

Introduction to Music

Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30 - 10:50 a.m.

Ryan Center for the Musical Arts (RCMA) 1-180

Instructor: Craig Davis Pinson (craig.pinson@northwestern.edu)

Office: RCMA 4-156

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00am-12:00pm; and by appointment

Course description

This course seeks to introduce music as a concept centered in the ways humans interact with the realm of sound - culturally, socially, and cognitively. We will examine concrete musical examples from a variety of genres, geographies, and historical periods, using a range of different, culturally specific approaches to ground our discussions. Special emphasis will be placed on the popular music of the Americas. Topics to be addressed include genre, modes of listening, authorship, work-concept, ritual, ethnicity, nation, authenticity, individual vs. collective, dance, narrative, technology, and notions of experimentalism. Assignments include brief weekly writing assignments, a longer-form analysis project, and midterm and final exams based on concepts and required listening excerpts. The class is open to students with all levels of experience with music.

Materials

Reading and assignment descriptions will be made available via Canvas, and other communications through your Northwestern email account.

Recordings:

The required listening examples will be available to you through a series of channels. The most accessible is a Spotify playlist I will be updating, which will contain several (though not all!) of the required listenings. The basic Spotify service is free, and features advertising between tracks. The “Premium” account offers no advertising and other features, but is a paid subscription. You are not required to pay for this service. A link to access this playlist will be provided on Canvas. Other listening examples will be provided either directly through the Canvas website, or through other platforms such as YouTube.

Please note that the Spotify playlist will include recordings than aren't on the required listening list - some recommended listening materials will be added as well. It is crucial that you follow the weekly assignment pages on Canvas as your guides for what music needs to be familiar to you for the exams.

Requirements and Grading

The components of your grade will be participation and attendance (20%); submission of reading response journals (40%); two exams (15% + 15%), and an analytical essay (10%).

Participation (20%)

Your contributions will be crucial to the success of this class. Reading and listening should be completed before each class, as listed on the Course Schedule below; you are expected to arrive (on time!) prepared to participate actively in discussion of the material. Be aware that “discussion” involves not only speaking but also listening to and engaging with your fellow students. Do your best to put this principle into practice.

Consistent attendance is obligatory for successful performance in the course, and our attendance policy follows that of the School of Music's Undergraduate Handbook:

Students are expected to attend all sessions of courses...for which they are registered....

When one-time conflicts arise...the student's attendance obligation for the scheduled course...still stands.... For exceptional circumstances, contact the student affairs office for assistance.

Excessive absence is potential grounds for failure in the course. Even when absences are excused due to personal emergency, religious observance, or professional conflict (auditions, etc.), you remain responsible for covering the assigned course material, and we will need to discuss ways of demonstrating that you have done so.

Required Listening (Only graded as a component of the two exams)

As an essential part of this course, you will be required to do close listening on your own time to an average of four songs per class session. The listening component of the two exams, detailed below, require not only song and artist identification, but also contextual and/or analytical remarks. You will have to rely on information from lectures and readings to contextualize tracks, and I recommend creating your own study guides synthesizing course information with the corresponding musical excerpt.

Reading Responses (40%)

A major portion of your grade will be drawn from a course-long series of reading responses. Each reading assignment will be accompanied by a journal entry prompt on a Canvas discussion page. These responses will vary in length, which will be specified in each prompt. The average length is one or two paragraphs. You must submit your response to each prompt no later than 11:59 p.m. the night before the corresponding class session - otherwise, you will not receive credit (This is a strict cut-off).

For most weeks, you will be assigned to either the “A” or “B” options for reading responses. There will be a period of time where you will be able to submit your preferences for desired topics to submit reading responses to. Please keep in mind you are still required to do all the readings and listenings since material from them will be tested on the exams.

Exams (15% + 15%)

There will be two exams for this course, the first taking place halfway through the quarter, and the second one taking place during finals week. The second exam is not cumulative. They are both comprised of three parts; listening identification and details, multiple choice questions, and short answer questions. For listening identification, brief excerpts of eight or nine of the required listenings will be played for you, and you will identify the artist(s) and the recording title, while also providing two relevant contextual and/or analytical details. Multiple choice questions vary from broad stylistic and historical concepts to more specific factual information regarding key people and musical excerpts. All of the questions are drawn from content of the lectures and readings. For the short response essay, you will be provided a prompt which will task you to synthesize information from the previously covered material in order to answer a question that will require you to provide specific examples of concepts and music for your argumentation.

Final Project (10%)

You will be asked to compare and contrast two recordings of songs or pieces of music of your choosing. The recordings may be of any time period and location, however, they must have a concrete and definable connection to the concepts, genres, or musical characteristics explored as topics within the course and to each other. They may or may not be from the same artist or genre. This comparison will have both musical and historical/cultural analysis elements. Specific ways of talking about music will be addressed in lecture to give you tools for the musical component. More details will be clarified through Canvas, but bear in mind that there will be two separate deadlines for this assignment - one for a choice of recordings and preliminary ideas for analysis approach and one for the final submission of the paper.

Other Information

Academic integrity: Please be aware of University-wide policies regarding dishonesty in academic work, as well as those specific to the School of Music. Information can be found at www.northwestern.edu/provost/students/integrity/#guide. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, or of the circumstances under which you are obligated to cite a source in your writing, please consult the documents found through this site.

Communication: I will often communicate important information to the class – potentially including changes or clarifications to the reading and listening assignments – via email. Please check your mail regularly for updates.

Students with disabilities enrolled in this course and who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me before the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, although the University's Office of Services for Students with Disabilities office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

Electronic device policy: Laptops and other electronics may NOT be used during lecture sessions. For exceptional circumstances, speak to me in advance and we will try to work out a solution (Mostly, this would require communication with Accessible NU).

COURSE SCHEDULE

(Required listening, reading, and assignment details will be available on a weekly basis on Canvas)

Please note that the Bienen School of Music does not observe reading week!

WEEK 1 - Course introduction

Thursday, April 5 - Lecture

WEEK 2 - The elements of music - “empirical” and “social”

Monday, April 9 - Reading response 1 Due by 11:59 p.m.

Your response must be comprised of two paragraphs, separated by content as follows:

- 1) *What does Small mean by “Everyone, whether aware of it or not, has what we can call a theory of musicking...”?*
- 2) *With Small’s definition in mind, detail an occasion where you have “musicked” - what was the context, who were the people involved, what were the sounds like?*

Tuesday, April 10 - Lecture

Required reading:

Small, Christopher. *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1998.

Required listening:

Billie Holiday, “Strange Fruit”

Recommended listening:

Frederic Chopin, Funeral March in C Minor, Op. 72, No. 2
Louis Armstrong & His Savoy Ballroom Five “St. James Infirmary”

Wednesday, April 11 - Reading response 2 Due by 11:59 p.m.

Your response must be comprised of two paragraphs, separated by content as follows:

- 1) *What is Fabian Holt’s conception of genre in popular music? What are the elements of it, and its social significance?*
- 2) *A central event in Benjamin Filene’s chapter is the conflict between Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan at the Newport Festival. How are Holt’s ideas of genre as a social phenomenon reflected in this conflict? Be sure to consider both musician’s views on what Christopher Small termed ‘musicking’ (Concept from the first reading response).*

Thursday, April 12 - Lecture

Required readings:

Excerpts from “Chapter one: Introduction” in Holt, Fabian. *Genre in Popular Music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. (pp. 1-9)

Benjamin Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). Chapter 5, "Performing the Folk: Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan," 182–232.

Required Listening:

Pete Seeger, "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore"

Pete Seeger, "Summertime"

Bob Dylan, "Blowin' in the Wind"

Bob Dylan, "Maggie's Farm"

Recommended Listening:

Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald, "Summertime"

Bob Dylan, "All Along The Watchtower"

Jimi Hendrix, "All Along The Watchtower"

WEEK 3 - Music, genre, and authenticity

Monday, April 16 - Reading response 3-A due by 11:59 p.m.

Your response must be in two brief paragraphs, separated by content as follows:

- 1) Briefly, what are some arguments in Gelbart's article that have been historically used to think of punk as either an "event" or as "music"?*
- 2) Drawing from our discussions last class regarding "battles" fought over genre boundaries, how would you say the case of London Calling in relation to punk compares and contrasts with Dylan's Newport performance in relation to folk?*

Tuesday, April 17 - Lecture: Punk and the policing of genre boundaries

Required reading:

Matthew Gelbart, "A Cohesive Shambles: The Clash's 'London Calling' and the Normalization of Punk," *Music & Letters* 92 (2011): 230-272.

Required listening:

The Sex Pistols, "God Save the Queen"

Patti Smith, "Gloria"

The Clash, "Complete Control"

The Clash, "Revolution Rock"

Wednesday, April 18 - Reading response 3-B due by 11:59 p.m.

Your response must be in two brief paragraphs, separated by content as follows:

- 1) What does it mean when genres such as rock and punk are embraced by Latin American musicians? Mention at least two specific tracks by the artists mentioned in the article and how they negotiate these transformations.*
- 2) Briefly, compare and contrast how the element of folk music is used here as opposed to how Bob Dylan approached it in his folk/rock hybrid.*

Thursday, April 19 - Lecture: Punk and rock vs. Latin American folk traditions

Required reading :

Esterrich, Carmelo, and Javier H. Murillo. "Rock with Punk with Pop with Folklore: Transformations and Renewal in Aterciopelados and Café Tacuba". *Latin American Music Review* 21, no. 1 (2000): 31-44.

Required listening:

Los Fabulosos Cadillacs "Mal Bicho"

Aterciopelados, "La Gomela"

Aterciopelados, "Baracunatana"

Cafe Tacuba, "La Chica Banda"

Cafe Tacuba, "La Ingrata"

WEEK 4 - Music and dance

Monday, April 23 - Reading response 4-A due by 11:59 p.m.

Your response must be in two brief paragraphs, separated by content as follows:

1) What are some of the central values that drive the musicians in Garvey's article to make the kind of music they make? Additionally, briefly mention some specifically musical characteristics of the genre involved.

2) What is your personal relationship to dancing? Is it something you consciously seek out, occasionally participate in, or actively avoid? Are there specific genres and styles of dance and music that change the answers to this question.

Tuesday, April 24 -

NOTE 9:30 Lecture cancelled in favor of 11:00am presentation -

DJ Taye at Galvin Hall 11:00am

Required Reading:

Meghan Garvey, "From Teklife to the Next Life" (Pitchfork)

Recommended (NOT required) listening:

Parris Mitchell Project, "Ghetto Shout Out!!"

DJ Rashad, "Feelin'"

DJ Rashad, "Feelin (feat. Spinn & Taso)"

RP Boo, "02-52-03"

Wednesday, April 25 - Reading response 4-B due by 11:59 p.m.

Your response must be in two brief paragraphs, separated by content as follows:

- 1) Describe how the genre of EDM can be considered to be “socially” based, according to the author. Additionally, briefly mention some specific “musical” characteristics of at least one of the styles mentioned in this chapter.*
- 2) What is your personal relationship to dancing? Is it something you consciously seek out, occasionally participate in, or actively avoid? Are there specific genres and styles of dance and music that change the answers to this question.*

Thursday, April 26 - Lecture: Electronic dance music, its history and value systems

Required reading:

“The History and Creation of Electronic Dance Music” in Butler, Mark J. *Unlocking the Groove: Rhythm, Meter, and Musical Design in Electronic Dance Music*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2010.

Required Listening:

Double Exposure “Ten Percent” (Walter Gibbons Mix)
Frankie Knuckles, “Your Love” (12” Mix)
Model 500 “No UFO’s (Vocal)”
Robert Hood, “Untitled 4”

WEEK 5 - Music and sociocultural identity

Monday, April 30 - Reading response 5-A due by 11:59 p.m.

Your response must be in two brief paragraphs, separated by content as follows:

- 1) How would you summarize Benedict Anderson's definition of the concept of nationalism? What are some notable elements of his arguments?*
- 2) Using Anderson's concept of nationalism, discuss in what ways his definition can be useful or not useful in understanding the role the concept of national identity has for the musical communities described in Ragland's article. Additionally, consider what the role of music is in these contexts.*

Tuesday, May 1 - Lecture: National identity as cultural artefact pt. 1

Required readings:

Excerpt from the introductory chapter in Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 2016.

Ragland, Cathy. 2003. "Mexican Deejays and the Transnational Space of Youth Dances in New York and New Jersey". *Ethnomusicology*. 47, no. 3: 338-354.

Required Listening:

Los Cometas “Chupando Caña”

La Sonora Santanera, “Los Aretes de La Luna”

La Sonora Dinamita, “Que Nadie Sepa Mi Sufrir”

Los Angeles Azules, “Como te Voy a Olvidar”

Wednesday, May 2 - Reading response 5-B due by 11:59 p.m.

Your response must be in two brief paragraphs, separated by content as follows:

- 1) How would you summarize Benedict Anderson's definition of the concept of nationalism? What are some notable elements of his arguments?*
- 2) Using Anderson's concept of nationalism, discuss in what ways his definition can be useful or not useful in understanding the role the concept of national identity has for the musical communities described in Lebron's article. Additionally, consider what the role of music is in these contexts.*

Thursday, May 3 - Lecture: National identity as cultural artefact pt. 2

Required reading:

Lebron M. 2011. "Con Un Flow Natural: Sonic Affinities and Reggaeton Nationalism". *Women and Performance*. 21, no. 2: 219-233.

Don Omar, “Reggaeton Latino”

Kavita K Subramaniam “Eli Re Eli”

Tito “El Bambino,” “Flow Natural (feat. Deevani)”

WEEK 6 - Music and sociocultural identity, cont.

Tuesday, May 8 - Lecture (CANCELLED)

Wednesday, May 9 - Reading response 6 (All students) due by 11:59 p.m.

Your response should be two paragraphs, separated by content as follows:

- 1) How would you characterize the general aims of Stilwell in relation to received narratives about the history of rock as a music and cultural form?*
- 2) How does this relate specifically to the issue of race? Give at least one example of one of the ways this factor is explored by the author.*

Thursday, May 10 - Lecture

Required reading:

Robynn Stilwell, *Music of the Youth Revolution: Rock Through the 1960s* pp. 418-434

Required listening:

Bo Diddley, "Bo Diddley"

Sam Cooke & the Soul Stirrers "Jesus Gave Me Water"

Aldus Roger & Lafayette Playboys "Hix Wagon Wheel Special"

Chuck Berry, "Maybellene"

WEEK 7 - Midterm exam, Music and authorship

Tuesday, May 15 - Midterm

MIDTERM EXAM ADMINISTERED - No reading responses due this week

Thursday, May 17 - Guest lecture: Alex Mincek on improvisation in jazz and other idioms

Recommended (Not required) Listening:

Miles Davis, "Dr. Jekyll"

Ornette Coleman, "Lonely Woman"

Excerpts from Evan Parker and Peter Evans improvisation recordings

WEEK 8 - Music and authorship cont., music and words

Monday, May 21 - Reading response 7-A due by 11:59 p.m

Choose two key players in Moorefield's narrative about the evolving role of the producer (John Hammond, Les Paul, Mitch Miller, Leiber & Stoller, Phil Spector, Brian Wilson, George Martin, among others). Compare and contrast their conceptions of the role of recording, their goals (the values driving their decisions), and the techniques they relied on to get there.

ALSO DUE MONDAY: Recording Choice and Preliminary Ideas for Final Project by 11:59 p.m.

Tuesday, May 22 - Lecture: The evolving role of authorship in American popular music

Required Reading:

"From Mirror to Beacon" chapter in *The Producer as Composer* by Virgil Moorefield

Required listening:

Les Paul and Mary Ford, "How High the Moon"

The Ronettes, "Be My Baby"

The Beatles, "Tomorrow Never Knows"

Recommended (NOT required) listening:

Big Mama Thornton, "Hound Dog"

The Beach Boys, "Good Vibrations"

The Beatles, "A Day In The Life"

Wednesday, May 23 - Reading response 7-B due by 11:59 p.m.

What is the relationship Guess is proposing between the musical structure and the "literary" structure in Kendrick Lamar's album, Good Kid, M.A.A.D City? Do you believe that his argument is reflected accurately in the musical/textual examples he chose?

Thursday, May 24 - Lecture: Analyzing musical and textual narratives in Kendrick Lamar's work

Required reading:

"The New Faith of Kendrick Lamar: Dramatic Unity in 'good kid, m.A.A.d city'" by Wynton Guess

Required Listening:

Kendrick Lamar, "Sherane a.k.a Master Splinter's Daughter"

Kendrick Lamar, "good kid"

Kendrick Lamar, "m.A.A.d city"

WEEK 9 - Music words, continued; music and image

Tuesday, May 29 - Lecture: Survey of music and text in Western art music history

No required reading for this session!

Guillaume de Machaut, *Messe de Notre Dame*

Clara Schumann, Op. 13 no. 4 "Der Mond kommt still gegangen"

Kate Soper, "Prelude: May Kasahara" from *Voices from the Killing Jar*

Thursday, May 31 - Guest lecture: Nicholas Cline on music, sound, image and film

No required reading for this session!

Recommended (NOT required) media:

Video excerpts from "Jaws" and "Psycho"

Phil Niblock, "The Movement of People Working"

Oscar Fischinger, "An Optical Poem"

Michel van der Aa, "Up-close"

WEEK 10 - Music and technology, final exam

(Please note that the Bienen School of Music does not observe reading week)

Monday, June 4 - Optional extra-credit assignment due by 11:59 p.m.: Form analysis charts

Tuesday, June 5 - Lecture: Creative misuses of musical technologies, review for Exam no. 2

Recommended (NOT required) reading:

Garnet Hertz and Jussi Parikka, "Zombie Media: Circuit Bending Media Archaeology into an Art Method," *Leonardo* 45, no. 5 (2012): 425–30.

Required Listening:

Helmut Lachenmann, "Pression"

My Bloody Valentine, "Come in Alone"

Sigur Rós, "Svefn-g-englar"

Recommended NOT required media:

John Coltrane, "Evolution," Live in Seattle

Reed Ghazala on the origins and purpose of circuit bending

Fred Frith in Mexico City (2007)

Thursday, June 7 - Final Exam

FINAL EXAM ADMINISTERED during class time

FINALS WEEK

Thursday, June 14

FINAL PROJECT DUE