

21 January 2020

RE: Formal Review in Spring 2020 of Dr. Luke Dahn

Peer Teaching Review conducted by Dr. Jane D. Hatter

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to offer this peer teaching review for Dr. Luke Dahn. I attended his Special Topics in Music Theory – “The Chorale in Bach and Beyond” (MUSC 4565) on January 21, 2020. The course that I attended was a discussion of two readings on Bach Chorale harmonization and pedagogy, looking at documents produced by students of Bach. This course is an upper-level undergraduate music theory course that is focused on the legacy of the Bach Chorales.

I. TEACHING ABILITY (CLASSROOM)

A. Does the instructor create confidence in his/her knowledge of the subject?

Dr. Dahn clearly has mastery of the music theory pedagogy and literature as well as the techniques and the extensive secondary literature associated with the chorales of Bach. He can easily bring examples from a diversity of perspectives into the class discussions, which during this course ranged from counterpoint pedagogy to basso continuo. His extensive knowledge of the repertoire was demonstrated when he discussed specific examples in the student bass lines in reference to a variety of examples from Bach’s own harmonizations.

B. Does the instructor demonstrate good methodology in presentation of material?

Dr. Dahn’s course followed an easy, practical structure. He began with a group discussion of the readings. He had read the responses that the student had posted on Canvas and he summarized some of the general trends in the responses for the class as a whole. When the student engagement in responses had wound down, Luke brought in a number of examples of chorale harmonizations that students sang and analyzed in class and some other resources that could be useful to students in their future assignments. Towards the end of the class period he provided students with an activity that stemmed from the reading—writing bass lines for a well-known chorale tune which he placed in the soprano. There was time before the end of class to play through a few of the examples written by students and discuss some of the edgier elements in the student bass lines. The final activity was the presentation of a couple particularly challenging figured bass progressions that were going to come up in the next assignment.

C. Does the instructor use examples and/or illustrations to clarify material?

Yes. Dr. Dahn was ready to project and/or play a variety of examples, both from the articles and from additional materials.

D. Does the instructor stimulate interest in the subject?

All students were engaged throughout the class. During the group discussion and each student had a chance to speak to various topics from the readings and the thoughts that the topics had stimulated.

E. Does the instructor demonstrate an appealing teaching personality to the class?

Dr. Dahn is friendly and open to student interactions. Multiple times he was able to politely steer the discussion back to the main topic when student comments had wandered.

F. Is the instructor sensitive to class needs of discipline, understanding, participation, etc.?

Dr. Dahn showed sensitivity to the various interest and abilities of his class. During the activity he circulated through the room, interacting with individual students as they worked on their bass lines. He provided individual feedback, solutions, and encouraged various students to write their solutions on the board.

G. Is the instructor prepared to answer questions effectively?

There were multiple questions from the class. A few were critical of the use of species counterpoint in current music theory pedagogy. Dr. Dahn was able to respond in a way that was both respectful of the students and the pedagogical methods that they were criticizing.

H. Does the instructor demonstrate effective class planning and carrying out of plans in terms of objectives and accomplishments?

It is clear that Dr. Dahn has a thoughtful course lesson plan which provides a variety of activities, from reflection on theories as a group to in-class writing and analysis. He offered instructions and tip for the next assignment during the final 10-minutes of class.

I. Are all students treated fairly and with respect and dignity?

All students were treated fairly and Dr. Dahn demonstrated respect in his interactions.

J. Other.

N/A

It was a pleasure to attend Dr. Dahn's course and learn more about the Bach Chorales! This is clearly a popular course for good reason, as it is fascinating repertoire that is taught well by an expert on the material.

Sincerely,



Jane D. Hatter

Assistant Professor