some sources may not be available at all.

Finally, remember that you do not actually have to look at every source on your list. You are simply recording the relevant sources you find out about, whether through searches or through references in works that you do look at. You are required to find the usual bibliographic information, and you are required to assess relevance. If you don't have access to the source, you can assess its relevance based on its title, facts of its publication, its abstract in RILM, discussions of it in other sources, etc.

3) Prepare a list of sources

Make sure to include all of the usual bibliographic information. Use any of the bibliographic styles listed in the Chicago Manual of Style. Exact adherence to the guidelines is not required, but all of the usual information should be there, in the right order and in more or less the right format.

Note that if you access a printed source such as a journal article through an electronic portal such as JSTOR, cite as if you had looked at a paper copy. Do not use citation styles developed for web pages that list URL's, date of access, etc.