



MUS 1 - Music Appreciation

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

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Course Description: A survey of art music in western civilization. Topics studied include but are not limited to elements of music, basic musical forms, music periods, styles, and the role of music and musicians in the western world. Students will develop active listening skills and explore music's connections to history, culture, other art forms, and the interplay of global musical traditions. (C-ID MUS 100).

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Identify musical instruments and ensembles.
2. Recognize and compare major eras, styles, composers, and works of Western art music.
3. Use active listening skills to analyze and evaluate musical performances critically, considering their artistic, cultural, and historical significance.
4. Discuss music within its historical, cultural, and societal contexts.
5. Apply appropriate musical terminology to identify and analyze the fundamental elements of music—pitch, rhythm, texture, form, timbre, and dynamics.
6. Examine the interplay between Western and non-Western musical traditions and how they have influenced each other over time.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic	
Lecture	
Topics	Lec Hrs
Introduction to Music Fundamentals	6.00
• The elements of music: melody, rhythm, texture, form, timbre, and dynamics • Introduction to musical terminology and its application in listening and analysis • Overview of active listening techniques for deeper engagement with music	
Musical Instruments and Ensembles	3.00
• Identification of instrument families • Overview of ensembles • Cultural roles and significance of instruments in Western and non-Western traditions	
Evaluation of Musical Performances	3.00
• Techniques for analyzing live and recorded performances • Evaluating artistic intent, cultural context, and emotional impact • Listening practice with a variety of genres and styles	
The Intersection of Western and Non-Western Music	6.00
• Interactions and influences between Western and non-Western music traditions • Cross-cultural collaborations in modern music • The evolution of music into a global medium, blending traditions and styles across cultures	
The Development of Western Art Music	27.00
• Major eras of Western music: Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Modern, Blues, Jazz, Rock, Hip Hop and Rap, and Popular • Key composers and works in each era and their historical/cultural significance • Evolution of musical styles, forms, and innovations across periods	
Music in Historical and Cultural Contexts	3.00
• How music reflects and influences societal events and movements • The role of music in rituals, politics, and social change • Case studies: music of the Civil Rights Movement, protest songs, and national anthems	
Music and Other Art Forms	3.00

Topics

Lec Hrs

- Connections between music and visual art, literature, and theater
- The role of music in film, dance, video games, and multimedia

Total Hours: 51.00

Methods of Instruction

- A. Collaborative Group Work
- B. Group Discussions
- C. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- D. Lecture
- E. Reading Assignments

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Exams/Tests
- B. Research Projects
- C. Class participation
- D. Final Examination
- E. Written Assignments
- F. Evaluation of live performance

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read a biography of a composer of your choice and write a short one-page summary on the composer's life and work. Be prepared to share with the class.
2. Pick a course-appropriate musical instrument and read the article on that instrument in Grove's Encyclopedia of Music. Be prepared to discuss in class.

Writing Assignments

1. Listen to an example of music from one of the assigned eras and prepare a two-page critical analysis of the music. Be prepared to discuss your findings in class.
2. For this assignment, create a playlist featuring at least 10 selections from various historical periods and genres covered in the course, including pieces from the Medieval and Renaissance periods through to modern Hip Hop & Rap. Alongside your playlist, write a 900-word paper explaining your selections and reflect on how they relate to your personal interests and course content. In your paper, discuss how the course has shaped your musical preferences and deepened your understanding of different genres. Highlight how the chosen pieces resonate with you, exploring what impacted your musical journey and how your appreciation of music has evolved throughout the course.

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Attend a live or online concert and write a 600-word detailed review that analyzes the performance from multiple angles. Start by providing context for the concert, including the venue, the performers, and the atmosphere of the event. Focus on the musicians' technical proficiency, discussing their skill, interpretation, and overall execution of the repertoire. Examine how well they engaged with the music and each other, and note any standout soloists or memorable moments. Reflect on the balance between instruments, sound quality, and the use of dynamics and phrasing. Pay attention to the audience's reactions and how the performance affected you personally, whether it met your expectations or surprised you in some way. Conclude your review by summarizing the impact of the concert, considering both the technical and emotional elements that made it a unique experience. The goal is to provide a thoughtful, balanced critique that captures the essence of the performance in a clear and engaging manner.
2. Work in small groups to select and research a specific era of music, such as the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, or 20th Century. Prepare an in-class group presentation focused on two main areas: the evolution of musical forms during that era and the use of instruments. In discussing musical forms, the presentation should highlight how different structures, like the symphony, sonata, or concerto, developed over time and their significance in the era. For the use of instruments, the group will examine how instruments were used, evolved, or innovated during the period, noting any advancements in instrument design or technique. The presentation should be both informative and engaging, incorporating examples of key composers and pieces that illustrate these developments.

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Roger Kamien. (2025). Music: An Appreciation. McGraw Hill, Updated Release. 9781264933907.

Zero Cost Textbook

Clark, N. Alan; Heflin, Thomas; Kluball, Jeffrey; and Kramer, Elizabeth, "Understanding Music: Past and Present" (2015). Fine Arts Open Textbooks. 1.

<https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/arts-textbooks/1>

Other Learning Materials

Recordings, listening examples, performances, and readings as provided by instructor

Minimum Qualifications

Music (Masters Required)

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