

HUMA 3106: Music Theory IIB — Tonal and Post-Tonal Music Analysis

School of Humanities, HKUST — Spring 2026

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| Instructor: | Ilari KAILA – kaila@ust.hk |
| Office hours: | TBA / by appointment |
| Office: | Shaw Auditorium, Room 205 |
| Instructional Assistant: | Alvin TAM – hmalvintam@ust.hk |
| Lectures: | Thursday 10:00 AM–1:50 PM |
| Tutorials: | Thursday 2:00–2:50 PM, 3:00–3:50 PM, 4:00–4:50 PM |
| Room: | Shaw Auditorium, Room 103 |

Course description

In this course, students will study the various ways in which music in the Western classical repertoire is crafted, starting with functional tonal music of the common-practice period (roughly 1600–1900) and ending with 20th- and 21st-century works. We will inspect parameters such as formal structure, harmony and voice leading, instrumentation, and rhythm, using various analytical approaches and techniques to uncover the organizing principles behind the music.

The technical and analytical tools assimilated in Music Theory II will broaden the students' understanding of centuries of core western repertoire, develop their ear, musicianship, and compositional prowess, in addition to giving them a perspective that helps them relate to various other musical traditions, idioms, and styles. These foundational skills are essential to anyone wishing to continue into advanced studies in music.

Prerequisites—read carefully before enrolling!

Successful completion of HUMA 2104 (Music Theory I) or an equivalent course will give most students adequate tools to take HUMA 3106. However, having completed HUMA 2104 is not a guarantee of enough musical knowhow. *Hence, all prospective Music Theory II students are required to take an advisory placement exam which will take place on the first day of class.*

Homework

This class will have regular homework assignments. These consist of various analytical tasks based on scores and/or recordings, as well as some more hands-on exercises such as rudimentary counterpoint assignments. Homework assignments constitute 30% of your final grade.

Attendance and participation are crucial for assimilating and honing your contrapuntal and harmonic writing skills. *If you cannot commit to attending every session, you should not take this course.* We will be taking attendance at the beginning of each class; arriving late twice will be considered equivalent of being absent once.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

On successful completion of the course, you will be able to

- utilize a variety of analytical techniques on musical works representing different styles, genres, and idioms in the Western art music tradition;
- make informed choices about which analytical tools or techniques will work for a particular purpose and in a given context;
- read musical scores at a higher competency level;

- demonstrate a deeper understanding of and sensitivity to music in general, and Western art music in particular;
- discuss, in speech and writing, issues related to music theory, analysis, and compositional technique.

Grading

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| Midterm | 20% |
| Final paper | 35% |
| Homework | 30% |
| Attendance/participation | 15% |