

Attendance/Reading Quiz!

# Mu 101: Introduction to Music

Queensborough Community College

Instructor: Dr. Alice Jones

Spring 2018

Sections H2 (T 2:10-5), H3 (W 2:10-5), L3 (W 5:10-8)



# Reading quiz

Synthesizers and electronics are only used in pop music, not in classical music.

- a) True
- b) False

# Reading quiz

Which of the following is a trend in music by avant-garde composers following World War II?

- a) Leaving some or many aspects of a performance to chance
- b) Carefully controlling every sound
- c) Adding digital elements (tape, synthesizers, radios, or computers)
- d) Making new sounds with traditional instruments
- e) All of the above
- f) None of the above

# Reading quiz

The musical style of minimalism can be found in scores for movies and video games.

- a) True
- b) False

# Reading quiz

Music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (especially postmodernism) has no relationship to music of the past, so knowing music history doesn't help a listener understand what a composer may be communicating.

- a) True
- b) False

# Reading quiz

What was the most interesting or surprising thing you learned from the reading(s) this week?

# Recap

- Impressionism
- Expressionism
- Creating an opera!

# In-class writing, part 1

What is a piece of music?

As an audience member, what do you expect from a performance of a piece of music?



John Cage (1912-92), 4'33 (1952)

# John Cage (1912-92)



Cage in Japan, 1962

“To what end does one write music?... [Music conditions one’s mind, leading to] moments in life that are complete and fulfilled.” (1948)

“Until I die there will be sounds. And they will continue following my death. One need not fear about the future of music.”

—Cage, after visiting an anechoic chamber at Harvard University, 1951

# Musical sounds are not fixed



Ludwig van Beethoven,  
Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major  
“Eroica”, I. Allegro con brio (1804)



A chronological survey of the opening  
chords of Beethoven's Eroica Symphony

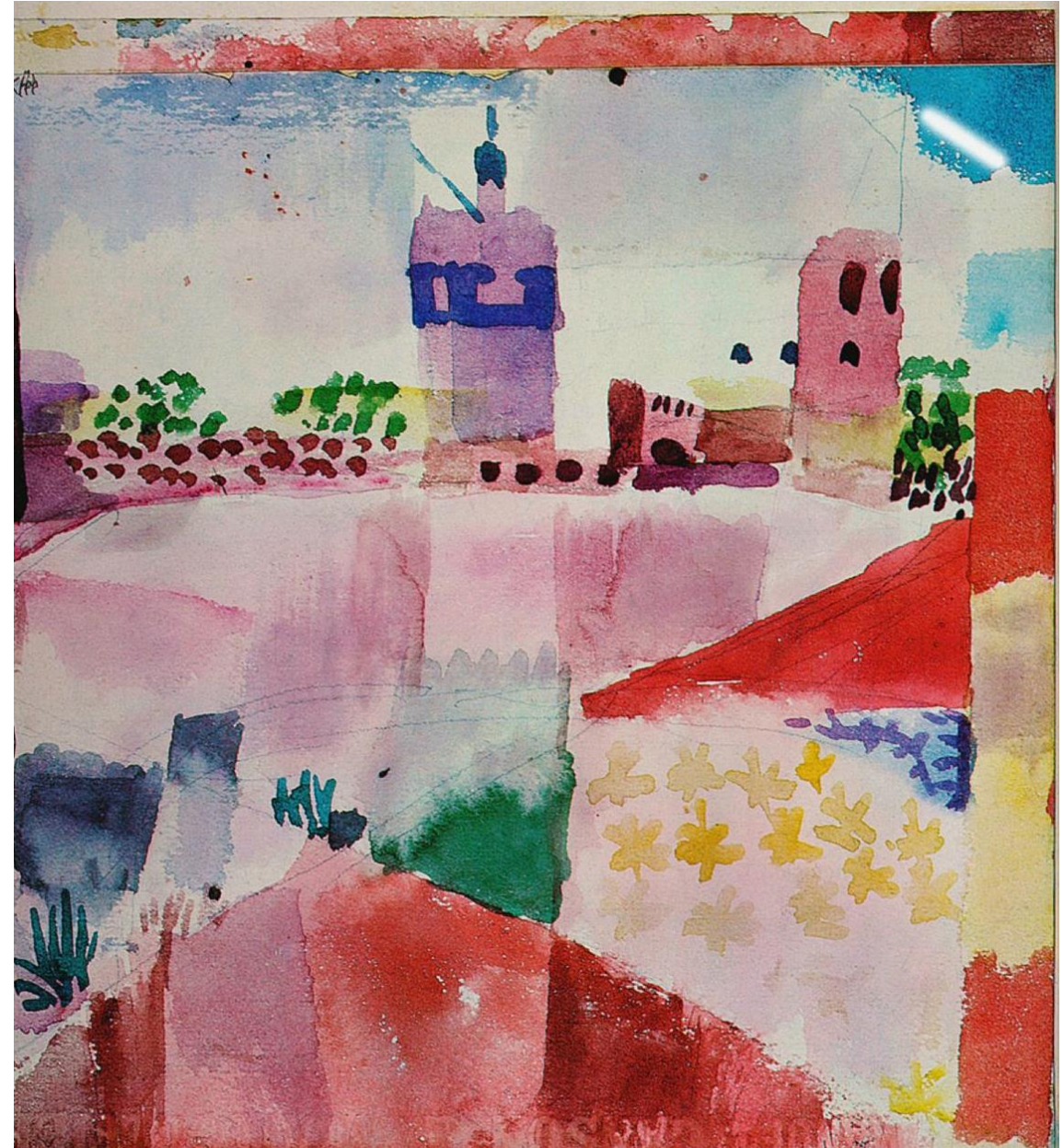


# Minimalism in visual art



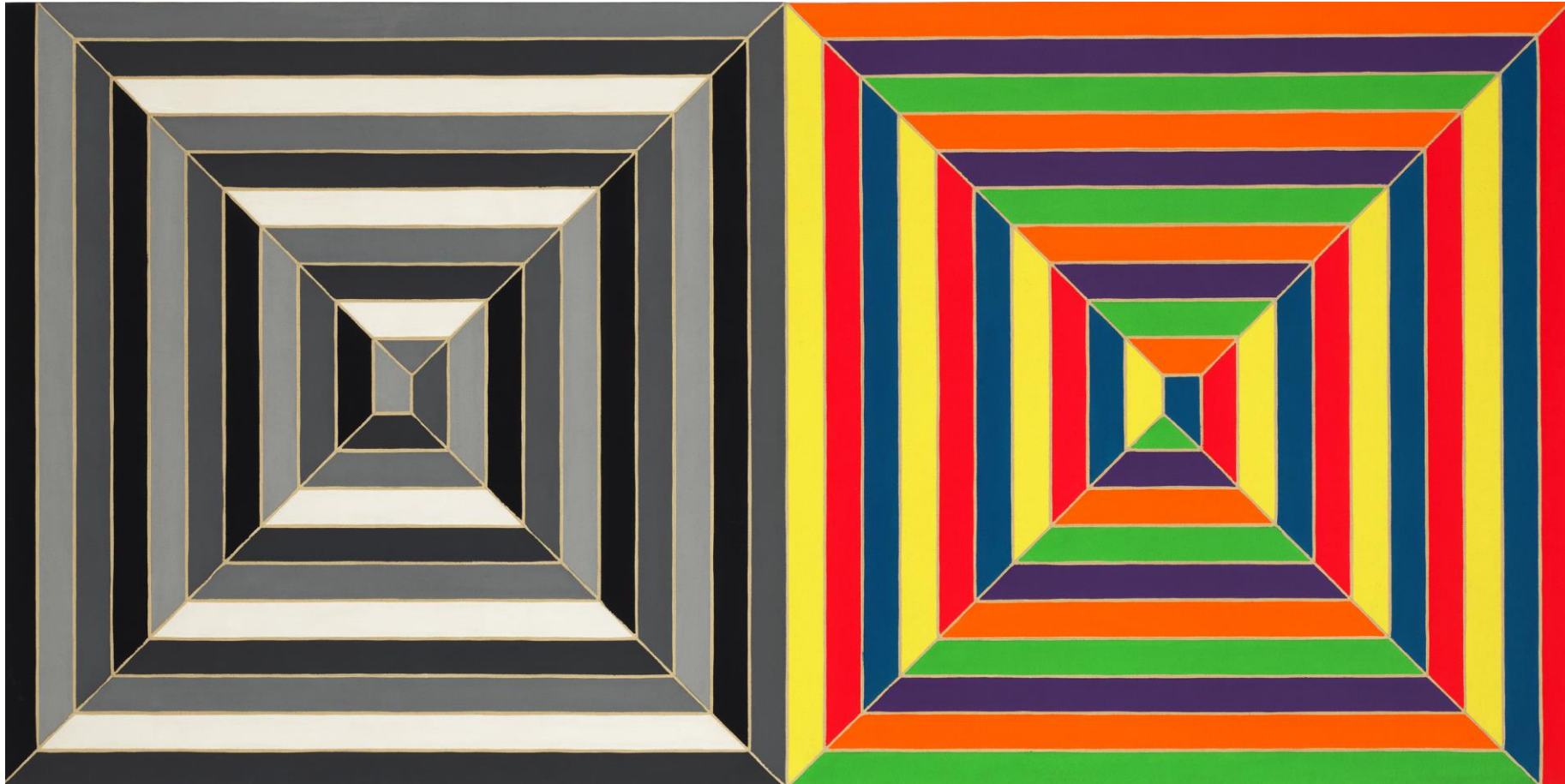
Hammamet,  
Tunisia

Paul Klee (1879-1940),  
*Hammamet with its  
Mosque* (1914)



# Minimalism in visual art

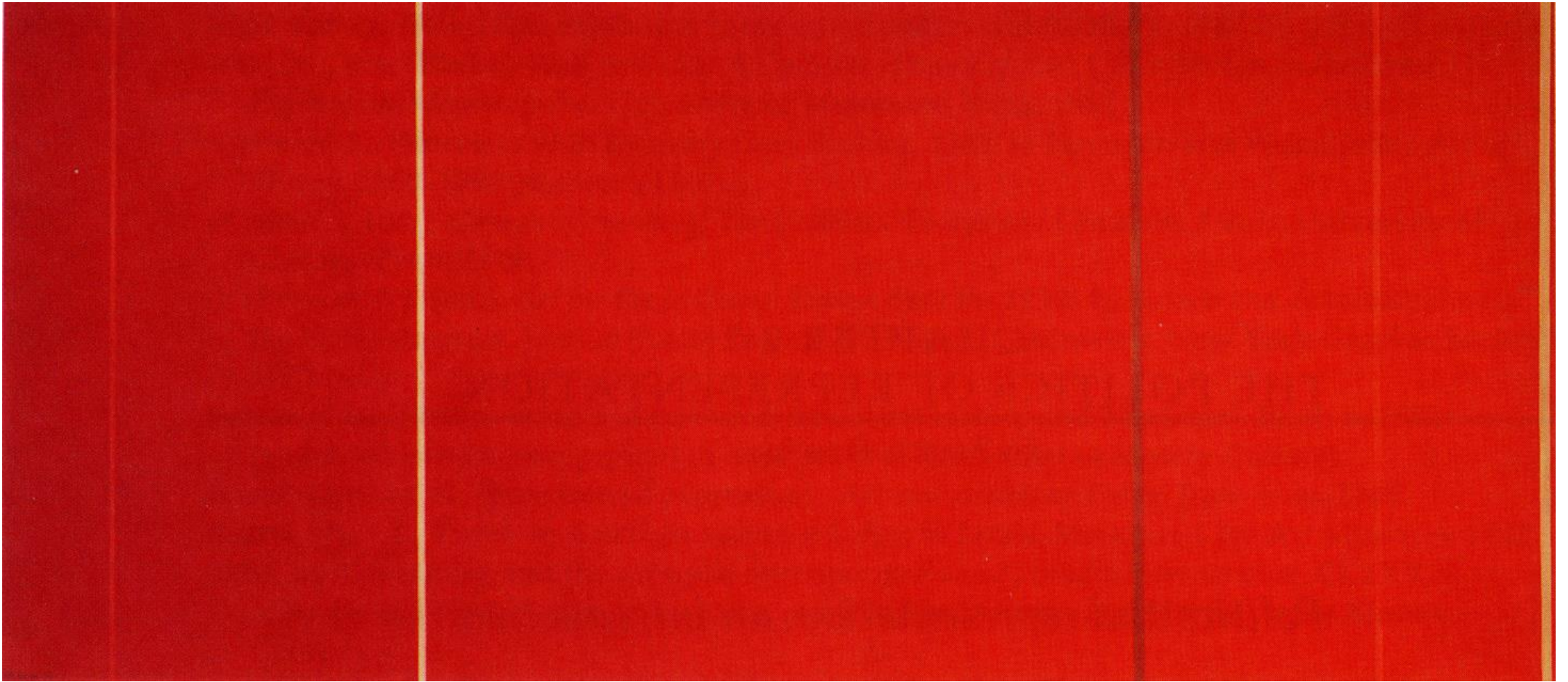
Philip Glass, String Quartet  
No. 2 "Company", I. (1983)



Frank Stella (b. 1936), *Untitled* (1966)



# Minimalism in visual art



Barnett Newman (1905-70), *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* (1951)

# Minimalism in visual art



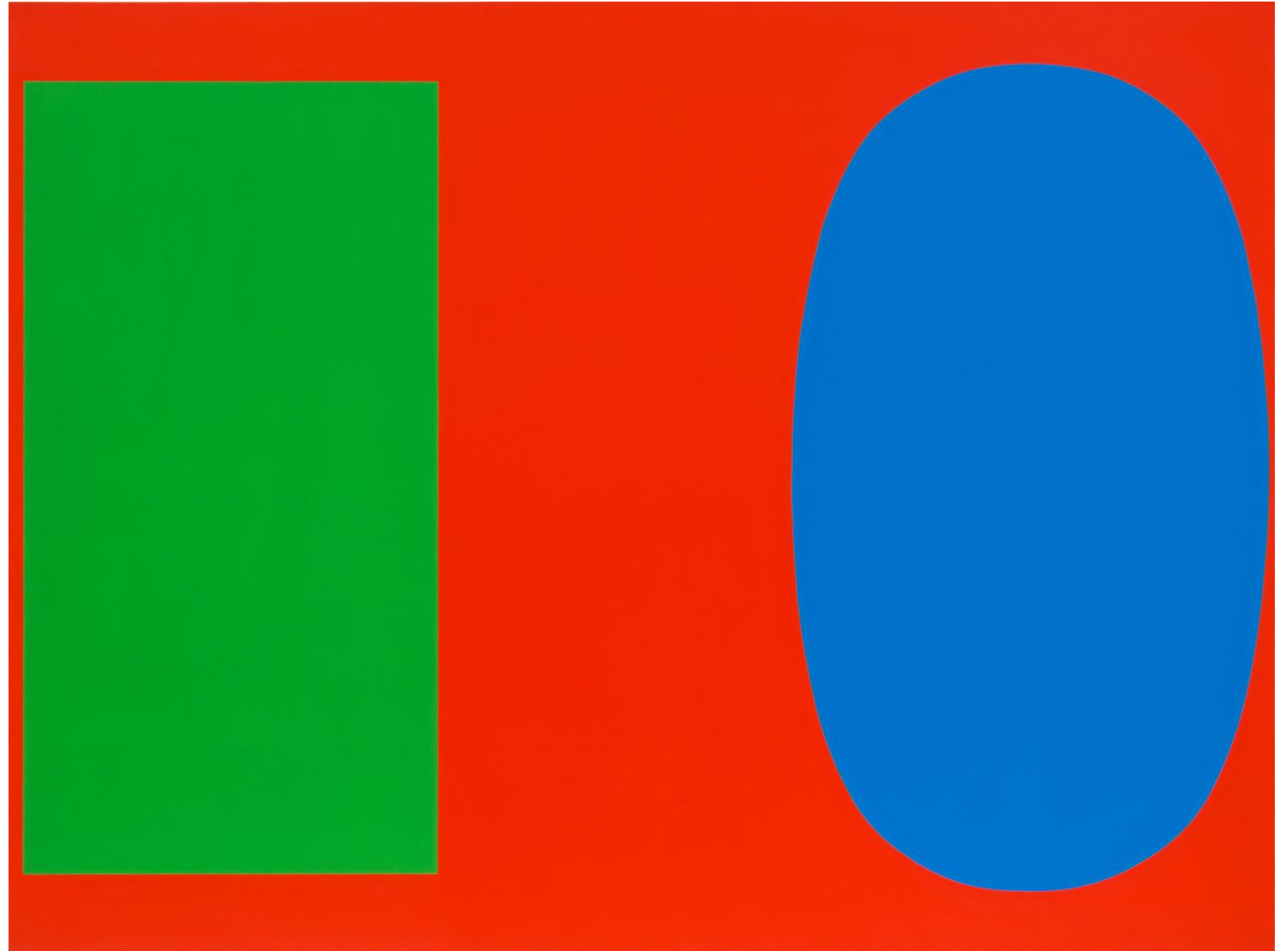
Kerry James Marshall (b. 1955), *Red (If They Come in the Morning)* (2011)

Alvin Lucier, *I Am Sitting in a Room* (1969)



Break!

Ellsworth Kelly  
(1923-2015),  
*Green Blue Red*  
(1963)



# Listening comparison: Romantic vs. 12 tone vs. Minimalism

- Johannes Brahms (1833-97), String Quartet in A minor, Op. 51 No. 2 (1873)
- Anton Webern (1883-1945), String Quartet, Op. 28 (1937-38)
- Philip Glass (b. 1937), String Quartet No. 5, III. (1991)

The term “minimalism” was intended as an insult  
Pierre Boulez (1925-2016): it is music “of  
minimal interest”

Johannes Brahms



Anton Webern



Philip Glass

# Steve Reich (b. 1936), *Clapping Music* (1972)

- Phasing – playing the same rhythmic figure slightly out of time (out of phase) with another musician



# Steve Reich (b. 1936), *Drumming*, part I (1970-1)

- 4 sets of tuned bongos (8 drums, 4 players)
- Phasing
- The composer provides a template for how the piece should unfold, not specific commands for the execution of every single note
  - Improvisation – each player takes a turn at a solo



# Frederic Rzewski (b.1938), *Coming Together*, Part I (1971)

Thursday February 17, 2011 powerFUL

# Meredith Monk (b. 1942)



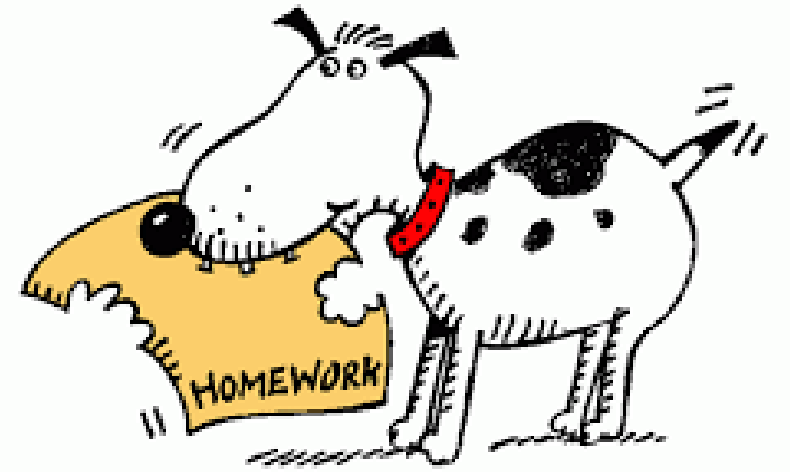
# In-class writing, part 2

What is a piece of music?

As an audience member, what do you expect from a performance of a piece of music?

How are your definitions now different from your definitions at the beginning of the class?

# Homework and reminders



- Reading for our last class (!) is available online
  - Experimentation and virtuosity
- Student Blog Posts are happening now! This project ends on Sunday, May 13
- Course Response Essay – due May 15/16
- Concert Response Essay – due at the final exam, May 22/23
- Final exam = class discussion + in-class writing project (blog post available starting May 14)
  - H2: May 22, 2:30-4:30 / H3: May 23, 12:15-2:15 / L3: May 23, 4:45-6:45



# End quiz

1. “Minimalism” refers to music that is always quiet and short in length.
  - a) True
  - b) False
  
2. Composers can control every aspect of how a piece of music sounds.
  - a) True
  - b) False
  
3. What was the most interesting or surprising thing you learned today?  
What made it interesting/surprising?