

MUS 545, Topics in Renaissance Music: Music's Material Entanglements
Instructor: Erika Honisch | Tuesday, 3:30pm – 6:20pm

This is a course about music books and other musical things in Europe from 1500 to 1750, and what they can tell us about the sonorous past. We will consider how musical practices took material form in different places at different times during this period. What can we learn from a polyphonic partbook, a church tower, a hollowed-out gourd, a doodle, a note to a friend, animal hide, an inventory, a diary, an echo? How were they used then, and what use might we make of them today? Together, we will scrutinize music's material traces but also music's material practices—making, collecting, notating, performing, editing—seeking out what resonant objects and activities reveal about orality and literacy, institutions and politics, ownership and exchange, identity and difference. Ultimately, this is a course about the ethical challenges and methodological opportunities of using musical objects to write history.

Coursework will involve weekly readings, discussion, and transcriptions from primary sources. Once in the semester at a mutually agreeable time, we will visit New York City to see, touch, handle, smell, very old musical things.

This course is primarily intended for MA and PhD students. However, interested MM or DMA students may enroll with permission from Professor Honisch. Interested MMs must also contact the Graduate Program Director for approval. For students in the MA/PhD in Critical Music Studies track, it satisfies the Elective Group 2 requirement. For DMA students, this course fulfills the Elective Group 1 requirement.

3 credits