

The Art of Music in Film – MUS 193
Spring 2016
Tuesday 6:30-9:30
Brethren's House 207

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Office Hours: By appointment

Art of Film Music emphasizes the history, musical innovation and creativity of a diverse range of film composers and composition styles. In addition – with a mix of theoretical and practical training - students will learn how to develop their own creativity in music technology, production, and selection of music for film. Students should have an interest in music for film, but they do not need to read music or play an instrument.

Text:

Cooke, Mervyn. A History of Film Music. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Course Content:

Each week part of or all of a film will be viewed by the class.

The first half of this course looks at the history, musical innovation and creativity of film music, with an analysis of procedure and production in an historical context.

Assigned reading:

Week 1: Music for the 'Silent' Cinema; Introduction to Sound on Track (chpts. 1-2)

Week Two: The Golden Age (Narrative Cinema & the Classical Film Score) (chpts. 3-4)

Week Three: Post-War Horizons and the Influence of Jazz (chpts. 5-6)

Week Four: Scores for Documentary Film and Animation (chpt. 7)

Week Five: Global Influences (chpts. 8-9)

Week Six: Popular and Classical Music in the Cinema (chpts. 10-11)

Week Seven: Film Music Since the "New Hollywood" (chpt. 12)

The second half of the course offers technical and practical instruction with Pro-Tools (audio platform), music technology (microphone techniques, mixing, signal paths and plug-ins), MIDI-related software and synchronizing music to vision. Students will work in teams to provide the soundscape for a film. An example of this type of collaborative work can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jT35tpa-16Y>

Week Eight: Introduction to Pro-Tools audio technology and audio mixing concepts.

Week Nine: Recording concepts and basic audio editing techniques.

Week Ten: Synchronizing music to film and techniques for composing as a group.

Week Eleven: Group Composition I

Week Twelve: Group Composition II

Week Thirteen: Group Composition project mix.

Week Fourteen: Student Film presentations

Goals of Course: Students will learn about the progression of film composition in an historical context. In addition, students will learn to improvise and record in Pro-Tools and Synchronize to Vision. Students will learn specific practical skills in music making, including the use of music hardware and software, MIDI and MIDI-related technologies, and they will be able to share and disseminate the products of these music skills using the relevant technologies. Students will support and contextualize these practical skills with relevant theoretical content.

Specific transferable skills include creativity and imagination, self-assessment ability, self-directed learning and information literacy. They will also gain experience in problem-solving and decision-making; critical thinking and analytical ability; writing skills and oral delivery; numeracy, information and communication technologies; teamwork, planning and project management.

Course Assignments and Requirements:

Weekly Assignments: Weekly homework assignments will include writing reaction papers about specific film scores, half page chapter reactions to the text (Cooke, Mervyn.) *A History of Film Music* and short assignments related to the use of the musical scores within the films viewed by the class and for films viewed by individual students. (25%)

Final Film Project: Working in small teams, students will create a soundscape for a short film. Each team member will identify his or her own contributions to the project, along with the contributions of others, and these evaluations, in combination with the final product, will contribute to the individual's grade. (30%)

Final Essay: Each student will write a 4-6 page paper on one aspect of the progression of film composition in an historical context. (25%)

Quiz: There will be two quizzes. One based on the text book and the other based on the technology aspect.(10%)

Discussion: Students are expected to participate in class discussions and activities. (10%)

Expectations: Attendance is mandatory. For each unexcused absence, the overall grade for the class will be lowered by 0.25 (using a 4.0 scale). Excused absences include illness and family funeral. All absences will be evaluated at the discretion of the instructor. Chronic lateness will not be tolerated, and will be reflected in the overall grade. If you are not in your seat at the beginning of class, you will be marked tardy. Two tardies are equivalent to one unexcused absence. If you feel there is a compelling reason why you were tardy, you must see me immediately after class.

Assignments must be turned in on the day they are due in order to receive a letter grade. Assignments not turned in by that time will receive a "zero". The instructor reserves the right to make qualitative judgments in determining grades.

Students can expect to work eight or more hours per week outside of class time.

Students are expected to watch at least one feature length film, or equivalent, outside of class hours and make notes regarding the use of music in the film, utilizing the 9-point system of judging the technical and or emotional aspect of a film.

The student work in this course is in full compliance with the federal definition of a four Teaching Strategies: The course will be conducted with a series of lectures, discussions, and class exercises based on the reading assignments, audio-visual materials, and other supplemental materials presented by the instructor.

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to uphold the standards of academic honesty, as they are spelled out in the Student Handbook.

Accommodations: "Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center, located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling [610-861-1401](tel:610-861-1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center."

Please note that this syllabus is subject to change.