

MUS 507, Studies in Music History: The Voice in History, Theory, and Sound

Instructor: Ryan Minor

Wednesday, 10am – 12:50pm

This course examines the human voice as it has been imagined and heard across genres, historical contexts, and theoretical discourse. We will consider a number of musical practices--ranging from the castrato to Auto-Tune to throat singing--as well as the biological, political, and philosophical debates that inform these practices. And we will be listening to a lot of recordings.

Some contours of the course will depend on student interest and backgrounds, but in general we will be guided by several broad questions: how has the human voice been invested with the power of expression? how have audiences, performers, and scientists understood the physical capacities of the singing voice? and how do changing vectors of identity--race, gender, sexuality, and many more--intersect with the extraordinarily wide range of sounds the human voice is capable of producing?

This course is primarily intended for MM and DMA students, for whom it fulfills the Elective Group 1 requirement.

3 credits