

MUS 504: Analysis of Music in the 20th and 21st Centuries – From Music to Sound

Instructor: Tony Doyle | Monday, 2pm – 4:40pm

(NB: Course topic in Solar shows “Analysis of 21st Century Music”. That topic is listed for bureaucratic reasons only.)

From the mid-twentieth century to the present, composers have increasingly explored sound as a primary compositional material, expanding beyond traditional notions of harmony, melody, and form. This course examines the aesthetic and technical developments that accompanied this shift, focusing on how changing approaches to timbre, texture, and spatialization redefined the act of composition and listening. Through discussion, analysis, and creative exploration, students will investigate the evolving relationship between sound, technology, and musical expression.

Coursework will include short analytical and creative studies leading toward a final composition or research project. Active participation in seminar discussions and peer critique forms an essential part of assessment. Attendance at all meetings is expected, and unexcused absences will negatively affect the final grade.

This course is suitable for all graduate students. For MM and DMA students, this fulfills the Elective Group 2 requirement. Students in the MA in Composition and the MA in Critical Music Studies tracks must take either MUS 502 or MUS 504 in the first year, unless exempted via the relevant examination (Composition) or advisory assessment (Critical Music Studies).

3 credits