

MUS 750: Graduate Seminar in Musicology/Ethnomusicology

Current and Upcoming Topics

Fall 2025 *Improvisation in World Cultures*

Instructor: Connell

An examination of musical improvisation within various global traditions, including (but not limited to) jazz, Indian ragas, Arabic maqam, Brazilian embolada, Baroque performance practice, the blues, and aleatoric music. In addition to readings and discussions on select musical cultures, students will create and participate in a variety of improvisational games and compositions.

Spring 2026 *Global Opera*

Instructor: Zhang

This seminar reimagines opera as a global phenomenon, moving beyond its European origins to explore dynamic transformations across the Americas, Asia, and Australasia. Students will engage with a diverse repertoire—from grand opera and operetta to film adaptations, experimental stagings, and contemporary cross-cultural works—while examining how the art form intersects with cultural identity, political discourse, and technological innovation. Drawing on musicology, media studies, postcolonial theory, alongside practitioner perspectives, the course investigates opera as a site of global exchange and creative reinvention. Featuring guest visitors, field trips to JMU Opera Theatre, and curated screenings, the seminar invites students to critically and creatively explore opera's past, present, and future.

Summer 2026 [in person, first 4wk summer term] *Sound*

Instructor: Gibson

An in-depth exploration of sound and how human beings experience it. We will draw on the rapidly expanding field of "Sound Studies," as well as on related areas of philosophy, ecology, acoustics, ethnomusicology, musicology, music theory, physics, and cognitive psychology.

Fall 2026 *20th-Century Art Music in Latin America*

Instructor: Aponte

This seminar will deal with Latin-American Art Music in the twentieth century. The focus will be on music and musical life in the context of politics, national formation, and modernization. Case studies will be drawn from Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, and Venezuela.

Spring 2027 *Topic TBA*

Instructor: Gibson

- Address any questions to Profs. Aponte, Connell, Gibson, or Zhang
- We will make every effort to adhere to what appears above, but topics may occasionally change