

Professor Guerino Mazzola

Fall 2010: Freshman Seminar: *What Music Is—Its Meaning, Reality, Communication, and Embodiment*

### **Course Description**

The great philosopher of life Friedrich Nietzsche rightly claims that "without music, life would be a mistake." This does not mean that life is automatically perfect with music. This seminar deals with exactly this problem: What is music doing to us? Why do we listen to it? And how that? What is its meaning in our lives, why does it matter, which realities does it touch, how can it be communicated? In what way is it distributed between intellect and emotions? And why do we go to concerts, since electronic media and the internet provide such an easy access? The answers will be approached via intensive listening to all kinds of music from different cultures and epochs as well as through critical, very open discussions with the students. The instructor being highly sensitive to non-authoritarian music cultures, he may provide a thoroughly dynamic and flexible access to music.

### **Media and Collaboration**

The course is using numerous music examples from CDs, DVDs, and Internet resources. The students will play a crucial role by their participation in core discussions about their understanding of and approach to music. This collaboration will be successful if they know better, why they are interested in music, its philosophy, its overall influence, and its making.

### **Prerequisites**

No special prerequisites except: interest and confidence that this seminar is basic for the future music-oriented curriculum.

### **Goals and Objectives**

Our overall target is to set up a gross "topography of music", namely a big body encompassing all aspects and putting them together in a non-conflicting way. The miraculous thing is that this body can be visualized by a four-dimensional cube. Isn't that fascinating?

### **Grading**

I grade on a scale 0-10 with 0.1 steps: 9.5-10 = A, 9-9.4 = A-, 8.5-8.9 = B+, 7.6-8.4 = B, 7-7.5 = B-, 6.5-6.9 = C; 6-6.4 = C-, 5-5.9 = D, 0-4.9 = F.

Final grade: Class participation 1/2, 2 class papers 1/2, no final exam.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will lead to failure.

### **Contact**

My office hours are by appointment (room 164).

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## **Schedule of Classes**

*As a rule of thumb, each chapter will take us one week of the semester.*

### **I Introduction**

### **II The Dimension of Realities**

- II.1 Physical Reality
- II.2 Psychological Reality
- II.3 Mental Reality

### **III The Dimension of Meaning**

- III.1 Expressions of Music
- III.2 Musical Contents
- III.3 Mechanisms of Musical Signification

### **IV The Dimension of Communication**

- IV.1 Poetics: The Creative
- IV.2 Neutral Level: The Work
- IV.3 Aesthesis: The Receptive Position

### **V The Dimension of Embodiment**

- V.1 Musical Facticity
- V.2 Processes Behind the Facts
- V.3 The Gestural Stratum of the Making

### **VI Synopsis**

## **References**

none