



Music Analysis Paper - Instructions

Overview

Due Date: Peer Review draft due **April 9, 2019 at 2PM** via Blackboard (bring a digital or printed version to class as well). Final draft due **April 30, 2019 at 11:59PM**.

Components: Paper AND musical example (e.g. mp3 file or YouTube link)

Length: ~750-1000 words

Format: Double-spaced

Citation Style: MLA

Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is for you to practice listening to, analyzing, and writing about music. In doing so, you will apply the concepts and methods of analysis we have been learning this semester to a musical performance of your choice.

Instructions

Step 1: If you haven't already done so in your Bibliography Assignment, choose a specific musical performance you'd like to analyze. The only limitation is that it cannot be one of the musical examples we studied this term. Keep in mind the fact that you will be closely analyzing and contextualizing this music, so choose an example that you think is rich and interesting enough to warrant a lengthy examination.

Step 2: Listen to the song. Listen to it many times. Write a section of your essay, analyzing the song's prominent and interesting musical features. This analysis should be based on your own application of musical terms & concepts from Unit 1, *not* a preexisting analysis. Avoid value judgements—"this song is pretty," "I don't like this song"—and focus on how the sounds are organized. I am not looking for an analysis of textual aspects. If lyrics/words are present, limit any textual exegesis to no more than a paragraph.

Step 3: Expand on/dig into the research you started in your Bibliography Assignment, and provide cultural context for your musical example. This section should be no longer than half of your paper. Be deliberate about what you include in this section—what kind of information will encourage readers to understand the cultural importance or meaning of this musical example? Finally, you must cite all sources. **Neither Wikipedia nor random websites with information you cannot cross-reference are appropriate sources for a paper.** Some resources you might find useful:

- The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music (online version available via Hunter library)
- Academic journal articles or published books
- Articles from reputable newspapers or journalistic magazines
- Oral-historical records from friends or family (you can cite their names or cite them anonymously, but indicate the date your conversation(s) took place, if possible)
- Your own experiential knowledge (be specific about how you acquired this knowledge: What's your background? What kind of authority does this grant you to provide definitive



information about this music's cultural context? Can you supplement this knowledge with other types of resources?)

Organization

You are free to organize your paper however you wish (you can even include a section with a "listening chart," as per your textbook, if you wish). Whatever format you choose, make sure that your discussion of the "music itself" includes both of these elements:

Description - **Describe** and **summarize** the elements of the music. What happens, and when?

What kinds of instruments are present? How can you describe the rhythm, melody, timbre, moments of contrast/repetition/variation, or any other components of the music?

Analysis - **Analyze** the relationships among different elements in the music and their overall effect. What are the most important moments in the song, and why? Does this resemble any standard song genres, and how so? What makes this song compelling as a piece of art and/or a cultural expression?

Grading Rubric for Final Draft (10 points)

- Does the paper accurately describe the song's musical elements using technical terms from course readings and lectures? (3 points)
- Does the paper synthesize description with broader concepts and themes from our course in order to provide a compelling analysis of the music and its cultural context? (3 points)
- Is the paper formatted correctly and of the proper length, and is the musical example included for the reader (either as an mp3 file or YouTube link)? (2 points)
- Is the paper free from mechanical errors? (2 points)