This undergraduate seminar offers historical and critical perspectives on music and the brain between approximately 1660 and 1870. Through scientific perspectives, the course is intended to foster interdisciplinary engagement between musicology, the history of science and medicine, the body. Based on our readings and investigations, students will develop new strategies for engaging with music from analytical, historical, and a healing or destabilizing medium, as well as the role of musical instruments and sounds in different philosophical and physiological theories of attention, and cognition. We will examine the role of resonance and vibration in various models of mental activity, conceptualizations of music as anti-racist, Afrofuturist? How should theorists of race, gender, and sexuality address sound in and out of the arts?

This undergraduate seminar offers historical and critical perspectives on music and the brain between approximately 1660 and 1870. Through engaging with scholarship and primary sources from disciplines including musicology, philosophy, and the history of science and medicine, we will focus on the role of music in shifting understandings of mental states, aesthetic ideals, methods of treatment, and questions of sensation, attention, and cognition. We will examine the role of resonance and vibration in various models of mental activity, conceptualizations of music as a healing or destabilizing medium, as well as the role of musical instruments and sounds in different philosophical and physiological theories of the body. Based on our readings and investigations, students will develop new strategies for engaging with music from analytical, historical, and scientific perspectives. The course is intended to foster interdisciplinary engagement between musicology, the history of science and medicine, and disability studies, providing students with critical tools to examine constructions of music and the brain in various contexts.

This course examines the role of music in salon culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with particular emphasis on the cities of Paris, Vienna, and Berlin. Topics include: theories of conversation and musical rhetoric; gender and the salonnières; the growth of the publishing industry/music for popular consumption; virtuosity and connoisseurship; the reception of “sociable” and serious genres in the emerging Romantic age. Final projects may be either research oriented or historiographic in nature.

In the light of selected works by composers from Lully to Gluck, especially Rameau, and the polemics they generated, and of broader contemporaneous philosophizing, we consider some of the vastly multi-faceted theorizing and propagandizing of music in general and opera in particular by the lumières of the French Enlightenment, especially Rameau, Diderot, and Rousseau (among others), and by modern scholars such as Thomas Christensen, Catherine Kintzler, Charles Dill, and Downing Thomas.

The objective of this course is to address different debates that have coalesced around the growing and increasingly formalized field of sound studies and put them in relation to Latin American and Caribbean theories of acoustic signification. The course is organized around the anthropological turn to ontology in Latin America and its imbroglios with listening and literature. NOTE: This course will make use of originals in Spanish and Portuguese with translations in English so that non-Spanish speaking students can take the course. It will reference materials in Spanish, Portuguese and French so the student is aware of their existence and can use them in case they speak those languages.