

MUS 115LEC-B 9:10–10:00 AM

MUS 115LEC-C 10:20–11:10 AM

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

Live Zoom lectures via UB Learns

3 Credits



Remote Instruction

No in-person requirements
for Spring 2021 semester

Prof. Derek R. Strykowski

Virtual office hours, M/T/Th 2–4 PM

[Zoom link for virtual office hours](#)

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Understanding Music

A GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY

Welcome to **Understanding Music: A Global Opportunity**, a course that invites you to explore the many ways in which music contributes to our shared human experience while also developing your skills as an active listener. The weekly course modules are structured around three guiding questions, the first of which is perhaps the most basic of all: *“What does it sound like?”* We thus begin each week with a participatory introduction to the stylistic elements (such as melody and rhythm) from which all music is created. The ability to analyze almost any style of music according to these principles will allow us to articulate how the music relates to specific social circumstances later in the week, when the discussion turns to the questions of *“When do we hear it?”* and *“What does it mean?”* We will consider musical case studies drawn from a broad range of historical and geographical milieux in order to understand why music remains one of the most sublime and powerful expressions of human culture throughout the world.

You do not need any prior musical training as a performer in order to approach the topics above as a thoughtful listener. **Understanding Music** is also a Pathway course within the UB Curriculum, and can help you to complete pathways in “Cultures, Art and Imagination,” “Global Cultures and Expression,” “Communities, Populations, and Spaces,” and “Human Nature.”

With best wishes for the semester ahead,



Student Learning Outcomes

Lectures, readings, and class discussions are important methods of instruction that together will prepare you to achieve a number of learning outcomes, which shall be assessed as follows:

Learning Outcome	Weekly Quizzes	Listening Log	Analysis Paper	Concert Report
Identify musical examples discussed and demonstrate an understanding of their historical and cultural context	✓			
Explain how various kinds of music function within the societies that produce them	✓	✓		
Demonstrate knowledge of how the musical examples discussed relate to the key concepts of the course	✓			
Listen to music and discuss its nature using precise disciplinary vocabulary and relevant principles of analysis	✓	✓	✓	✓
Understand the multiplicity of meanings that music can evoke, and navigate these meanings to explore the values and experiences of the listeners who hold them	✓			✓

Course Requirements

Readings

All required readings and listening examples are made freely available through UB Learns. The following are recommended, but not required:

Bernstein, Leonard. *The Unanswered Question*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Forney, Kristine, et al. *The Enjoyment of Music*. 13th ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 2018.

LaRue, Jan. *Guidelines for Style Analysis*. 2nd ed. Sterling Heights, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 2011.

Levitin, Daniel J. *This Is Your Brain On Music: The Science of a Human Obsession*. New York: Dutton, 2006.

Weekly Quizzes

In lieu of exams, short quizzes are administered on a weekly basis through UB Learns. Each quiz includes a short series of questions, in multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank formats, concerning concepts and musical examples relating to the previous week. Each quiz is made available for one week only (Saturday morning through Friday evening) following the three lectures in which the material on the quiz was discussed. Quiz scores are not posted until after each quiz has closed.

Short Assignments

You must complete several short assignments: namely, a reading response (Week 1), a listening log (Week 5), a music analysis paper (Week 10), and finally a concert report (associated with the concert

requirement, below). Instructions will be made available on UB Learns in the appropriate weekly folders.

Virtual Concert Requirement

Every year, the Department of Music hosts a series of professional concerts that feature distinguished visiting artists and faculty musicians. To meet the requirement, you must attend at least one concert in the series and then write a short concert report about your experience. Please write about one of the many free concerts that are scheduled to stream live during the semester. The department will also attempt to host one or more live concerts, as circumstances allow. See UB Learns for more details, including links to suggested concerts.

Participation + Attendance

You are expected to participate both in group discussions and in general class discussions. Don't hesitate to ask questions. Credit for participation depends on your completion of the short assignments described above, including the concert requirement.

Attendance at (virtual) lectures and concerts is essential, particularly because the course does not use a textbook. According to the [Undergraduate Catalog](#), students may only be excused from classes due to military obligations, religious observances, illness documented by a physician, conflicts with university-sanctioned activities, public emergencies, and documented personal or family emergencies. The student is responsible for notifying the instructor in writing with as much advance notice as possible. Instructors may determine a reasonable amount of coursework that should be completed in order to make up the student's absence.

Grading Policies

Your final grade for the course depends on the outcome of the Golden Record reading response (worth 5 percent), the listening log (10 percent), the music analysis paper (15 percent), the concert report (10 percent), and your twelve best quiz scores (worth 5 percent each, for a total of 60 percent). There is no final exam. Any extra-credit points are added directly to your final grade. Letter grades are then calculated as follows:

Grade	Points	Percentage
A	4.0	93.00 – 100.00
A-	3.67	90.00 – 92.99
B+	3.33	87.00 – 89.99
B	3.00	83.00 – 86.99
B-	2.67	80.00 – 82.99
C+	2.33	77.00 – 79.99
C	2.00	73.00 – 76.99
C-	1.67	70.00 – 72.99
D+	1.33	67.00 – 69.99
D	1.00	60.00 – 66.99
F	0	59.99 or below

How do I calculate my final grade?		
Reading Response	=	___ of 5
Listening Log	=	___ of 10
Music Analysis Paper	=	___ of 15
Concert Report	=	___ of 10
12 Best Quiz Scores	=	___ of 60
Final grade	=	___ of 100

Incomplete grades for undergraduate students

A grade of incomplete (“I”) indicates that additional course work is required to fulfill the requirements of a given course. Students may only be given an “I” grade if they have a passing average in coursework that has been completed and have well-defined parameters to complete the course requirements that could result in a grade better than the default grade. An “I” grade may not be assigned to a student who did not attend the course.

Prior to the end of the semester, students must initiate the request for an “I” grade and receive the instructor’s approval. Assignment of an “I” grade is at the discretion of the instructor. See the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) for details.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a fundamental university value. Through the honest completion of academic work, students sustain the integrity of the university while facilitating the university’s imperative for the transmission of knowledge and culture based upon the generation of new and innovative ideas. When an instance of suspected or alleged academic dishonesty by a student arises, it shall be resolved according to procedures outlined in the academic integrity policy published in the most recent edition of the [Undergraduate Catalog](#).

“Does my work violate the policy?” Be sure to ask the professor, in advance of the deadline, if you have any doubt. Ignorance is not an acceptable excuse.

UB Portfolio

If you are completing this course as part of your UB Curriculum requirements, upload a course “artifact” (such as a paper or exam) to your UB Portfolio. For details, visit the [UB Curriculum Capstone](#) website.

Accessibility Resources

If you require classroom or testing accommodations due to a disability, please contact Accessibility Resources, located at 60 Capen Hall. AR can be reached by email at stu-accessibility@buffalo.edu. Please inform the professor as soon as possible about your needs so that we can coordinate your accommodations.

Sexual Violence

UB is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment. Please contact UB’s [Title IX Coordinator](#) for information about academic and housing accommodations, health and counseling services, help with legal protective orders, and assistance with reporting the incident to police or other UB officials if you so choose. For confidential assistance, you may also contact a Crisis Services Campus Advocate at [716-796-4399](tel:716-796-4399).

Mental Health

You may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. [Counseling Services](#), [Health Services](#), and [Health Promotion](#) are here to help. Learn more about these programs and services by following the links above.

WEEK 1

THE MUSIC OF VOYAGER

MONDAY, FEB. 1

- *Voyager's* Golden Record
- Hearing frequency as pitch
- Course structure and objectives

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 3

- **Read** Nelson and Polansky, "Music of the *Voyager*" (pp. 362–68) on UB Learns
- Connections to the UB Curriculum

FRIDAY, FEB. 5

- Reading response **due**: "Music for the Golden Record" on UB Learns
- Three guiding questions about music

WEEK 2

BABY STEPS

MONDAY, FEB. 8

- **Read** Jan LaRue, "What is Analysis?" on UB Learns
- Introducing SHMRG: five elements of musical style
- Pinkfong, "Baby Shark" (2015)

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 10

- **Read** Alan Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Ch. 11, "Uses and Functions") on UB Learns
- Introducing the five reporter's questions
- Merriam's taxonomy of core functions
- Pinkfong, "Wash Your Hands" (2020)

FRIDAY, FEB. 12

- Messages, audiences, and aesthetics
- Richard Taruskin asks, "What has it meant?"



WEEK 3



MONDAY, FEB. 15

- Sound: Volume and timbre
- Silk Road Ensemble, "Heart and Soul" (2016)

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 17

- Merriam III: Entertainment
- Duke Ellington, "It Don't Mean a Thing" (1932)
- Francisco Tárrega, *Recuerdos de la Alhambra* (1896)

FRIDAY, FEB. 19

- Audience and meaning in "world" music
- Anoushka Shankar, Raag Bhairavi (2014)

WEEK 4

“YOU’RE a MUSICIAN, HARRY”

MONDAY, FEB. 22

- Sound: Volume and timbre
- John Williams, “Hedwig’s Theme” and selected scenes from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (2001)

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 24

- Merriam IV: Communication
- Merriam V: Symbolic Representation
- Motivic development of *Harry Potter* characters

FRIDAY, FEB. 26

- Identifying musical diegesis in film
- Examples of diegetic music from *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1* (2010)

WEEK 5

Voices *of* Faith

MONDAY, MAR. 1

- Harmony: Three musical textures
- Tracing a sacred melody from monophony to polyphony to homophony

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 3

- Merriam VIII: Validation of social institutions and religious rituals
- Merriam IX: Contribution to the continuity and stability of culture
- Merriam X: Integration of society
- Christian chant: "Dies Irae"

FRIDAY, MAR. 5

- "Is this music?" Giving voice to faith
- Qur'anic recitation: Surah 36, "Ya-Sin"
- **Due:** Listening log assignment

WEEK 6

PROTEST AT THE PIANO

MONDAY, MAR. 8

- Harmony: Mode
- The magic of key

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 10

- **Read** Nadine Cohodas, "The Arrival of Nina Simone" (2010)
- Merriam IV: Communication
- Joseph Haydn, "Farewell" Symphony No. 45 (1772)

FRIDAY, MAR. 12

- Social protest through music
- Nina Simone, "Mississippi Goddam" (1964)



WEEK 7

Beauty

AND THE BEAT



MONDAY, MAR. 15

- Melody: Phrasing and cadences
- Johann Pachelbel, Canon in D (c.1690)

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 17

- Merriam II: Aesthetic enjoyment
- A reception history of Pachelbel's Canon: Three centuries of music

FRIDAY, MAR. 19

- Aesthetics of content and style
- Pachelbel's Canon, remixed

WEEK 8

LAND OF THE FREE

THE STORY OF AMERICA'S NATIONAL ANTHEM

MONDAY, MAR. 22

- Melody: Register and melodic range
- John Stafford Smith, "To Anacreon in Heav'n" (c. 1773)
- Francis Scott Key, "The Defence of Fort M'Henry" (1814)

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 24

- Merriam IX: The continuity and stability of culture
- Merriam X: The integration of society
- Whitney Houston, "The Star-Spangled Banner" (1991)
- Fergie, "The Star-Spangled Banner" (2018)

FRIDAY, MAR. 26

- Culture as group identity in public music
- NFL Quarterback Colin Kaepernick kneels (2016)
- Slavery in Key's "Defence of Fort M'Henry"

WEEK 9

Move

MUSIC FOR DANCING



MONDAY, MAR. 29

- Rhythm: Tempo and meter

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 31

- Merriam VI: Physical response
- Johann Strauss II, "On the Beautiful, Blue Danube" (1867)

FRIDAY, APR. 2

- **Read** Zajenkowski et al, "Let's Dance—Feel Better!" (2015)
- Taylor Swift, "Shake It Off" (2014)
- Dance culture of hardcore punk

WEEK 10

TO DO ME HARM



MONDAY, APR. 5

- J. W. von Goethe, "Der Erlkönig" (1782)
- In-class practice analysis
- Franz Schubert, "Der Erlkönig" (1815)

WEDNESDAY, APR. 7

- Growth: Development and form
- Franz Schubert, "Der Erlkönig" (1815)

FRIDAY, APR. 9

- Merriam IV: Communication
- Merriam V: Symbolic Representation
- Franz Schubert, "Der Erlkönig" (1815)
- Achim Reichel, "Der Erlkönig" (2002)
- **Due:** Music analysis paper

WEEK 11

The Actress & the Medical Student

A COMPOSER FALLS IN LOVE

MONDAY, APR. 12

- Growth: The symphony as large form

WEDNESDAY, APR. 14

- Merriam I: Emotional expression
- Hector Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique* (1830), I-II
- **Read** the composer's program note on U'B Learns

FRIDAY, APR. 16

- Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique*, III-V
- Meanings beyond words



WEEK 12

TASTE

MONDAY, APR. 19

- Popular music in 1921 and 2021
- The Billboard Hot 100

WEDNESDAY, APR. 21

- Merriam II: Aesthetic enjoyment
- Merriam III: Entertainment
- Six decades of the Billboard charts

FRIDAY, APR. 23

- Case study: Chart history of Prince, "1999" (1982)
- **Duc:** Extra-credit analysis



WEEK 14

Why Music?

MONDAY, MAY 3

- Prehistoric origins
- Early instruments

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5

- **Read** Alan Harvey, "Music, Altruism, and Social Cooperation" (2017)
- Music and the brain

FRIDAY, MAY 7

- The case for music
- *Voyager* revisited
- **Due:** Concert Report(s)

NO FINAL EXAM

