

## ***Student Evaluations:***

The feedback below was provided by students voluntarily and anonymously at the conclusion of each semester via the College or University’s online grade-retrieval service. Only select responses are included here, but original PDF copies of the complete evaluations are available upon request. Basic information about each course and an indication of how many students responded is also provided below.

### **Contents:**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Bowdoin College Official Evaluations . . . . .                      | 1  |
| Bates College Official Evaluations . . . . .                        | 5  |
| Yale University Official Instructor of Record Evaluations . . . . . | 9  |
| Yale University Official Teaching Fellow Evaluations . . . . .      | 10 |
| Additional Samples of Questions and Feedback . . . . .              | 16 |
| Selected unsolicited comments from student emails . . . . .         | 20 |

## **BOWDOIN COLLEGE**

### ***Official Evaluations***

MUS 1301 (Spring 2018)

#### **Introduction to Classical Music**

*This course was an elective course with no prerequisites and was part of the Writing Project, which entailed having students work with Peer Writing Assistants throughout the course of the semester on structured writing assignments. For each quantitative question, students had the option of writing additional comments. 9 of 12 students responded.*

#### **Student Comments:**

- I really enjoyed this course. It was a lot of work, but the class taught me a lot about the history and background of musical composers, so I now see how musical movements were shaped by other events throughout history.
- This class exposed me to new perspectives and ideas that I would never assume about classical music. I learned quite a lot of information and this developed an appreciation for the detail and historical aspect of western classical music.
- The balance between group work and lecture as well as the combination of visual and audio examples showed that Prof. Thomas knew how to effectively use the class sessions.
- The class was very well structured and I felt like we learned a lot everyday.
- Every class session was used productively—the whole time was taken up by class material.
- Feedback was specific, constructive, and helpful towards improving my own understanding of classical music.
- The comments that Professor Thomas have back on the exams and the listening assignments helped us prepare for the next one.

- Professor Thomas would respond very quickly to emails and her office hours were very accessible. She even moved her office hours to Smith Union to make the location better for her students.
- Professor Thomas was an extremely engaging and interesting teacher. She presented the history in a manner to help analyze how it was similar [to] present situations.
- Very enthusiastic about the material and pace was absolutely perfect, which is hard to do when covering decades of history. The work load was manageable although it would take hard work to keep up, and Professor Thomas is a very reasonable grader.
- Professor Thomas was very was to talk to, and she was very response both by email and in person. She gave me really good ideas and helped me direct my thinking for my paper in a way that was constructive but also didn't feel like she was feeding me answers.
- I loved the content of the course and the way Professor Thomas brought it to life. In particular, the organization of the course—weekly listening quizzes, shorter and longer writing assignments, plus 3 similarly structured exams with bot listening and writing—made it easy to stay on top of what was going on in class.
- There was assigned reading and reading questions for each class, a listening quiz on five compositions each week, two listening assignments, three exams with listening and written portions, and a final essay. The structure and organization of this course was phenomenal. Professor Thomas also incorporated the Writing Workshop into our class and required students to meet at two different times with a Writing Assistant.
- Pace was perfect. I liked how there were assignments with the readings and opportunities to ask questions (definitely helped me in case I forgot my questions by class time). The weekly listening quizzes, and the listening exam were a little hard to memorize, but I got through it. The listening assignment although challenging to write, did put my music analysis skills to the test. Overall, I had no problem with this cause.

MUS 1301 (Spring 2018)

### **Tonal Analysis**

*This course was an elective course with prerequisites. For each quantitative question, students had the option of writing additional comments. 2 of 4 students responded, and because of the small class size, student comments were not made available to the instructor.*

MUS 1017 (Fall 2017)

### **Music & Technology: A History**

*This course was a writing-intensive first-year seminar, and the only required writing course at Bowdoin. For each quantitative question, students had the option of writing additional comments. 13 of 16 students responded.*

- I learned a lot through this course, both about necessary writing skills and also how to use my resources on campus. I was challenged to look critically at my writing, and learned many new ideas related to music and technology and its intersection with our lives today. Definitely had a learning stretch with this class.

- Very efficient with timing. Most of the classes were discussion based, and whenever the discussion ended, there was always something else planned.
- Her comments on our essays are definitely the most effective ones I've ever received. She makes sure she reads every details [sic] and let [sic] us know about what we did right or wrong.
- I specifically remember comments I got on the first abstract assignment, and these really helped me identify weaknesses as I [sic] writer and focus on these going forward. Prof. Thomas always gives detailed feedback that is helpful.
- Prof. Thomas responses to my e-mails really quickly, and she advertises her office hours. She in general is very open and excited to hear from students and has a real passion for the topic.
- Professor Thomas was unbelievable this semester and she made my transition to college really easy.
- She's awesome. She pushed me to better my writing his semester and is really kind and does a great job of explaining the plan to all of us. I really enjoyed her focus on getting us comfortable with the resources at Bowdoin and setting us up to succeed over the next four years. Very approachable and knowledgable.
- In this course we learned about music in a global context and how it has developed since day one. During this course I acquired appreciation for music and for those who dedicate their lives to composing music.
- The best thing that I liked about the course was having it not always in the classroom. I liked when people sang in different areas and we listened to how the sound changed. I also liked the structure of the class. I liked that we would have readings and then talk about them the next day. Lastly, I enjoyed the writing exercises because it got me to write everyday.
- I loved the writing exercises. I think they really helped me develop better writing skills on a daily basis. The organization of a weekly syllabus was helpful and the pace of the course was just right.
- I loved this class and how in depth we got with music. Professor Thomas was very engaging and made it easy to get excited about coming to class. She had very reasonable assignments with the perfect balance of always challenging us. The pace of the course was just right and always kept us busy.
- My favorite parts of the course were when we would take field trips to other departments or resources on campus, and the requirement to attend concerts. I would suggest having less writing logs, which required us to write every day of the week.
- I really liked how Prof. Thomas structured the deadlines for assignments, asking us to submit drafts a week before they were due and giving us drafting time during the writing exercises each week. I initially thought I would dislike the exercises, but they were really helpful in getting prose down. The structure meant that our end of semester was not as crammed as some other courses, and made it harder to procrastinate.

MUS 1401 (Fall 2017)

**Introduction to Music Theory**

*This course was open to students who had a background in reading written notation but who had not previously studied music theory (other than having potentially taken a fundamentals course introducing them to the basics of notation). For each quantitative question, students had the option of writing additional comments. 11 of 12 students responded.*

- Music is my prospective major, so this course was necessary in advancing through the major. I was challenged, and at times overwhelmed, but I am amazed to see how far I've come in my knowledge of music theory!
- Professor Thomas asks a lot from her students and holds them to an extremely high standard.
- Instead of just lecturing on the material and rewording what was already in the textbook, Professor Thomas was always prepared with interactive ways for us to interact/engage with the material. Doing problems/analysis in class was extremely helpful in preparing me to do the assignment packets on my own. Also, if we had questions about something, we could ask them in class, and she would elaborate for everyone. I also really enjoyed the drills we would do for the first 10 minutes of class, going around the room so everyone got a chance to answer. Lastly and most crucially, Professor Thomas always prepared handouts on each topic that simplified the material in the textbook/gave us tips on memorizing/doing certain things. These handouts were essential to my studying for the course and filling out the assignment packets. I wish more teachers prepared handouts like hers, but I feel like many don't because of the extra work it entails.
- Professor Thomas was very detailed in her grading of the assignment packets. In addition to being thorough in grading mistakes, Thomas also left constructive comments on many packets that demonstrated her care and knowledge of each student's INDIVIDUAL growth.
- Homework was always returned with mistakes outlined and correct answers shown with an explanation. Professor Thomas supplied additional questions that were similar to those assigned so we could then practice on similar problems and avoid mistakes in the future.
- The assignment packets that were due every week or every other week were a brilliant way to ensure that we were keeping up with the material and to track our progress. They were extremely helpful to me, and I felt like they adequately prepared me for our quizzes and exams, and as I mentioned before, I feel like due to the nature/structure of these packets, I will actually retain this material after the semester ends. Lastly, I really appreciated that we were able to correct the assignment packets for up to 90% of the original grade, because this ensured that I was actually learning the material the right way and not just mailing it in. Quizzes and exams were fair, and Professor Thomas adjusted the time allotted to take them when she sensed that none of us were finished. This sense of understanding was incredibly important to me, because it felt as if Professor Thomas genuinely wanted to succeed and wasn't trying to punish people by negatively impacting our GPAs. Her attitude made me actually want to do well in the class, and this ended up being the course I probably spent the most time on. Lastly, I loved the Final Composition Project, because it gave me a chance to use the general skills/knowledge I acquired over the semester to create and perform my own song.

- Professor Thomas is one of the most dedicated and consistent teachers I have ever encountered. For classes like music theory, students desperately need meticulous teachers like her to lay a firm groundwork of key concepts.
- Professor Thomas was very organized about her policies, assigning material, and grading in a manner characteristic of a professor who has been teaching for a long time. Occasionally, I came away from the class without a complete understanding of a concept, and the textbook was not very helpful in filling the gaps. It may be that the material of this course is very demanding, but sometimes I felt she overestimated our competency on concepts that were still relatively new.
- While I'm only a sophomore, Professor Thomas is the best professor I've had at Bowdoin so far, and I wish more professors would follow in her footsteps.
- I have already written a lot about how I enjoyed the nature of assignments, but in addition, I would say that I really appreciated the variety of songs that Professor Thomas picked for us to analyze, from Mozart to Adele. It kept the course interesting and helped communicate that music theory isn't just for those interested in classical [music]. This is important to me as a jazz singer. The pace of the course was quick, certainly, but since there is so much that we have to cover in one semester, it made sense. It was slow enough that I had time to really understand what was going on and develop skills I needed to.

## **BATES COLLEGE**

### ***Official Evaluations***

MUS s26 (Short Term 2017)

#### **Performance in Western Classical Music**

*This course was an elective course required of music majors in the performance track but open to any student who had previously taken at least one semester of applied music lessons. For each quantitative question, students had the option of writing additional comments. 12 of 13 students responded.*

- This course was my first music class at a college level so I went in with a very shaky base knowledge, however i am confident now that the class is over in my basic music skills. Not only did this class inform me on different facets of the music realm it also captivated my interest and made me want to take more music classes--With Professor Thomas especially.
- I learned a lot about classical performance and how it can relate to other musical ventures I take on. I also loved learning about making the program and advertising for our recital.
- Coming into this course, I thought classical music was for old white people in stuffy auditoriums. Now I have discovered the history, emotion, and art behind the discipline, and I have grown to respect it immensely.
- Dr. Thomas is a fantastic educator. She made the subject material very interesting.
- She held us to high, but attainable standards of performance. She always encouraged us for more and to produce our best work. Often times I would be working extra hard on an assignment just for her.

- Christy strongly encouraged thoughtful participation and equal contributions to the class from each student. She outlined clear, attainable and challenging goals.
- Her expectations were high, but she also fostered a culture in which I genuinely wanted to meet them.
- There was a level of trust involved with assessing students since we submitted self assessments. I like that participation and honesty were part grading.
- She held us to a high personal standard, but she by no means allowed that to stand in the way of our personal growth as musicians. Holding us to a high standard was a good thing. It helped us perform and work together efficiently. She was always there to help us. And even offered to come back to campus often if we needed help outside of class. Clearly an extremely motivated professor, one of the best I've had.
- I have never had a class where each member of the class felt comfortable enough to be an active participator. She fostered a classroom environment in which everyone was included and felt safe and comfortable to participate.
- The class environment did not seem like a "class" environment, rather it felt like a group of honest friends talking about what they enjoy and are interested in. Simply put, there was a fantastic vibe.
- I appreciated how much the students were able to contribute ideas to how the class would be run, how we would be evaluated, and which subjects we wanted to learn more about.
- Killer assignment sheets, very well thought out.

### MUS 210 (Spring 2017)

#### **Classical Music in Western Culture**

*This course was an elective course with no pre-requisites. It provides an introduction to the history of Western classical music in Europe and America from 1600 to the present. For each quantitative question, students had the option of writing additional comments. 15 of 15 students responded.*

- The class was outstandingly planned. Having access to the week's plan one week before helped me be better prepared for each class. Easy reading was assigned at least 4 days before it was due and this helped me plan my schedule.
- I love how even in one semester I still learned so much about classical music. The course gave a great overview of every movement and main style, and I got a great sense of how music history is connected to social and political themes.
- I truly did not have a background in much music history before taking this course. I now feel very confident in my abilities to discuss music history and how it has evolved to shape how we listen and interpret music today.
- Christy is an incredibly knowledgeable, and engaging professor. She is very eager to share her passion for classical music with her students and each class she brought great energy and

excitement. Even if I was exhausted or hungry when I got to her class, it was never a chore to have to pay attention because I wanted to hear what she had to say about a certain composer.

- This was the second class that I've had with Professor Thomas and this one was just as great as the previous one! Even though I am not much of a person with great interest in Classical Music, she definitely delivered the material in a way that was accessible to me.
- The instructor's attitude towards the material was one of excitement and interest. Having expressed that she wished to have gone more in depth into the subjects studied, and having expressed regret on how many things she didn't get to talk about conveyed just how passionate she was about the subject. Bringing handouts and scores to class broadened the type of material we studied and expanded the dynamics of the class beyond lectures and assigned readings.
- Christy had realistic expectations for a class that covered more than 300 years of music in one semester. Tests were graded fairly and not too harshly, but they also weren't too easy so that the class was not a "joke".
- Christy integrated the historical narrative alongside a composer's musical agenda very well. Her comments were insightful and meaningfully rooted in the present context of how we interpret music history and how we ultimately create the narrative. Christy especially helped me link complex historical trends (like maximalism) to music.
- The professor made sure to go over the difficult concepts that were relevant to the class. Complex ideas were either thoroughly explained, or not "fair game" for the exam. This not only helped students be prepared for exams, but also helped students understand better what the course was really about. Complex ideas weren't left out at random. All complex ideas studied in class played an important role in the broader goal of the class.
- There was a lot of discussion that took place in the class, and Professor Thomas was extremely respectful of other people's opinions in the class. Even when I hesitated to say something, she would always encourage me to say it knowing that my opinion mattered.
- Comments were provided in relevant assignments helping me understand the goal of the assignment. I felt like the grading corresponded to my understanding of the material and I found that deeply motivating.
- In class, we considered different textbooks and historical approaches. Critical analysis of these helped me broaden my perspective on history as a whole.
- The final paper was very hefty, but I found myself cruising through it because I was very prepared throughout the course.
- Weekly listening quizzes and quizzes on exams kept us accountable.
- I learned how to read textbooks as subjective works, and I learned how history cannot be presented objectively or without bias.
- I learned about classical music as aspects within historical movements. I learned about musical progress as a whole instead of individual composers as single subjects.

MU/WS 256 (Spring 2017)

**Opera & Gender**

*This course was an elective course with no pre-requisites. It provided an introduction to opera and to women and gender studies. For each quantitative question, students had the option of writing additional comments, but none chose to do so for this course. 9 of 9 students responded.*

MUS 254 (Fall 2016)

**Music & Drama**

*This course was an elective course with no pre-requisites. It provides a basic introduction to the relationship between music and drama on stage in a selection of operas and musicals. For each quantitative question, students had the option of writing additional comments. 10 of 15 students responded.*

- The readings for this course were definitely useful, as I had seldom knowledge of opera going into the course. The assignments were reasonable and very fun to complete most of the time—especially when we had to rethink the production design for Carmen! It is awesome that Professor Thomas encourages creativity in the learning process!
- Professor Thomas was honestly one of the best professors I've ever had. She was always engaged and enthusiastic and passionate about the material she was teaching as well as the students she was teaching it to. It was always apparent how much she genuinely cared about us and enjoyed spending time with us, and her knowledge of the subject was astounding and inspiring. Classes were interesting and well-orchestrated, and assignments always felt well worth the time spent on them.
- Every single day in class, she was very interested in what we had to say about the readings and other assignments done prior to the class meeting.
- I thought opera was dumb/boring—I now love it!
- Class discussion were always amazing!! Such interesting debates, perspectives, etc.
- Professor Thomas' methods of breaking down complex concepts were excellent! I would walk out of class every day feeling like I had gained a good understanding of something I may not have understood the day before while doing an assignment.
- The professor made an explicit effort to encourage discussion and arguments
- Everyone in class was so respectful while one person was taking—especially when we discussed very delicate subjects like how issues of race and gender are incorporated into the operatic and/or musical productions.
- Love the circular arrangement for discussion! I always felt included and respected—we had a GREAT group of people in this class.
- Every day was filled down to the minute!



**YALE UNIVERSITY**  
***Official Instructor of Record Evaluations***

MUSI 110 (Spring 2016)

**Introduction to the Elements of Music**

*This course was an elective course with no pre-requisites, intended for students who are unable to read music. It provides a basic introduction to written notation, music analysis, ear training, and composition. 7 of 8 students responded.*

- I absolutely loved this class and am grateful to have this knowledge now. Strengths: getting a taste of many areas of music; good encouragement of participation in class; good, low stress environment. Drills were good for learning at home. Weaknesses: while drills were helpful, the homework assignments could become tedious/repetitive; moved quickly at the beginning of the semester; would have liked more practical applications with piano.
- The course is a rigorous introduction to the discipline of music theory. Its greatest strength is the cumulative nature of learning that it enforces in students—this ensures that the pace remains rapid and the class covers a lot of material, but does so in a productive manner without setting excessive pressure on the students. It is also a richness that the class encourages students to take a ‘hands-on’ approach in their learning by teaching them to compose their own pieces; this method is invaluable in alleviating any fears of approaching the art of composition and giving students a sense of familiarity and building confidence in this regard. I don’t see much that could be improved, other than perhaps homework answers being more readily available (given that sometimes understanding a homework assignment was slightly delayed due to waiting for homework to be graded and handed back—but I understand the risk of cheating, which makes this question problematic).
- Christy was great! You could tell that she really cared about all of us excelling and having a good understanding of music theory. She was always very calm and collected, and was able to get everyone excited even though it was a 9am class.
- Christy is very knowledgeable and does a great job at translating information over. She goes out of her way to make the class less stressful, which helped as it started to move faster.
- Christy is a GREAT teacher. Approachable, encouraging, knowledgeable. I liked how you called on people in class (usually doesn’t happen in section and the professor can struggle to get people to talk). It was effective.
- Christy is an extremely organized, enthusiastic and kind instructor whose passion for the discipline is palpable. One of her greatest assets is her ability to calibrate the class to various different levels of prior knowledge and skill among the students. She is particularly good at encouraging questions and asking for help, which is invaluable in a beginners’ class like this.
- Great class overall! A very basic and not too difficult intro to music theory. There were some people in the class with no musical background and some people in the class with a background in music but no background in theory. As far as I can tell, everyone was able to keep up fairly well and Christy always welcomed questions. Christy is very calm and collected and definitely wanted all of us to excel at music.

## MUSI 110 (Fall 2015)

**Introduction to the Elements of Music**

*This course was an elective course with no pre-requisites, intended for students who are unable to read music. It provides a basic introduction to written notation, music analysis, ear training, and composition. 7 of 8 students responded.*

- This class is absolutely amazing, and low-stress way of getting a good basic foundation of music theory. It is absolutely amazing how much is packed in one semester.
- Great class, well paced, learnt a ton and really enjoyed it!
- Christy is absolutely amazing! She is incredibly knowledgeable and receptive!
- Christy was an amazing teacher that was successfully able to teach difficult material to students who had little to no musical experience. She is always eager to improve the class and that was a huge help as the semester unfolded.
- Christy Thomas is a great instructor who knows how to motivate her students. I think the course material could easily become boring if not taught correctly; however, Christy approached the topics in a way that were fun and manageable.
- Christy is an amazing teacher - dedicated and caring and also good at helping us understand the various concepts we had to learn. Really cares about her students doing well and understanding, instead of just “going by the book.” Definitely take her class!
- A nice introductory course for music theory for those who don’t know much about music. I would definitely recommend it.
- Great class for a beginner if they are willing to put daily work in.
- Great course for those with little to no musical background. Students went from being unable to read music to composing their own pieces. It sounds daunting up front, but if you go through with the course you will see it is not that way.
- Music 110 is a great way to rapidly improve your basic skills in music reading and analysis. I recommend this to any student who has no background in music and wishes to learn.

***Official Teaching Fellow Evaluations***

MUSI 352 (Spring 2016 — James Hepokoski)

**History of Western Music: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries**

*This was a required music history course for music majors, with a prerequisite ability to read music, focused on detailed musical analysis of the music of the Western world between 1800 and 1950. I picked up teaching this course halfway through the semester to cover for a colleague who went on emergency medical leave. I taught two weekly sections, which involved group discussion, detailed analysis of select pieces, explanation and clarification of concepts, covering additional material not covered in the weekly lectures, etc. I also graded papers and exams, and wrote questions for the exams. 8 of 13 students responded.*

- A very competent and knowledgeable section teacher. I really appreciate the relevance of the casework we had in section, even in the mere four sections or so that we had with Christy. Thanks so much for your superior musicianship and contextual understanding!

- Christy stepped in and did a great job!
- Great T.A. Was excited about the material, and very knowledgeable about what she was teaching.
- Ms. Thomas was amazing. Her discussion sections enriched the rest of the lectures and were very useful!
- It would have been more effective if students were forced to come into section more often. Christin was great, but it would've felt fuller if more than four people showed up to any given section.
- Christy was a good section leader. However, her grading was often ambiguous and didn't really leave any hints about how to improve on the exams.
- Section was great! Christy was very nice and helpful.

MUSI 131 (Spring 2013 — Gundula Kreuzer)

**Introduction to the History of Western Music: 1800 to the Present**

*This was a music history course for non-majors and without pre-requisites, providing a survey of nineteenth- and twentieth-century composers, genres, and styles of music in Europe and America, with an emphasis on ways of listening. I was one of two TA's, and we had equal interaction with all students in the course, rather than dividing the students between us. In addition to giving one of the main lectures, I taught periodic sections throughout the semester, which involved group discussion, guided listening, explanation and clarification of concepts, particular preparation for listening assignments, etc. In addition, I graded homework assignments, papers, and exams. 13 of 51 students responded.*

- This teaching fellow is great and will help you if you ask her questions.
- Christy was very helpful this semester! Sections were very informative, she answered emails very quickly, and even helped me with a favor for my student orchestra!
- Enthusiastic and was able to answer all questions we had. Her expectations were very realistic, and she wanted everyone to learn. I hope she continues teaching.
- Wonderful! TA's had so much positive energy and desire to help.
- Both Christy and Valerie were great TA's. The sections that they hosted were so helpful both to complete the listening assignments and to cement my understanding of the material. They were both very approachable and very nice.
- I thought the sections were really helpful. They gave us a better chance to practice the techniques we worked [on] in section and also provided helpful overviews of various musical techniques. They were especially helpful before the listening assignments were due. I thought Christy was a great TF.
- Christy was a fantastic TA! She was one of the few TA's I had this year that paid a lot of individual attention to students. Her guest lecture was also well prepared. Whenever I asked Christy a question about anything I was confused about, she really helped me with prompt answers and any information from outside of class that might be helpful.

- Christy was insanely helpful. Wonderful TA.
- Christin was a great TA. She was very nice and willing to help, and for the couple of listening sessions she conducted as well as the lecture she taught, she came very prepared and organized.
- Christy was an amazing TA and was extremely well-prepared at all of her sections. She crafted all of her sections and lectures in a very beautiful way, using the highest-quality music that wasn't from YouTube. She has been an amazing resource and very responsive and quick to emails. She was extremely knowledgeable and her sections complemented the course material nicely and really prepared us for our listening analyses. I really enjoyed learning from Christy.
- Great!
- Christin is great! Her sessions are really helpful and informative. She is also very kind when I emailed her and spammed her with questions.
- Both TF's were excellent. They were informed and patient, and clearly put a lot of effort into running outstanding sections.

MUSI 351 (Fall 2012 — James Hepokoski)

**History of Western Music: Baroque and Classical**

*This was a required music history course for music majors, with a prerequisite ability to read music, focused on detailed musical analysis of the music of the Western world between 1600 and 1800. I taught two weekly sections, which involved group discussion, detailed analysis of select pieces, explanation and clarification of concepts, covering additional material not covered in the weekly lectures, etc. I also graded papers and exams, and wrote questions for the exams. 8 of 14 students responded.*

- Christy was very personable, fun, and an eager-to-teach section leader. She combined different methods of teaching to make the experience memorable for her students, and sections successfully aided in my preparation for exams.
- Christy was absolutely wonderful as our TF. She was always approachable and on top of the material, and understanding and reasonable in her grading. Her sections were fun and interesting, highlighting some aspect of the material we covered in lecture. As a discussion leader she was encouraging and warm.
- The section was SO very important to my general feeling of success in this class. The TF (Christy Thomas) was my first level of contact for the course and was a wonderful resource: she always sought to extend the discussions we had in class and in section further, focusing on helping us to develop our own claims and opinions on the music. I felt like section represented a very important, practical element of the course: we were able to move from taking notes and learning the fundamentals of music history to actually engaging in the practices (at a very rudimentary level, I am aware) of music historians. I found that a really useful tool. Christy was an excellent TF. I think she fostered discussion actively and tried to help students think critically. I think she could improve her teaching style by working on classroom inclusion and incorporating all students (not just those who choose to raise their hands or volunteer) into the conversational dynamic.

- I've had the pleasure of having Christy for two of these required history courses now and there's nothing to say except positive things. She balances section expounding on things we learn in class and supplemental material that adds a new perspective/better understanding of the material studying in class. She has a very down-to-earth personality that's easy to connect with and gives guidance in a way that is at once professional and friendly.
- Christy is a solid TA that was helpful during section.
- I did not always attend section because it was optional and the timing (Thursday afternoons) was difficult for me. It is possible to do well in the course without attending every section. Christy has grown as a teacher over the semester. I was especially impressed with the questions she wrote for the final exam.
- Christy was great, and I thought section was a great addition to the class. New material was covered in section so DEFINITELY GO. It can backfire on you if you don't. And it can be fun (and sometimes annoying of course) to talk to other musicians about the music.
- Christy was very helpful in terms of reviewing material from lecture and looking at specific pieces in depth. She created a very comfortable environment and greatly enhanced the course.

MUSI 350 (Spring 2012 — Craig Wright)

**History of Western Music: Middle Ages and Renaissance**

*This was a required music history course for music majors, with a prerequisite ability to read music, focused on detailed musical analysis of the music of the Western world to 1600. In addition to giving one of the main lectures, I taught two weekly sections, which involved group discussion, detailed analysis of select pieces, explanation and clarification of concepts, etc. I also graded homework assignments, papers, and exams. 12 of 14 students responded.*

- Christy was very personable and clear as a TA. Her teaching was perfectly suited to the needs of the section.
- Christy was so wonderful! Sections were mostly a review of the material we'd covered in class and help on the homework assignments, which could be a bit confusing at times. Christy was very down-to-earth about the material we had to cover in each section; she frequently brought in supplemental material, and was always ready and willing to help us when we had questions.
- Christy was absolutely wonderful! Section was my favorite part of the course.
- Christin is seriously amazing. She knew how to keep the class real. Best TA ever.
- Christy was a very good TF: she is talented at helping students understand the nuances of her subject.
- Christy, you were the only shining light of this course. I think that at times you operated under the same bad assumptions of Prof. Wright that we didn't actually care about the material and that we are fundamentally looking for facts as opposed to knowledge. Otherwise I'm sure that you will be a good professor—you are a great lecturer and incredibly insightful into our assignments.
- Christy is amazing!

- She was great — she made everything clear when it wasn't clear from lecture (which it usually wasn't).
- Well versed in the music and [led] productive sections.
- Did a good job, was prepared for section. Unfortunately section was very small so there was not a lot of discussion between people in class.
- Great TA, very bright, always helpful.
- Christy was always pleasant and accommodating, and she had a sincere interest in the material (even in its more duller moments) and for her students—their education and their well-being. She is always well-prepared for section and shows a clear passion for music, teaching, and learning.

MUSI 112 (Fall 2011 — Craig Wright)

### **Listening to Music**

*This course was an elective course for non-majors with no pre-requisites, a basic introduction focused on the development of aural skills that lead to an understanding of Western music. The musical novice is introduced to the ways in which music is put together and is taught how to listen to a wide variety of musical styles, from Bach and Mozart, to Gregorian chant, to the blues. For this course, I taught two weekly sections involving discussions, guided listening and viewing, explanation and clarification of concepts, etc. In addition, I graded homework assignments, papers, and exams. 14 of 24 students responded.*

- Christy was an excellent TA. She was always very well prepared and led fun and engaging sections. I would recommend her without reserve.
- Christy was an awesome TA! She was great at engaging students and making section interactive, and she was very helpful with answering any questions.
- Great TA. Really took the time to help her students even beyond class. Was always responsive and helpful both during section and outside of it.
- Christy was a great TA. She reinforced the material learned in lectures very well and was very helpful to all students. She reviewed key concepts and provided a good learning atmosphere for the class.
- Phenomenal TA. Very enthusiastic, knowledgeable, dedicated, and fun. Section was always a pleasure to attend, and also very helpful to grasp the material.
- Christy was great! Very approachable. Kept section interesting. Super helpful recap of what was going on in lecture. Very helpful for going over more confusing material.
- Section complemented the course very well. Christy was great at explaining musical concepts in a concise and coherent way, and section definitely helped me understand the course material much better. It also helped me put the pieces together in my mind in terms of the music history portion of the class. Section was always very well planned out!
- Christin is a very good teacher.

- Section was actually really helpful. We were able to practice telling the genres, forms, etc., of different pieces of music which helped a lot with preparing for the exams. Also, just listening to all sorts of music was cool.
- Section and lecture overlapped well, especially served to clarify concepts in lecture. Helped with test prep. Christy was engaging, seemed a little nervous at beginning of semester.
- Christy's sections were great! She covered all the material really well, but she was also a harsh grader.
- Christy was a great TA. Section was highly informative and a fun way to refresh information I had learned in lecture and also tackle new topics.
- Probably one of the better TA's I've ever had. She always kept section informative and tried to keep it engaging.
- I thought section was really helpful. Christy gave great examples to help us understand the material, and generally made herself available to help us.

## **Additional samples of questions and feedback**

In addition to receiving end-of-term feedback from the official university prompts, for certain courses I also requested additional optional feedback via Google forms. These served as ways for students to provide anonymous feedback to more specific questions. Because the prompts provided by the university in the course reviews at the end of term were fairly general and not all students responded with specific details, I wanted more particular feedback related to my teaching and my students' thoughts on the course overall. In addition to requesting feedback at the conclusion of a course, I also asked students for mid-term feedback as well so that I could make any necessary adjustments for using class time more effectively. A small sample of questions and responses is included below:

### **MUS 1301 (Spring 2018): End-of-semester feedback**

- The best quality of the course overall was the unending amount of guidance, flexibility, and genuineness that was given to each student as equals. I loved that you were instilling in us deeper questions about how we can engage with music history after each reading and lesson.
- I thought the structure and teaching were really great. From lecture to discussions to weekly quizzes to writing assignments, the course was structured in a way that made us constantly reinforce what we did in our readings.
- I believe that the course did an amazing job of welcoming students of all musical backgrounds and providing them the ability to learn about classical music in an impactful way.
- I definitely appreciate classical music more now that I know how much history has influenced the reasons why composers wrote what they did. My definition has also changed by including modern classical music and technological changes. I enjoyment of listening to and playing classical music is still the same, and it takes me to another world away from popular music that is listened to a lot today.
- Over the course of this semester I have developed a much deeper appreciation for classical music because I was able to learn why and how different styles of classical music emerged in history which is fascinating. By being exposed to the history of classical music and its importance in modern day culture and music culture, I am interested in learning more and perhaps playing concert band again.
- I see classical music alongside the history it's connected to, rather than it alone as a work with no context. And that's a special view to have while listening to classical music.

### **MUS 210 (Spring 2017): End-of-semester feedback**

- I really enjoyed how this class was much more engaging and interactive than a regular history class. I had always hated history and had promised myself to never take another history class ever again after high school, but I loved classical music too much to not take this class. I am so glad that I did, because I learned a ton and was interested in everything not only because I love music, but also because of the way it was presented. Therefore, I believe the best quality



of this course was how it was not just a lecture- the constant use of audio to give us perspective, the enthusiasm, the group work, the score analyses, and the conversation really made this class enjoyable and made the history much more attractive to someone who is not a history person.

- 1. Music has a context that cannot be ignored 2. People (authors, writers) each have their own version of "history".
- Through the study of the evolution of music, I was better able to understand the situation of today's music. This puts me in a better place to compose, analyze, appreciate, create and perform music. It also presented me with many moments in music history I would like to zoom in and study later on my career.
- I loved in class analyses of music, like when we listened closely to Beethoven's 5th. I think the best way to learn about music is to listen to it, and whenever we listened in class, I really understood the intentions behind the composition and how it connected to the history.
- I actually really enjoyed writing the final paper. I felt that it was an awesome way to encompass all of the thoughts that I had been considering all course, and I was very proud of the analysis that I was able to do.
- I really enjoyed the walk-through listenings that the professor had during some of class periods. This would help ups to recognize specific areas of music, some common themes, and other elements of each piece that made it a category of a specific era.
- Listening and analyzing to pieces! It's incredible seeing how much more is involved in music than just notes and sounds and seeing that and being able to analyze it is really fascinating!

### **MUS 254 (Fall 2016): End-of-semester feedback**

- I really liked our in-class discussions of the works after we had watched them, and the production redesign project.
- I liked writing the reactions, doing the listening guides, writing the research paper. I feel like all of the assignments contributed to helping me learn the material
- I loved the rotation activity, gives you a fresh eyes on different questions. Also, I always love talking in small groups about the topics, allowed to steer questions in a certain direction.

### **MUSI 110 (Spring 2016): End-of-semester feedback**

- The course was genuinely an extremely productive learning experience. I think I particularly enjoyed the steady work pace: nothing ever piled on too much, but no week was lazy, either. It was very beneficial for our learning to go through regular homework assignments and drills at a steady pace.

### **MUSI 110 (Fall 2015): End-of-semester feedback**

- The best quality of the course was the pace at which we learned. It was fast enough that it forced me to work hard, but still slow enough that I never felt overwhelmed by a topic. Early on you instilled the fact that we would have to commit to learning because the curriculum continued to build on itself as the semester continued. With the workload balanced and at an appropriate pace, I was able to learn much more about music and theory behind it than I had ever expected.
- Very well taught! Well paced, had lots of constant practice so we were never really out of shape. Homework tied very well to what was taught in class, and it always felt like you really cared whether we learnt something or did well in the homework etc, tailoring your grading/ assignments accordingly.
- The best quality was the practical applications that we did later in the semester. I also very much enjoyed the composition project. The course requires that you do some not so fun work, but the pay off is good.
- The all-class drills and lecture demonstrations were how I learned best. When we did drills among the class, there was a lot of different approaches on how to understand the same concept. It was very helpful.

### **MUSI 351 (Fall 2012): Samples of mid-semester feedback**

- The hands-on approach to the musical examples is something I get a lot out of in section. Your overviews of the larger picture, though, are also extremely helpful.
- This class feels important in the same way that eating vegetables feels important. I know that I'm gaining a broad and practical background in music which will benefit me later, but I'm tested on the parts that don't feel relevant.
- History of Early Opera has been really applicable to me; I've also really appreciated delving into the composers and their idiosyncrasies — its made my other music classes more relevant and gives me something I feel like I can talk about and study more.
- This is actually the class I feel most comfortable in. It seems to have been conceived with the goal of student success, both on the exams and in becoming educated in the material. Moreover, unlike many classes here with the best intentions, it follows through.
- I love our section! You're a really effective discussion leader—you create a friendly environment that invites participation—and your preparation is wonderful. I find that you explain the musical examples as much as I need to do well on the exams, but also to feel like I am becoming familiar with and educated in the styles as a musician.

- I really enjoy the sections when we take the time to analyze the music “Hepo style”<sup>1</sup> that is on the listening list. It really connects with what we’ve covered in lecture and makes the material so much easier to remember. Its also just a great skill to build — it’s been helping me a lot in other music classes.

### **MUSI 350 (Spring 2012): Section Evaluation**

- Christy was a wonderful TA. No complaints at all!
- Fantastic and very personable!
- I really enjoyed section and think you did a great job given the nature of the course overall.
- Honestly, I think you are the best TA I have ever had at Yale for any course. Not only were you able to sympathize with the students’ complaints that the material was not interesting, but you were able to point us to neat parts of it that made studying the music more worthwhile. I also feel your down-to-earth sensibilities really work for you and you shouldn’t change them. It’s so easy to feel that in the Music major, regarding faculty AND students, everyone is trying to affect an air of scholasticism. In general, all instructors of this course were not subject to that and I found it so refreshing.
- Christy was wonderful—a great presence in the class, and she seemed to understand our frustrations with assignments and the class in general. Her warmth and diligence was so greatly appreciated. I just wish she had more freedom to structure sections and discussion—I think we all could have really benefited from her insight!
- Christy, you were great. You will make an excellent prof. some day.
- You did a really wonderful job! You conveyed a lot of material in your lectures, which were well-prepared and supported by, but not overly dependent on, effective PowerPoint presentations; and you put things in context for us during the lectures. Section was also something I looked forward to during the week—it was fun and you made sure we understood the arcane notations systems even if it meant answering the same question a bunch of times. Thank you!!
- Cheerful and always willing to help.

---

<sup>1</sup> “Hepokoski style,” that is, in the manner used by the professor, James Hepokoski.

## Selected unsolicited comments from student emails

In addition to receiving anonymous feedback from official prompts, I often heard from my students in a less official and unsolicited capacity: small thank-you's for my responses to queries, appreciation for attending their performances and concerts, excitement about their own increased engagement with music after taking a course, etc. Most frequently these came through casual conversation, but occasionally students would send emails or notes. A small sample is included here:

- “Sincere thanks for an absolutely wonderful class! I had a great time taking my first steps into the world of music, and I feel like my appreciation for the discipline is much higher than ever before. You are a talented teacher—suitably demanding, yet very empathetic and warm—and your future students next year will be lucky to have you. All the very best!” Sofia (MUSI 110)
- “Thank you for a wonderful semester, Christy! I am so glad to have taken this course with you. I learned a lot and am so happy to have a theoretical foundation in music now.” Claire (MUSI 110)
- “I just wanted to say I really enjoyed your lecture on Debussy today. Clear and engaging -- keep it up!” Liz (MUSI 131)
- “Just wanted to send you a quick note about something exciting that happened the other day. I have been obsessed with the Newberry Organ in Woolsey since freshman year, and always try to make it to all of the organ concerts and recitals. I went to one this past weekend, which is the first one I have gone to this semester, and noticed how I was actually able to understand a lot more of what was going on in the music based on concepts from our class. Clearly this class has been a steep learning curve for me and I still have a lot to learn before even being a mildly musically-literate person, but I was happy to see that at least something has really stuck and started to make me understand music better.” Sam (MUSI 131)
- “Thanks so much for grading the midterm for us and your amazing lecture before the spring break.” Chuyang (MUSI 131)
- “I just wanted to thank you for a really enjoyable semester. I really enjoyed the course, and it's probably one of my favorite courses I've taken here so far. [...] Thanks for everything! You have been a wonderful TA this semester!” Jessica (MUSI 131)
- “I hope you have a wonderful summer. Also, you are by far the best TA I have ever had; PLEASE continue teaching!! If you are a TA again (for a course I can take), please let me know!” Gia (MUSI 131)
- “I want to thank you for everything you've done over the last year and say it has been an absolute pleasure being in three of your classes! Needless to say, you have definitely been one of my favorite professors at Bates. Once again, thank you and best of luck at your future teaching opportunities!” Luke (MUS 210, MUS 254, MUS 256)
- “Thanks again for such a great semester! This really was one of the best music classes I have had at Bates.” Grace (MUS 210)

- “I just wanted to tell you that I really enjoyed your class this semester. I was fairly apathetic towards opera prior to the course, but now I have the knowledge to truly enjoy the art form. I think you were an excellent professor. I learned a lot not only about opera, but gender, sexuality, etc.” Mayele (MUS 256)
- [article in Bates News on the Brass Ensemble] “Fagan added that his coursework in classical music and Western culture has enhanced his playing experience. ‘Now I know why Bach wrote what he wrote. So that gives you a lot more context when you play, and at the end of the day you play better than you would have otherwise,’ he said.” Jamie (MUS 210)
- “Thanks for a GREAT semester, I really enjoyed taking this class. Good luck in your future endeavors at other institutions, we will surely miss you!” Lauren (MUS 210)
- “Thank you so much for an amazing class!” Elliot (MUS 210)
- “Thanks for an incredible semester” Christine (MUS 210)
- “My peer editor (Ian I think) did a great job of asking for more specifics in my analysis. As a result, I changed my ABAB form into a more specific ABCABC form, and subdivided the “A” section. I also decided (after the edits) it would be a good idea to take a look at the score of the piece, so that I could accurately describe the leaps and jumps. The essay I peer edited reminded me of all the music vocabulary I learned both from the terminology paper and from Music Theory One, so when I decided to rewrite the essay I incorporated more precise vocabulary. I pretty much rewrote the essay, and this is not because Ian's edits were bad, but because his edits showed me that I was working at too low an analytical standard. As a result, I was able to write stronger, more organized introductions and conclusions and have a better flow to the essay overall. I have to admit that I was confused why the peer edit was a part of the assignment, but now I am grateful for its help in writing my essay.” Jamie (MUS 210)
- “I enjoyed your class very much. I wish I could have spent more time with the material. What I learned and got out of this course went far beyond the mere material over which we went. It far exceeded my expectations of the course. Big part of it was the influence of your passion about the material. There are a few things that a person who is passionate for knowledge enjoys more than to have a teacher who is passionate about teaching. Thank you. This is a class I will not forget.” Chris (MUS 210)