UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OPTIONS – BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS 2018-19

2nd- and 3rd-year option courses are generally limited to 28 students per class, selected on a first-come first-served basis, unless stated otherwise below.

Full descriptions of all courses, including assessment requirements, can be found in the course specifications at [http://www.rhul.ac.uk/music/prospectivestudents/undergraduate/home.aspx](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/music/prospectivestudents/undergraduate/home.aspx)

The information below is offered in good faith but is for guidance only and may be subject to change, particularly with regard to staffing.

SECOND YEAR FLEXIBLE CORE COURSES:

**MU2000 Studies in Music Analysis (Stephen Downes) term 1, Monday 11-1**
This course introduces a range of important concepts for analysing music, and of the published secondary literature in music analysis. The analytical systems and repertories to be studied will vary from year to year, but students may expect to build on theoretical and analytical foundations established in the first year, by broadening their knowledge (through scores and recordings) of a wide range of Western musical repertoire, to learn and then apply standard analytical methods in order to gain a deeper understanding of the music’s construction and expressive effect, and to learn the vocabulary and technical proficiency necessary for reading and evaluating analyses of music by scholars from those traditions. The course may address pre-tonal, tonal or post-tonal music. The course is assessed by coursework (50%) and an exam (50%).

**MU2001 Studies in Composition (team-taught) terms 1 & 2 fortnightly, Monday 9-11**
In this course you will develop your knowledge of a range of fundamental techniques of musical composition with particular focus on structure, harmonic control and the manipulation of rhythmic and melodic material. You will be encouraged to explore and develop your own creativity through the study of key works by a diverse range of composers which will be used as springboards for your own musical invention. You will create a portfolio of technical exercises and a short composition written in response to a given brief. Assessment: 100% coursework.

**MU2002 Studies in Music History (Daniel Elphick & tba) term 2, Thursday 9-11**
This course introduces students to a wide range of issues in the history of music. It is taught by two members of staff, with one module focusing on pre-1750 and another focusing on post-1750 music. Questions of style history, technical developments in musical composition, and the relation of music to broader political, artistic, intellectual, and institutional histories are only the most obvious of those that will be interrogated in the course. The course is taught in a mixture of lectures and tutorials. Building on first-year courses in both music history and historiography in different ways, the course offers a particularly useful grounding for third-year dissertations, and provides a historical background to many second- and third-year option courses. The course is assessed by 50% coursework (essay of 2500-2750 words) and 50% exam.

**MU2003 Studies in Ethnomusicology term 1, Thursday 9-11**
In what way is ethnomusicology more than the study of world music genres? Are there universals in music, and how can musicians, listeners and scholars approach this question through lived practice, historical study and discourse? What is the value of preserving ‘dying’ traditions? This introductory course examines key issues and topics in
ethnomusicology such as fieldwork and ethnography, the music business, musical change, music cognition and approaches to instruments. The course is taught in a mixture of lectures and tutorials. It offers a particularly useful grounding for anyone intending to write a third-year dissertation on ethnomusicological topics. The course is assessed by 50% coursework (essay of 2500-2750 words) and 50% exam.

MU2004 Studies in Music, Media & Technology (Jonathan Godsall) term 2, Monday 11-1
The course will introduce students to a range of ways in which electronic media and technology have affected and transformed musical cultures across the world through their ability to: record and store musical sound; create new sounds, new ways of combining sounds and new ways of synching sound with other media; turn musical sound into a commodity; separate musical sound from live performance context; and greatly alter dynamics of power in the production and consumption of music. The course will cover a range of key phenomena and issues in contemporary musical culture that are inextricably linked to electronic media and technology. Exact topics will vary, but may include: popular and mass-mediated music; electronic music; the impact of technology on compositional practices; music industries; piracy; film music, video and multimedia; music and the Internet; globalisation; debates on the value of mass mediated music; and questions of power and representation. The course is taught in a mixture of lectures and tutorials. It offers a useful grounding for anyone wanting to write a third-year dissertation on aspects of popular music or music and the media. The course is assessed by 50% coursework (essay of 2500-2750 words) and 50% exam.

MU2205 Practical Performance I (Simon Watterton, Mary Dullea) terms 1 & 2, Monday 4-6
This half-unit course offers you 16 instrumental/vocal lessons of 45 mins duration, culminating in a 20-minute recital at the end of term 2. The course also includes a mix of seminars and workshops. Students are given opportunity to perform for and critique one another in a variety of genres and setups (of their own choosing). Seminar topics covered include performance theory, dealing with performance anxiety, practice methods, improvisation and concert production. There may also be workshops on Alexander Technique and cognitive behavioural therapies for performance anxiety.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL COURSES:

MU2210 Solo Performance (Mary Dullea) terms 1 & 2, Tuesday 9-11
This full-unit course for second year students only, and is intended for students who wish to specialise in performance. The class is divided into two groups, each of which meets regularly throughout the term on a fortnightly basis. This course offers you 20 instrumental/vocal lessons of 1-hour duration, culminating in a 30-minute public recital at the end of term 3. Places on this course will be limited and priority will be given to students achieving the highest marks in their recital for MU1118 Solo Performance.

MU2211 Ensemble Performance (Mary Dullea) terms 1 & 2, Tuesday 11-1
Admittance to this half unit course is limited to the most promising ensembles which submitted themselves for audition in March.

MU2213 Composition Portfolio (Samantha Fernando et al) terms 1 & 2 fortnightly, Thursday 11-1 (Co-requisite: MU2001 Studies in Composition)
In this course you will create a mixed portfolio of compositions and develop skills in independent creative work. You will be encouraged to pursue your own individual approach to writing music with guidance from the course tutors alongside a series of
group lectures. You will create two works: one involving a voice or voices, and another for either solo keyboard or small chamber ensemble. Assessment 100% coursework. **Places on this course will be limited and priority will be given to students achieving the highest marks in MU1112 Creative Composition Techniques and MU1113 Practical Composition Skills.**

**MU2251 Practical and Creative Orchestration (Brian Lock) term 2, Wednesday 11-1**  
(Pre-requisite: MU1110 Theory & Analysis and/or MU1111 Practical Musicianship)  
This course will introduce you to contemporary principles of orchestration, giving you the skills to orchestrate pieces of music for ensembles up to the size of a full symphony orchestra. The topics of lectures and seminars will vary from year to year, but may cover such topics as: instrumental projection and weight; instrumental timbre and solos; “colour” in orchestration; contrapuntal music and counter-melodies; orchestrating film and commercial music; drama and atmosphere; orchestrating rhythm; timing and pacing. Assessment: 100% coursework.

**MU2326 Choral Conducting term 1, Wednesday 9-11**  
This course will give you the technical skills, confidence and abilities to direct choral rehearsal and performance. Specifically it will teach skills of baton technique/hand gesture, rehearsal management and the principles of choral direction; develop your understanding of vocal techniques, warm-up exercises and other techniques of choral rehearsal; and develop your interpretation of scores and the communication of interpretative ideas to a choir in the pursuit of their realization in performance. Assessment 30% coursework, 70% practical exam.

**MU2335 Composing with Technology 1 (Brian Lock) term 1, Friday 11-1; (repeat) term 2, Friday 11-1**  
In this course you will learn about and compose some commercial and media style music using the Logic Audio sequencing programme. The course will be based around and marked on four exercises. The exercises might include putting some notated acoustic music into the computer and creating a ‘mock-up’ of it and/or composing music for a short fragment of a TV programme, such as a nature documentary, for example. The exercises will be designed to help you get a good understanding of using Logic Audio and to start composing commercial music. The course is designed for complete beginners in music technology or those with A Level Music Technology; both are welcome. This course contains learning skills that will be of direct relevance to all those considering careers in the following fields: composition, film and media music, sound design, media and broadcast industries, sound engineering, software design, publishing, advertising, pop music industry, sound recording, creative industries in general and teaching. There is a follow up course – Composing with Technology 2 – in the third year for all those who take this course in the second year and wish to continue with the subject. Assessment: 100% coursework. (One-term course, but typically offered twice: in term one and term two)

**MU2338 Introduction to Jazz: Theory, Practice and Contexts (Chris Whiter, with guest appearances by Shzr Ee Tan) term 1, Friday 9-11**  
This course is a historical and theoretical introduction to Jazz. Coverage of its origins and stylistic metamorphosis in the United States, as well as its globalised practice around the world today will be featured alongside a basic improvisation workshop and a practical look at the UK professional/ amateur scene. Cultural context will be examined via additional debates on race discourse and the politics of ‘fusion’ genres. The course is assessed by 50% coursework (essay of 2500-2750 words) and 50% exam.
MU2339 Popular Music and Musicians in Post-War Britain and North America (Daniel Elphick)  term 2, Friday 9-11

From the arrival of the blues in Britain, to the Beatles' invasion of America: British and American popular musics and musicians have maintained a relationship of exchange, convergence and divergence. This module considers popular music in post-war British and North American culture from the revival of skiffle in the 1950s to the current popularity of dubstep through shared patterns of production, dissemination and consumption between the two regions. In addition to acquainting students with the musicians and musical features that define important styles and genres of popular music, lectures will situate musical developments within broader social contexts of race, class, gender, politics, and economics. Through the lectures and readings students will also acquire knowledge of and familiarity with a range of methodologies and theoretical approaches for studying popular music. The course is assessed by 50% coursework (essay of 2500-2750 words) and 50% exam.

MU2350 Korean Percussion Performance (Shzr Ee Tan)  terms 1 & 2, Thursday 4-6

This is a (brand new) performance-based course involving the learning of Korean percussion traditions - largely of the neo-traditional samulnori style, but also of folk nongak and pungmul genres. Students will be required to acquire basic competence on all the samulnori instruments (the changgo, puk, jing and kwaeeggari). They will additionally be encouraged to specialise technically on an instrument of their choice, and work on a piece of solo repertoire alongside ensemble pieces. Ensembles will be required to meet at least twice a week during term - a minimum of once with the tutor and once independently.

Public performances (besides the final examination) will be expected and deemed to be part of the course. Each student will be required to satisfactorily complete a diary of their learning, performance and listening experiences and other related activities. This will be submitted to the examiners at the time of the final recital. The development of technical and practical skills will be accompanied by the study of relevant socio-cultural and historical context, and Korean music theory and history. Students will also be required to complete prescriptive transcriptions from audio or video recordings to aid the understanding of musical processes, forms of elaboration or improvisation, and the interaction of parts within an ensemble. The transcription exercise will require analytical and description skills.

PY2102 Practical Ethics (taught by Philosophy)

The aim of this course is to allow students to develop their abilities to apply theoretical ethical considerations to practical ethical situations. We will look at a number of different ethical issues such as abortion, euthanasia, the rights of animals, what rights the state has to constrain the behaviour of its citizens, human enhancement (through technology, medicine, DNA manipulation), the relationship between justice and punishment, and our responsibilities to the environment. Each week there will be a lecture addressing a different issue, followed by a seminar in which influential papers on the topic are discussed to determine how successful they are in analysing the ethical issue at stake. We will consider the abilities of various ethical theories to adequately characterise our concrete ethical life, and determine what this characterisation says about us as ethical individuals.

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HONOURS LEVEL COURSES:

**MU2230 Musical Aesthetics (Stephen Downes)  term 1, Monday 2-4**
This course examines some key ideas in the aesthetics, meaning and philosophy of music over the last two hundred years. It is concerned with theories of the nature of music, its capacity for expression and representation, its political value, and its relation to the natural and social world. Taking a broadly historical approach, it examines different ways in which questions of musical meaning and value have been dealt with in the context of philosophical and critical writing from Kant's *Critique of Judgment* to the work of Theodor Adorno.

**MU2253 Mozart's Operas (Mark Berry)  term 1, Friday 11-1**
Mozart’s operas will be explored both individually and collectively – or, to put it another way, as works and also thematically. There will be considerable scope for students to follow and to nurture their own interests. An especial focus will be the variety of ways in which the operas may be considered. Historical context will be crucial, but we shall explore how historical study might be combined with, amongst others, analytical, dramatic, and reception-based perspectives. Though greater weight may ultimately be accorded to works from Mozart’s maturity, the ‘early’ and incomplete operas will not be neglected; indeed, we shall ask what it is apart from chronology that distinguishes them – and many works by Mozart’s contemporaries – from the ‘canonical’ seven, and examine the historical instability of that ‘canon’.

**MU2304 Issues in Sound, Music and the Moving Image (Jonathan Godsall, with guest appearances by Julie Brown)  term 2, Monday 2-4**
Issues in Sound, Music and the Moving Image introduces analytical and critical approaches to the soundtracks of moving-image texts, including films (both silent and sound films, primarily from Hollywood and European traditions), television programmes, and video games. Each session of the course focuses on a particular critical issue, aesthetic practice, or genre, such as ‘Classical Hollywood’ film music of the 1930s-40s, or the use of pre-existing music in film. The course offers the opportunity to gain an understanding of key historical developments surrounding the use of music in moving-image media, to develop students' knowledge of the technologies involved in adding sound and music to such media, to explore the use of music within the broader sonic design of moving-image texts, and to investigate the development of music’s function in creating, or enhancing, ‘meaning’ in various contexts. The course is assessed by 50% coursework (essay of 2500-2750 words) and 50% exam.

**MU2333 Intercultural Performance (Rachel Beckles Willson)  term 2, Wednesday 9-11**
Performance is at the heart of this course, in which you will study the music of 20th-century artists who have combined contrasting traditions to create hybrids. The course includes written components and practical workshops. Drawing on study of contemporary performers working at intersections of western and world traditions (for example, Kronos Quartet, Björk, Jan Garbarek), you will have the opportunity to contribute to a mixed ensemble, and invited to use performing styles not developed elsewhere in the degree programme (jazz, world, popular or others). The course is assessed

**MU3400 Music and Society in Purcell's London (Stephen Rose)  term 1, Tuesday 11-1**
This course will introduce you to a range of music by Purcell and other composers, studied in the context of London society and politics between 1660 and 1700. You will make extensive use of primary sources from the period, including Samuel Pepys’s diary and
facsimiles of early printed and manuscript sources. Specific works to be considered include Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*, Purcell’s *King Arthur* and Purcell’s symphony anthems.

**MU3409 Music and Orientalism (Rachel Beckles Willson)**  term 1, Thursday 11-1
This course will have two main strands. In one, we will study “Orientalism” in music by exploring the cultural-political significance of European evocations of the Orient in composition, performance and writing. We will examine how musical and narrative clichés came to categorise an imagined “Orient” as a place of difference, eroticism, exoticism, danger, religiosity, and more... This side of the course will focus mainly on Europe’s portrayals of the Middle East (ranging from Verdi’s *Aïda* to Sting’s *Desert Rose*), and will be assessed by essay. The other strand of the course will consider how certain musics associated with the historical or contemporary Middle East affect us today as sounds, and how we can respond creatively in composition, performance, and writing. This will involve playing, singing, listening, and discussing sounds in Arab and Turkish music, and considering our experiences in the context of the partially globalized world we inhabit. Students can opt to develop their assessment for this strand in composition or performance (each plus commentary) or critical writing, so long as it engages with the course content.

**MU3412 Music, Power and Politics (Laryssa Whittaker – visiting teacher)**  term 1, Wednesday 9-11
This course examines a range of ways in which music holds power and importance in society and culture. It refers to musical genres, practices and cultures from across the world, involving familiar and unfamiliar territory, and aims to equip students with new approaches to looking at any kinds of music they are interested in. The course involves much that is relevant to the contemporary world. The course is assessed by 50% coursework (essay of 2500-2750 words) and 50% exam.

**MU3413 Ideas of German Music (Mark Berry)**  term 2, Friday 11-1
This course will look at ideas of German music, from c.1750 to c.2000. Certain key works will be considered, from Mozart to Hans Werner Henze, but we shall also look at composers’ writings, the attitudes of performing musicians (e.g., the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler), writers (e.g., Thomas Mann), philosophers (e.g., Theodor Adorno), and other artists (e.g., the painter, Caspar David Friedrich). What is it that was held to characterise German music in particular, and how convincing were the special claims made for it? How closely did other social, political, and intellectual currents influence conceptions of music, and how did music influence them?

**MU3424 Music and Gender (team-taught; convened by Mark Berry)**  term 2, Tuesday 11-1
This course aims to give students a wide-ranging understanding of music, performing arts and gender in different historical periods and different parts of the world, including Europe. It aims to introduce students to theoretical approaches to the study of gender through richly comparative case studies that will include western classical music as well as musical cultures from other parts of the world. The course will also develop the analytical and writing skills of students. The course is assessed by 50% coursework (essay of 2500-2750 words) and 50% exam.

**MUXXXX Contemporary Music Performance (Mary Dullea)**  term 1, Tuesday 2-4: coaching at negotiated times continues in term 2
This is a (brand new) course that will bridge the gap between the disciplines of composition and performance and develop both practical and analytical skills. Students will gain an increased understanding of practice in contemporary music performance,
extending to the world of performing with electronics. Regarding performance the key features of contemporary and new music that will be studied include; skills and strategies in reading differing notations, theories and practices such as extended techniques, microtonality, expressive possibilities of instruments, engaging with electronics. Students will gain both practical and critical understandings of how this music can be approached through a series of introductory and contextualising lectures, workshops, performance seminars and individual tuition as supported through individual instrumental/vocal lessons as part of solo/practical performance modules. The course is assessed by 70% performance exam (20-minutes: either solo repertoire or in a small ensemble), and 30% coursework (2,000 word essay, that will include an analysis of some of the selected repertoire and critical engagement with the questions raised in lectures and throughout the learning/rehearsal process).

THE FOLLOWING COURSES ARE FOR FINALISTS ONLY:

MU3407 Practical Performance II – finalists only (Mary Dullea)  terms 1 & 2, Monday 9-11
This course provides an opportunity for students to study an instrument/voice and work on performance through taking individual lessons, performing and giving feedback to other students in class seminars, writing programme notes and concert reviews, and giving an end of year solo recital. This course offers you 16 instrumental/vocal lessons of 45 mins duration, culminating in a 25-minute recital at the end of term 2.

MU3417 Composing with Technology 2 – finalists only (Brian Lock)  term 1, Friday 2-4
(Pre-requisite MU2335 Composing with Technology 1)
The course will carry on with all the technological and compositional techniques and methods introduced in MU2335 Composing with Technology 1 but take a more in-depth look at them and delve much deeper into the software. We will study compositional and technological techniques from the experimental and electronica fields and from the music to moving-image repertoire, including film, TV, adverts and games etc, and build up knowledge of up-to-date practices and trends to inform work with a view to making it concordant with current music industry practices. You will be encouraged to start trying to develop your own voice in these styles of music. There will be some study of the issues in and repertory of electronically mediated music. There will be an opportunity in this course to write a portion of a film score consisting of several cues. The course will contain sections on mixing and music production. This course will be highly relevant to those who want to undertake further study in the fields of music technology, composition for moving image, computer, commercial and pop music composition and those who wish to pursue employment in broadcasting, production, the media, film and creative industries, commercial composition, the technology sector and advertising and publishing. Assessment: 100% coursework. Admittance to this course may be limited to the ten students achieving the highest mark in MU2335 Composing with Technology I.

SPECIAL STUDIES (FINALISTS ONLY):

MU3391 Dissertation (various supervisors: queries to coordinator Stephen Downes)
To write a detailed essay of 10,000–11,000 words (including footnotes or endnotes and excluding appendices and bibliography) on a topic of a critical, aesthetic, technical, historical, cultural, analytical or theoretical nature relating to music; or on a topic of an ethnomusicological nature; or to make a transcription of one or more historical sources relating to music and to write a detailed accompanying commentary of 5000-5500 words (including footnotes or endnotes and excluding appendices and bibliography).
Assessment: By dissertation as described above (80%); and a 5-minute presentation at the start of term 2 (10%), along with presentation notes and an annotated bibliography (10%).

MU3392 Theory & Analysis (various supervisors: queries to coordinator Stephen Downes)
To write a detailed essay of 10,000–11,000 words (or the equivalent in analytical material, including footnotes or endnotes and excluding appendices and bibliography) on a topic of a technical, analytical or theoretical nature relating to music; or to make an edition of one or more theoretical sources relating to music and to write a detailed accompanying commentary of 5000–5500 words (including footnotes or endnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography). Assessment: By dissertation, as described above (80%); and a 5-minute presentation at the start of term 2 (10%), along with presentation notes and an annotated bibliography (10%).

MU3393 Special Study Performance (Mary Dullea) terms 1 & 2, Monday 11-1
The class is divided into two groups, each of which meets regularly throughout the term on a fortnightly basis. This course offers you 22 instrumental/vocal lessons of 1-hour duration, culminating in a 45-minute public recital at the end of term 3. Places on this course will be limited and priority will be given to students achieving the highest marks in their recital for MU2210 Solo Performance or MU2205 Practical Performance I or MU2211 Ensemble Performance.

MU3394 Special Study Composition (Samantha Fernando & tba) terms 1 & 2, Thursday 2-4
Developing on areas covered in MU2213 and MU2001 this course will provide a framework for you to further explore the possibilities in your own compositional method. You will complete a structured portfolio of compositions to include a work for solo unaccompanied instrument, a work for large ensemble and a work for orchestra, that will properly demonstrate your increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of contemporary art music and related compositional issues. The course is based primarily around lectures and small-group tutorial sessions. Lectures will draw on a wide variety of contemporary music to illustrate the techniques being explored. The purpose of the tutorial is for in-depth help, advice and feedback on the composition in progress. Other weeks will be given to seminar presentations by students and practical workshops. During the workshops you will be given the opportunity to have two of your works rehearsed and recorded by visiting professional musicians. It is hoped that through these workshops you will discover more about the possibilities of instrumentation and the many practical compositional issues facing composers today. You should also seek to develop your own opportunities for the performance of your music in order to develop your confidence and professional activity. Places on this course may be limited, and priority will be given to students achieving the highest marks in MU2213 Composition Portfolio.

** Please remember that across a single honours Music programme any student can opt to take up to one unit in another department without affecting their 'single honours Music' status. Even if you don’t have the necessary pre-requisites to study Rocket Science 1 or Particle Physics II, you might be perfectly capable of taking other courses. Simply explore the websites of other departments of interest and contact them directly as to whether they have space on X or Y course.