This graduate seminar meets for three hours. The first two hours will be a mix of lecture/discussion, based on reading and listening assignments and weekly written reflections posted on the course blog; occasionally we will also have discussion forums with visiting scholars. The final hour will usually consist of brief student presentations, described below.

There will be a term paper and a final presentation (in class on 11/21 and 12/5). For more information, refer to the syllabus.

UNIT I: DISABILITY THEORY

Disability Models and Archetypes (8/29)

Topics:
- An introduction to Disability Studies: religious, medical, and cultural models of disability; medical impairment vs. cultural disability; politics of “enforced normalcy.”
- Disability archetypes and “engulfment”: the savant, freak, sage, avenger, overcomer, etc. Examples from the operatic repertoire.
- Charting the reception of Schumann’s Violin Concerto: a case study on the shifting stigmatization and valorization of disability.

Readings:
- Joseph N. Straus, Extraordinary Measures (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), Introduction (pp. 3–14) and Chapter 1 (pp. 15–44).

Listening:
- Robert Schumann, Violin Concerto in D Minor (1853)
Performing Disability (9/5)

Topics:
- Sociological views of identity as performance: “staring,” “passing,” “enfreakment,” “masquerade.”
- One-hand pianism as emblem of disabled performance: Paul Wittgenstein’s commissions and reception history.

Readings:

Listening:
- Maurice Ravel, Concerto pour la main gauche (1929)
- Benjamin Britten, Diversions, Op. 21 (1942)

Special Guest (Skype):
- Stefan Honisch (University of British Columbia). Please post questions or comments for the author on the message board no later than 8:00 p.m. on the evening before class.

Presentations – Group A (20 minutes):
- In the folder below are dozens of short newspaper articles and concert announcements documenting the reception of one-hand piano music (and in particular the performances of Paul Wittgenstein) in the North American press. With a partner, prepare a presentation to the class that traces general themes in these documents. (Obviously, you do not need to study every article; feel free to focus on a particular decade or a single newspaper.) You should also consult recordings of Paul Wittgenstein’s performances, easily available online, and include audio clips in your presentation when they illuminate your argument.
- Watch Thomas Quasthoff: The Dreamer, dir. Michael Harder (2005), available on reserve in the music library. Consider the information that Quasthoff reveals about his disability, and consider the directorial choices involved in its filmic representation (narration, editing, camera angles, etc.). You should also consult Quasthoff’s autobiography (The Voice: A Memoir, trans. Kirsten Stoldt Wittenborn [New York: Pantheon, 2008]), cited in Straus’s chapter, for additional information. With a partner, present your findings to the class with clips from the films.
Musical Discourses of Disability: Embodiment and Narrative (9/12)

Topics:
- Representing the body in music: doctrine of imitation and *musica humana*, embodiment theory and image schemata, metaphors of organism, and the *Formenlehre*. Musical mobility as medicine.
- Common narrative treatments of disability: the “cure” or “expulsion” narrative, the “overcoming” narrative, the “accommodation” narrative.
- Hermeneutical readings of disability in “tonal problem” works by Haydn, Beethoven, and Schubert.

Readings:
- Blake Howe, “‘Leap, ye lame, for joy’: Musical Mobility and the Remediation of Disability” (forthcoming in the *Oxford Handbook on Music and Disability*).

Listening:
- Joseph Haydn, String Quartet in B Minor, Op. 64, No. 2 (ca. 1790): Third movement, Menuetto
- Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93: Fourth movement, Allegro vivace
- Franz Schubert, Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960 (1828): First movement, Molto moderato

Presentations – Group B (10 minutes):
- Pick one of the following works briefly mentioned by Straus, Grave, and Howe in their essays, and expand on their interpretations. Present your analysis to the class with an annotated score and audio examples of crucial passages.
  - Joseph Haydn, Symphony No. 83 in G Minor: First movement, Allegro spiritoso
  - Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Trio in D Major, Op. 70, No. 1 [Ghost] (1809): First movement, Allegro vivace e con brio
Prosthesis (9/19)

Topics
- Theorizing the prosthetic: the “cyborg,” assistive and compensatory technologies, superhuman functionality.
- The prosthetic role of electronic music technologies, including Auto-Tune. Expressive capabilities of the musical “cyborg.” Performance ethics.
- Metaphors of prosthesis and other corrective or supplemental appendages in narrative structures and musical forms.

Reading:

Listening:
- Milton Babbitt, Philomel (1964)
- Björk, Biophilia (2011)

Special Guest (Skype):
- Jennifer Iverson (University of Iowa). Please post questions or comments for the author on the message board no later than 8:00 p.m. on the evening before class.

Presentations – Group A (10 minutes):
- Read one of the following texts, and report to the class on how its author uses the notion of prosthesis to describe a compensatory, corrective, or supplemental function within a disabled body (real or metaphorical).

Final Projects:
• Post a brief “statement of topic” (two or three sentences) and a bibliography for your final project.
UNIT II: DISABILITY AS MUSICAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Hearing, Composing, and Performing Autistically (9/26)

Topics:

- Autism as a medical diagnostic category vs. autism as a form of identity and product of culture. Biodiversity, neurodiversity, and autism pride movements.
- “Blind Tom” Wiggins and Glenn Gould as “savants.” Prodigious performance, musical difference, and the dangers of exploitation and enfreakment. Parallels to the freak show?
- Compositional analogues to the autistic subject in modernism and postmodernism—e.g., serialism, dadaism, and minimalism.

Readings:


Listening:

- Thomas (“Blind Tom”) Wiggins, “The Battle of Manassas” (1866)
- Thomas (“Blind Tom”) Wiggins, Specimens of Blind Tom’s Vocal Compositions, ed. John G. Bethune (1867)
- Wolfgang A. Mozart, Sonata in A Major, K. 331: First movement, Andante grazioso, as performed by Glenn Gould

Special Guest (Skype):

- Stephanie Jensen-Moulton (Brooklyn College, The City University of New York). Please post questions or comments for the author on the message board no later than 8:00 p.m. on the evening before class.

Presentations – Group B (10 minutes):

- Read David A. Gerber, “The ‘Careers’ of People Exhibited in Freak Shows: The Problem of Volition and Valorization,” in Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body, ed. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (New York and London: New York University Press, 1996), 38–54. Then watch documentary profiles (available on YouTube) of one of the following musicians, and discuss how their self-presentation, media coverage, and audience reception may contribute to their identity as savants. Tackle some of the ethical questions pertaining to savantism and performance, as posed in Gerber’s essay: are these films and concerts
exploitative? or do they celebrate neurological difference? Report your observations and conclusions to the class.

- Leslie Lemke (profiled on That’s Incredible [1981], among many other programs)
- Derek Paravicini (profiled on Extraordinary People, NOVA, 60 Minutes, My Shocking Story, among many other programs) [two students, presenting separately on different documentaries]
- Rex Lewis-Clack (profiled in 60 Minutes and Ingenious Minds, among many other programs)
Enabling the Senses: Music in Blind and Deaf Cultures (10/3)

Topics:
• A sensory paradox: seeing and hearing as metaphors of understanding, blindness and deafness as symbols of insight.
• On the creation of a non-aural music: the rise of song signing in Deaf cultures.
• Music as a tool for autonomy among blind performers, as in eighteenth-century French education and twentieth-century blues and soul traditions.

Reading:
• Terry Rowden, The Songs of Blind Folk: African-American Musicians and the Cultures of Blindness (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2009), 35–63 and 85–121.

Listening:
• Owl City, “Fireflies,” as interpreted by Stephen Torrence (linked in Anabel Maler’s essay)

Special Guest (Skype):
• Anabel Maler (University of Chicago). Please post questions or comments for the author on the message board no later than 8:00 p.m. on the evening before class.

Presentations – Group A (10 minutes):
• Watch Genghis Blues, dir. Roko Belic (2000). How does Paul Pena, the film’s subject, describe his disabilities? How does he mediate his disabilities through his career as a bluesman? Do you agree with Terry Rowden’s summary of the film (cf. Songs of Blind Folk, 61–63)? Play excerpts of the film for the class.
• Compare three signed performances of the song “Just the Way You Are” (Bruno Mars, 2010). How do these performance differ from one another? How do commenters on YouTube respond to the “fluency” of the signers in their performance languages [ASL = American Sign Language; PSE = Pidgeon Signed English]?
  o anonymous performance posted by Kelsey S: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjEw5NwaU1Q>
  o Julia Sky: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8TYel6ikKQ>
  o Jason Listman: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vrboKNjpMk>
Vocal Disfluency or Prodigious Performance? (10/10)

Topics:
- Reflections on the “grain of the voice” (Barthes) and its implications for Disability Studies.
- Vocal trauma as enabling and disabling a singer’s performance. The appeal of “raspiness,”
  the danger of nodules. The voice as “organ of the soul.”
- On the “denatured” castrato: prodigious performance, vocal prosthetics, gender identity,
  and the economics of enfreakment.

Reading:
  the Voice”).
- Laurie Stras, “The Organ of the Soul: Voice, Damage, and Affect,” in *Sounding Off: Theorizing
  Disability in Music*, edited by Lerner and Joseph N. Straus (New York and London: Routledge,

Listening:
- Vivica Genaux, mezzo soprano, *Arias for Farinelli*, with the Akademie für Alte Musik,
  conducted by René Jacobs, Harmonia Mundi 801778 (2003).
- Andreas Scholl, countertenor, *Arias for Senesino*, with the Accademia Bizantina, conducted
  by Ottavio Dantone, Decca 530002 (2005).

Final Projects:
- For your term paper, complete an abstract (350 words), in the style of a conference paper
  proposal, and include a short bibliography of books and media that you plan on consulting.
- In lieu of our usual presentations, be prepared to describe your research project to the class.
UNIT III: MUSICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF DISABILITY

Modeling Musical Madness: A Brief History (10/17)

Topics:
- The changing medical discourse of madness, from humoral theory to psychiatry. The changing stigmatization or valorization of madness, from premodern lunacy to Romantic genius.
- Diverse strategies for auralizing an invisible disability. Musical representations of madness, aligned with contemporary medical models.
- The prosthetic function of madness in narratives of rehabilitation and expulsion. Madness as emblem of noncomformity (gender, sexuality, politics), and madness as license for creative freedom.

Readings:

Listening:
- Solage, Fumeux fume (late fourteenth century)
- Claudio Monteverdi, Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria, Act III, Scene 1 (1640)
- Gaetano Donizetti, Lucia di Lammermoor, Act III, Scene 2 (1835)
- Peter Cornelius, “Ein Ton,” from Trauer und Trost, Op. 3 (1854)

Special Guest (Skype):
- Julie Singer (Washington University). Please post questions or comments for the author on the message board no later than 8:00 p.m. on the evening before class.

Presentations – Group B (10 minutes):
- Review and report on the mad scenes or mad characters in one of the following music-dramatic works. How do composers represent madness musically? What purpose does the madness serve in the drama? Consider also how the medium of the work (ballet, operetta, opera, film, musical) might influence the depiction of mental distress.
  - Adolphe Adam, Giselle (1841)
  - Arthur Sullivan, Ruddigore (1887)
  - Benjamin Britten, Peter Grimes (1945)
  - Franz Waxman, score for Sunset Boulevard (1950)
  - Stephen Sondheim, Sweeney Todd (1979)
Musical Memoirs of Disability and Aging (10/24)

Topics:
- Music as evidence for posthumous diagnosis. When do compositional idiosyncrasies become pathologies?
- On aging and creativity: locating the “late style” in music through disability.

Readings:
- Joseph N. Straus, Extraordinary Measures, Chapter 5 (pp. 82–102).

Listening:
- Bedřich Smetana, String Quartet No. 2 in D Minor (1883)
- Béla Bartók, Piano Concerto No. 3 in E Major, Sz. 119 (1945): Second movement, Adagio religioso
- Aaron Copland, Night Thoughts: Homage to Ives (1972)

Note:
- There are no presentations this week, but there are major presentations next week. Begin studying your assigned materials early!
Disability, Gender, Agency (10/31)

Topics:
- We focus today on developing our own critical readings of disability in musical works, unmediated by existing secondary literature. (For most of these works, in fact, there is very little secondary literature to consult!) All operas for today feature characters whose disabilities significantly affect both the work’s narrative structure and its musical idiom. Disability also affects the characterization of gender roles in similarly meaningful ways; the essay by Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, on the integration of feminist theory and disability theory, will offer some relevant insights on this topic.
  - In the first half of the meeting, we will discuss Tchaikovsky’s *Iolanta* as a class. How does blindness control essential aspects of this opera (including narrative, gender characterization, musical idiom)? In your written reflection for today, attempt to come to some general conclusion about the operation of disability in the work, then focus on a specific passage that piques your interest.
  - In the second half of class, small groups will present on three operas (listed below), all featuring non-speaking/singing characters. What narrative or character archetypes does your opera use? How does muteness control essential aspects of this opera (including narrative, gender characterization, musical idiom)? Present your arguments to class (it is fine, even encouraged, to acknowledge differences of opinion within the group), and include audio or visual excerpts of relevant passages. Be prepared to ask and answer questions. (This assignment will count for double the usual presentation grade.)

Reading:

Listening (to be discussed as a class):
- Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, *Iolanta* (1892)

Presentations – Groups A and B (25 minutes):
- Carl Maria von Weber, *Silvana* (1810)
- Daniel Auber, *La muette de Portici* (1828)
- Gian Carlo Menotti, *The Medium* (1946)
Modern Disfigurements (11/14)

Topics:
• Disfigurement and the crisis of modernity: disability as emblem for the alienation of the modern subject.
• Redefining the aesthetic opposition of beauty and ugliness: toward a new synthesis for the modern age. The able-bodied self, the disabled shadow.
• Musical representations of physical disfigurement in expressionism and primitivism. Extraordinary gestures for the extraordinary body.

Readings:

Listening:
• Igor Stravinsky, Three Pieces for String Quartet, No. 2 (1914)
• Franz Schreker, Die Gezeichneten (1918)

Special Guest (Skype):
• Joseph N. Straus (The Graduate Center, The City University of New York). Please post questions or comments for the author on the message board no later than 8:00 p.m. on the evening before class.

Final Projects:
• So that you can focus on your final projects, there are no presentations in class today.
• Final presentations will be held in class on 11/21 and 12/5.
• For a schedule of deadlines for the term paper (peer-review, first drafts, second drafts), refer to the syllabus and the instructions for the final project.