SPRING 2023
Music 1 | Thursdays, 9:15AM – 12:00PM | Room 226

Instructor: Nicholas Borgia-Tran (they/them)
Virtual Office Hours: By appointment
Email: ntran@gradcenter.cuny.edu

Prerequisites: None
Credits: 3.0
Designation: Creative Expression

Course Description

Music 001 (Intro to Music) explores several genres of music, designed to develop a basic technical vocabulary from which students may use to discuss and analyze music. Identifying basic musical elements and practicing deep listening skills is the primary goal of this course and will be developed throughout this course through written, listening, and performance assignments. The secondary goal of this course is to explore intersections between music and social topics, such as gender and politics. We will focus mostly on Western art music, with forays into popular music and musics from around the world. While no musical or performance background is required, this once-a-week style class will move at an **accelerated and intense pace**. Music 001 is a prerequisite for all elective courses in Music Literature (Music 12 and Music 111-241).

CW: This course contains a unit on music and its relation to queer studies. If this is uncomfortable or triggering for you, alternative coursework will be made available.

Learning Goals and Objectives

- Develop a basic technical vocabulary about music
- Listen to various styles of music
- Practice deep listening skills
- Survey various types of music literature
- Explore and articulate relationships between music and its social context

Attendance

You are expected to attend lectures in order to participate in class discussions and performances. If you are going to be absent, please send me an email.

Please be on time to class.
Sorry for the 9:15AM start time!!!

Textbook, Readings, Videos, and Recordings
Required: *Resonances: Engaging Music in its Cultural Context*, edited by Esther M. Morgan-Ellis.
This textbook is available for **FREE.**
Other required readings will be available online or supplied by the instructor including videos and articles.
Recordings will be available via YouTube. Assignments will have hyperlinks to videos and recordings.

Assignments
Homework Assignments: (40%)
There are 8 written homework assignments for this course, each worth 50 points. Most weeks, students will be assigned readings, videos to watch, or pieces to listen to. You will answer a series of short questions about what you read, watched, or heard. This will be an opportunity for you to practice using technical terms to describe the music and will also be an opportunity for you to express your *unfiltered opinions* about the music. Typically, your answers for each question should be about a paragraph long. Assignments should be emailed or submitted on blackboard.

Participation (and midterm): (20%)
Slam Poetry (50pts): Musicians train throughout their lives to refine their sense of rhythm, pitch, delivery, projection, etc. You will be asked to think about rhythm, pitch, delivery, staging, and other musical parameters in a slam poetry performance. Students will choose a poem from a pre-approved list and perform it in front of the class, either as a solo, duet, trio, quartet, or quintet. This assignment is designed to illuminate the training that musicians go through and to build appreciation for the craft of performance.

Topic Proposals (5pts): Write a brief description of your project and share it with the class. This is an informal assignment that will help you plan the rest of your workload for the semester. The proposal should not be more than one paragraph long.

Graphic score (20pts): You will create a graphic score, similar to those that were being created during the avant-garde music movement in the 20th century. This assignment is designed to explore the relationship between music and visual arts.

"MIDTERM." Artificial Intelligence and the Arts Debate (125pts): Artificial intelligence (i.e. ChatGPT) poses interesting questions about ethics and the arts. The class will be divided into three groups—those supporting the use of AI in the arts, those who oppose the use of AI in the arts, and judges who will decide a winning debate team. This debate midterm will be paired with homework #6 where

you will have the opportunity to share written thoughts about the issue (a quasi-*amicus curiae* or, if you wish, a longer opinion).

Final Project and Presentation: (40%)
300 points for final project and 100 points for presentation

Final Project Options:
Final Paper:
Write a research paper on a topic of your choice (i.e. what do you think the role of AI will be in music, a review of an artist's style over their lifetime, the social impact of various music movements, etc.). The paper should contain at least three sources (preferably academic and peer-reviewed, but news articles and other references are possible). Your paper should not be a simple assemblage of facts but, rather, should contain a strong thesis that outlines your argument. The paper will be an opportunity for you to teach your classmates about something you are passionate about. Your paper will be 6-7 pages in length, written in Chicago format. You will also give a short presentation about your paper.

Foley Art Project:
Choose a clip from a show or film that is between 3 and 5 minutes long. Your task is to reproduce all of the sounds in the clip. You must have *at least* three sounds that you are recreating with physical, live props. If you want, you can use *some* sounds that you find online or that are featured in editing software that you already have. However, the majority of your sounds should be those that you reproduced physically from scratch. Your creative goal is to tell a narrative through the foley art. This means that you will need to think critically about the sounds. For example, if your clip has footsteps, should you record barefoot? With sneakers? High heels? Boots? If your clip features someone cooking, are they using metal or wooden or plastic utensils? During your presentation, you should play some of the original clip, play the entirety of your reproduction, and bring in at least 2 props that you used.

Live Performance and/or Compose Your Own Song:
If you play an instrument, you may perform any song you'd like, live, in front of the class. This could be a purely solo performance or you could use a backing track of some sort; you may also organize with other musicians and create an ensemble-type performance.

Alternatively, you may also compose your own song. You can pre-record this, have the computer perform your song for you, or you may perform it live for the class.

In either case, you will need to present your work, present about your rehearsal/creative process, and answer some questions that your classmates will have.

Playlist Project:
Choose a social topic or issue that you are passionate about. You will find at least 10 pieces that relate to this topic and write one short paragraph about each piece using technical vocabulary from the semester. The playlist will include an introduction and a conclusion and will include music from at least 2 different genres or time periods.

Your playlist and the subsequent write-up need to be specific: When a listener listens to all 10 songs, they should feel transformed in their thinking, uncovering nuances about the topic at hand. For example, you might choose to create a playlist about the depiction of women and outline various feminist movements or you might create a playlist that showcases various forms of propaganda.

You will present a portion of your playlist to the class in a short presentation.

Extra Credit:
Extra credit opportunities will be made available throughout the semester.

THE LAST DAY TO SUBMIT HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS IS <mark>04/06/2023.</mark>

Grading:
Total Points Available: 1,000.
Homework Assignments: 400 points total (40%)
Participation: 200 points total (20%)
Final Project and Presentation: 400 points total (40%)

Grade	Points to Earn	Grade	Points to Earn	Grade	Points to Earn
A+	970+	A	930-969	A-	900-929
B+	870-899	B	830-869	B-	800-829
C+	770-799	C	730-769	C-	700-729
D+	670-699	D	600-669	F	<599

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Candidates with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: 1) register with and provide documentation to the Special Services Office, Frese Hall, Room 111; 2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information

about services available to Queens College candidates, visit the website, or contact: Special Service Office; Director, Miriam Detres-Hickey, Frese Hall, Room 111; 718-997-5870.

CUNY POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Academic Dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion as provided at https://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/legal-affairs/policies-procedures/academic-integrity-policy/.

Course Schedule
01/26/23 – **What is listening? What is music?**
Part 1: Syllabus, introductions, and arguing about music
Break.
Part 2: Pauline Oliveros, Deep Listening, and Introduction to Instruments
No homework due.

02/02/23 – **What do we listen to and for in music?**
Part 1: Instrumentation, timbre, sound effects
Break.
Part 2: Rhythm, notation, form
Homework #1 due

02/09/23 – **How can music tell a story?**
Part 1: Storytelling and film music
Break.
Part 2: Classical music, leitmotifs, and DEATH
Homework #2 due
ASSIGN SLAM POETRY GROUPS.

02/16/23 – **Can sound effects tell a story? Are sound effects music?**
Part 1: Narrative intersections between art music and film music
Break.
Part 2: Foley Art!
Homework #3 due

02/23/23 – **Do you think that music is "political?" Music, bodies, and speech.**
Part 1: Slam Poetry Performances
Break.
Part 2: Protest music from Haydn to Lil Nas X to Eurovision
Slam Poetry Performance due

Homework #4 due

<mark style="background-color:cyan">03/02/23</mark> – **Eurovision: An Innocent Song Contest or a Tool for Nationalism?**
VIRTUAL: https://gc-cuny-edu.zoom.us/j/7442905583
Part 1: Guest lecture by Paul David Flood
Break (15 min).
Part 2: Q&A with Paul David Flood and sharing topic proposals
TOPIC PROPOSALS DUE
Homework #5 due

<mark style="background-color:yellow">03/09/23 – **MIDTERM. Artificial Intelligence and the Arts**</mark>
Part 1: TEAMS: Prepare your argument that defends or rejects the use of AI in art.
Break (10 min).
Part 2: DEBATE.
ASSIGN GRAPHIC SCORE ASSIGNMENT
Homework #6 due

<mark style="background-color:cyan">03/16/23</mark> - **Guest performers performing Julius Eastman**
Part 1: Lecture and performance
Break.
Part 2: Graphic Scores Workshop
Graphic Scores Due

<mark style="background-color:cyan">03/23/23</mark> – **Can music be gay? Straight? Gendered? How might music depict gender and sexuality?**
Part 1: MOVIE DAY! Watch *Paris is Burning*.
Break.
Part 2: How does Suzanne Cusick's article "On a Lesbian Relationship with Music" and Judith Butler's article "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" relate to *Paris is Burning*?
Homework #7 due

<mark style="background-color:cyan">03/30/23</mark> – **The New York Ballroom Scene and the hit show *Pose***
Part 1: MOVIE DAY! Finish *Paris is Burning*.
Break.
Part 2: *Pose* and the New York Ballroom Scene
Homework #8 due

<mark style="background-color:cyan">04/06/23 – SPRING BREAK | NO CLASS</mark>
LAST DAY TO SUBMIT ANY MISSING HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS. NO EXCEPTIONS.

<mark style="background-color:cyan">04/13/23 – SPRING BREAK | NO CLASS</mark>

04/20/23 **– How do the visual arts influence music and what fosters experimentation?**
Part 1: Mussogsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*
Break.
Part 2: Abstract Expressionists, Morton Feldman, John Cage, Jason Eckardt, and experimental music writ large
No homework due!

04/22/23 – SATURDAY – FIELD TRIP AT NOON to MET (Museum could change)
Attendance is OPTIONAL. However, you will receive 50 extra credit points for attending the field trip.

04/27/23 - **Presentations; 15 min break**
05/04/23 - **Presentations; 15 min break**
05/11/23 **– LAST CLASS - Presentations; 15 min break**
ALL FINAL PROJECTS DUE BY MIDNIGHT. NO EXCEPTIONS.