

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 401 L02: Special Topics – Music as Communication

Lecture: Tuesdays & Thursdays 11 – 12:15
January 13 – April 15, 2020 (excluding February 18-20)

Instructor:	Dr. Marcia J. Epstein
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Office Hours:	Contact by email only

Course Description

Music is often regarded as a language that can be universally understood – but its grammar and syntax are influenced by culture and spoken language, as well as technologies. This course will present ways to identify patterns, translate what you hear into deeper understanding, and expand the music you choose into a broad spectrum of conscious listening.

Additional Information:

This revision contains instructions and expectations for the last 3 weeks of the course, while classes are meeting online.

The remaining lectures (and discussion questions (March 16-18), in written form, have been emailed to all students and posted in the D2L Content section as of March 18th.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand and recognize basic structural components of music (melody, rhythm, etc.)
- Understand and identify cultural functions of music
- Articulate what auditory elements attract their notice
- Demonstrate skills at recognition of musical cultures
- Demonstrate skills at writing about music and their responses to it.

Textbooks and Readings

Cornelius & Natvig, *Music: A Social Experience*.
Available in paperback or e-book on Amazon.ca.

Policy on the use of Electronic Communication Devices

Laptops, tablets, and mobile phones may be used in class and tutorials only for course-related purposes and only if their use is not distracting others or negatively impacting the learning environment. No audio or video recording is allowed in any class without the instructor's permission.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment	Weight	Due
Listening report 1	10%	Feb. 4
Midterm	20%	Feb.13
Project proposal & References	10%	Mar. 5
Listening report 2	20%	April 2
Group project presentations	30% (<i>includes document</i>)	Mar. 24 - Apr.7
Final exam in class	cancelled	
Participation	10%	posted April 14

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You must complete all assignments and exams or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Instructions for Assignments

Listening reports:

For Report 1: Attend a live music event on campus or off. Write a short (avg. 2 pages) essay about your experience: What was presented, and by whom (e.g. group, soloists, purpose, what voices and/or instruments and/or electronics were involved, etc.) What did you notice? How did you feel? What did you especially like or dislike, and why? Did anything relate to the textbook or a lecture? Did anything surprise you?

For Report 2: Since live local performances are cancelled, use a recording of a live performance on YouTube or another streamed source. The same instructions about content apply as above. Include the URL for the online recording.

Final Exam: Cancelled. The 10 points originally assigned have been allotted to the 2d Listening report (15 + 5 pts.) and the Group projects (25 + 5 pts.)

Group projects: A group consists of 3-4 members. Each group will choose a topic to research and present to the class.

Sample topic areas, to generate topics:

- Music of a particular geographic region, nationality, or traditional ethnic group: how is regional or traditional identity presented in music?
- Music as a political or social force: how does it motivate crowds?
- Music expressing celebration or grief: how is emotion evoked and mediated?

- Music and the brain or nervous system: what is involved in music perception?
- Music and health or therapy: how does it affect health and healing?

Each topic must include mention of *how the music communicates to listeners*.

Project proposals will include the group's topic, plan for research and presentation, and preliminary sources: *two sources per group member is the minimum requirement*.

- Each source must be annotated – a brief description of *relevant content* and how the group will use it (usually one paragraph per source).
- There should also be a statement of agreement among the group members for who will be responsible for each section of the project.

Project documents, submitted to the D2L Dropbox in the same week as the group's scheduled posting date for the PowerPoint that replaces live presentation, will include:

- A detailed summary of the presentation that identifies who provided what portions of the work,
 - A full list of references cited with a *consistent* system (APA or MLA),
 - and a statement from each group member about what you learned from the process.
- All references must be compiled together at the end of the document: this includes visual and sound files. (No annotations are expected at this point.)

Participation: Six points of your score will come from two (2) comments on presentations by groups other than your own (a paragraph or two for each), based on the Powerpoints posted in the designated D2L Discussion Forum. Comments must also be posted in a separate designated Discussion Forum.

The other 4 points will come from participation in class or online discussions.

Submission of Assignments

Note: It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

Please upload assignments to the D2L dropbox: **Use Word files** (*not* .pdf format).

Label files as follows:

Listening exercises: (Your surname) – Listening 1(or 2)

Group documents: COMS 401 – (Surname of one group member) Group.

Also include a heading on the first page with the *names of all group members in alphabetical order by surname*. This prevents delays in recording scores.

Examples:

Label: COMS 401 - Chan Group

Heading: Lily Chan, Jon Jones, Marie Leclair

Written assignments will be emailed back to you from D2L.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each week late.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, numerical scores (out of the total points allotted to each assignment or exam) will be assigned to each item. They will be totalled at the end of term, with scores falling a point below the next grade, and fractional scores, rounding upward.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%

2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. **In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin.** Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the *University of Calgary Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please visit <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

1/14 Introduction: How to listen to music (the answers might surprise you)
Terminology, structures, patterns, mysteries...

A full schedule is posted on D2L.

Since classes are not meeting at this time, please check emails for instructions. The presentation schedule posted on D2L is accurate for posting the presentation PowerPoints in the D2L Discussion Board; all project documents are due in the D2L Dropbox within 3-5

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