

FACULTY OF MUSIC
Lecture/Seminar Feedback Summary

Course Title: The Music of Chopin, Part II Paper 15, 2017/18

I was delighted that the students expressed such high levels of satisfaction with the content of the lectures (53.3% at 5 = excellent; 40% at 4; and 6.7% at 3), the delivery of the lectures (86.7% at 5; 13.% at 4), AV aids (66.7% at 5; 33.3% at 4), and supervisions (50% each at 5 and at 4). The comments against these categories were mostly very positive, as the digest on p. 2 below indicates. One student queried the extent to which course content corresponded to previous examination questions, but that was before we had drilled on past exam papers in the final supervision – and it should also be remembered that this year's exam was focused on this year's content, not the content when the course was taught in 2012-13 or before. The suggestion of adding a summary slide by way of conclusion is useful. I realise that note-taking is not easy if slides do contain a large amount of text, but I always try to highlight the main points when such slides are shown so that those points can easily be jotted down and then referred to when later consulting the slides on Moodle. I note that further comments about case-study pieces would be welcome; it will not however be possible to provide printed scores for all of the music under discussion. I do not agree that one supervision consisted of 'two thirty-minute presentations': in fact, the student presentations were half that length or less, with the rest of the allotted time devoted to Q&A and discussion. Otherwise, the very positive tenor of the comments is gratifying, not least about the good/very good/excellent/perfect links between lectures and supervisions.

I am also gratified by the long list of course attributes that were considered to be most valuable. (See p. 3 below.) There are possible improvements to weigh up, however, one of which has to do with streamlining the content, a suggestion made by several respondents. When previously taught, the course consisted of the same number of sessions but with two hours for each one rather than 90 minutes. Although I did pare down the lectures, I will want to give further thought to the best use of the available time when the course is delivered again in 2018-19. A couple of people suggested focusing on fewer pieces in more detail; again, I will consider this, though on occasion I will still want to 'skim over' select works when they offer brief examples of the phenomena under discussion. The workload was almost universally considered to be manageable if not light, even though there were 'a lot of works to remember'. Students welcomed the advance notice given for assignments, the timing of which will continue to be carefully calibrated even though it can never be ideal for everyone. Some students wanted more supervisions, and some suggested having more tasks which were smaller in nature or even more full-blown essays.

There is no single recommendation that causes concern: indeed, the thrust of the feedback is extremely positive, though, as noted, I will give thought to all of the suggestions before teaching the course again next year.

Professor John Rink
4 June 2018

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Lecture/Seminar Questionnaire Summary

Course Title: The Music of Chopin Term/Year 2017/18

15 forms (out of a maximum 17 possible returns) were completed by students at the final seminar in the series.

	5 Excellent	4	3	2	1 Poor	Student comments (extracted verbatim from questionnaires, numbered 1 to 15)
Content of lectures	8 = 53.3%	6 = 40%	1 = 6.7%			1. Good 2. All encompassing 3. The course content doesn't seem to correspond to the previous exam questions. 4. Maybe a summary slide of the key ideas of the lecture could be added in, as a conclusion? 8. Great content, but a lot to digest 10. Lots of content 13. Good mix of having lecture talks and lecturing 14. Good mix of listening and lecturing 15. Sometimes the content is almost overwhelming in its breadth, so time ran out before we'd covered everything
Delivery of lectures	13 = 86.7%	2 = 13.3%				1. Entertaining & engaging with clear emphasis on important points 3. Very engaging lecturer 4. Always entertaining. Sometimes I'd say it's hard to take notes when there are large amounts of quotation. 6. Very engaging. Decent number of jokes to increase motivation. Obviously excellent piano illustrations. 8. Extremely engaging 9. John Rink is very engaging. Interesting sense of humour. 10. Exceptionally good 11. I love the interactive nature 12. Really engaging and interesting 13. Rink is funny – he makes the lectures what they are! – very engaging 14. Very engaging, makes an effort to get to know all of us individually, which no one else does
Audio-visual aids	10 = 66.7%	5 = 33.3%				1. Good. Some examples could maybe have done with additional notes – occasionally a page of a score was given with little comment 2. Fabulous use of Powerpoint techniques – detailed handouts and reading lists 4. Love all the Kate Liu YouTube examples 8. I would appreciate paper handouts of the pieces which are analysed. 9. Handout with bibliography for every lecture is really helpful. 11. Some technological troubles, but slides have superb content (graphs, tables, etc.) 14. Handouts fantastic
Supervisions	7.5 = 50%	7.5 = 50%				1. Perhaps could do with them more frequently to solidify lecture content 4. Good 5. One supervision relied overly on student contribution – two thirty-minute presentations – such that there was not a lot of help supplied from supervisor. 10. So much course content, would be nice to have more supervisions 11. Have been very helpful in understanding of larger themes of the course
Relationship between lectures and supervisions						1. Good 2. Excellent interplay between both 4. Good 6. Very clear. 11. Perfect synergy 12. Very good 15. Supervisions were similar to lectures, but with more room for discussion

What aspect(s) of this course did you find most valuable?

- Lecturer
- Constant injections of performance examples
- Very well structured lectures and supervisions
- Wide focus
- Good survey of Chopin's style and oeuvre; lots of musical detail; relevant to performance as well! emphasising other aspects of music apart from structural/musical analysis
- Prof. Rink is extremely good – knows his stuff, knows all of us by name etc., very good teacher
- Content of lectures, Prof. Rink's teaching of the material
- Listening to the music in lectures
- Very informative. Covers all aspects of his playing. JR is a babe.
- John Rink
- Gaining a much deeper understanding of Chopin

How do you think the course could be improved?

- More regular supervisions
- I think the course could be structured differently, dealing directly with issues of reception and genre etc. Some supervision tasks didn't seem that relevant.
- Not really
- More detailed references to pieces w/in lectures
- For a course this specific, there is nothing that could be changed. A broader point can nevertheless be made about the white, western, heteronormative focus of the Music Faculty, however.
- Perhaps focusing on less pieces in more detail would be helpful.
- I think it would be better to focus on fewer pieces in more detail, as some pieces we seem to skim over.

Are there any additional topics or materials that might enrich this course?

- Likewise [i.e. 'not really']
- Slightly less content? E.g. Messiaen course is only 15 years of his life, and then we can really explore in depth and context

Comments (if any) on workload manageability:

- More frequent/regular supervisions could allow more, slightly smaller tasks
- Excellent – supervision workload encouraged well-wrought, extended essays
- More reminders of the work deadlines would be appreciated.
- Manageable set assignments, but breadth of the course in general – encompassing Chopin's entire oeuvre! – is a little much.
- Yes, fine, and work detailed well in advance
- Very light – could be more essays
- Very manageable and reasonable workload
- Good, but slightly more exam preparation/guidance in supervision would be helpful
- Perhaps too much work for the 2,500-word essay – would have been nice to spread it
- Infrequent supervisions, more work for each than is usual. Manageable.
- Workload has been manageable.
- A lot of works to remember!
- Very manageable
- Manageable workload, but assignment deadlines not especially well-timed.

Other comments:

- Bravo
- Really enjoyed the course – thank you!