

**MUS 535, Lecture-Workshop in the Performance of Baroque Music**  
**Instructors: Erika Honisch and Arthur Haas | Wednesday, 10am – 12:50pm**

How are we to perform, today, music from the Baroque era (ca. 1600-1750)? The diverse styles of the instrumental and vocal music composed during this period—preserved in sources of varying clarity and specificity—elicit a wide array of responses from instrumentalists and singers attuned to pre-Romantic performance practices. In this discussion-driven and performance-centered course, we seek to adopt a Baroque mindset: not just by mulling over musical details (although we will do that!), but also by immersing ourselves in the cultural worlds in which Baroque composers lived, listened, performed, and composed. We take as our starting point an understanding of music in this period as reflecting and being shaped by cultural contact in an age of European colonization, as well as internal crisis and calamity, and note the frequent cross-over between popular and learned musical traditions in this period. Throughout, we will be guided by the notion, fundamental to the Baroque musician, that music is above all a rhetorical art.

Sensitizing ourselves to these larger cultural forces, we will take in the many possibilities available to the intrepid and historically-engaged performer. The topics we will explore together include Baroque sound, ornamentation, vibrato, text-music relationships, improvisation, tempo and meter, rhythmic alteration, dynamics, tuning and temperament, and basso continuo. These issues will become concrete through conversations about the mechanics of period instruments as compared to their modern descendants, and the perusal of primary source documents—music manuscripts and prints, iconographic and literary sources, as well as music-theoretical treatises—now available online.

We will situate our exploration of these detailed musical issues within larger historical and critical contexts, anchoring our discussions using compositions that we study together and return to regularly over the course of the semester. We will address the importance of national preferences (e.g. dance in France, rhetoric in Germany) as well as how genres such as the *ciaccona* were transformed as they traveled—from the streets of Latin America, for instance, to the palazzos of Venice, to the Köthen study of Johann Sebastian Bach. At the same time, we will turn a critical eye on ourselves, exploring the ideologies of the early music movement as it has taken shape in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

*This course is suitable for all students. It fulfills the Elective Group 1 requirement for DMA students. Interested MMs should contact the Graduate Program Director.*

*3 credits*