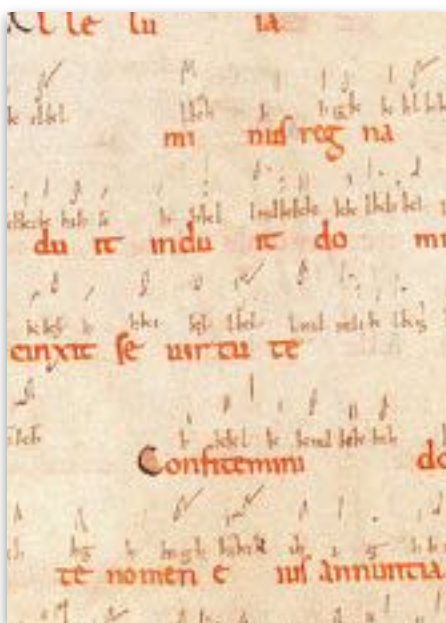


Seeing Sound: The History and Practice of Notation to c.1500

Prof. Karen Desmond, Brandeis University



Fall 2018 (Tuesdays 9:30am-12:30pm)

Open to students in the Boston Consortium, and advanced undergraduates (with permission). Contact Prof. Desmond at kdesmond@brandeis.edu for details.

The late ninth century witnessed a major technological breakthrough in the transmission of music in western Europe that was to have far-reaching consequences. Chants that had been taught orally for several centuries began to be encoded on parchment using signs placed above text syllables that recorded the shape and contour of the chant melodies. Systems of music notation spread rapidly across Europe, and took root as the way to record, archive, share, and (eventually) compose music. This graduate seminar course examines the form and function of music notation, and how the writing down of music transformed music practice. Students will transcribe music from a variety of early notation systems, working with high quality facsimiles and online reproductions of the original manuscripts.