



Music: Its Language, History, and Culture.

Syllabus for Musc. 1300 – Fall 2023

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Teaching mode: Online (synchronous and asynchronous)

Synchronous meetings: Thursdays from 9:30am to 10:45am via Zoom.

Office hours: Thursdays 11am to 12 via Zoom. Schedule your meeting via email at least 24h prior. If you need to talk to me but are unavailable during these times, please email me.

Please note that the instructor may change this syllabus at their discretion over the course of the semester; students will be notified in writing of any changes.

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Course Description

This course examines how music communicates and embodies social and personal ideas, beliefs, and values relevant to both music makers and users. Throughout the course we will explore different tools with which to understand a variety of musical styles and the contexts from which they emerged. We will investigate topics such as music and spirituality, music and race, music and technology, etc. We will also examine how these topics are embedded in different genres of music. This course primarily explores the Western musical tradition from the Middle Ages to the present with some punctual incursions into other genres and geographies such as popular music, jazz, and Latin American music. No previous musical expertise such as knowledge of musical notation is required to succeed in this class. Students will develop the skill of listening to music perceptively and critically. Through a playlist project, students will also learn and practice how to research about music, supporting their ideas and arguments in clear and effective



writing. At the end of this semester, students will better understand how various types of music function within a social context. We will develop the ability to reflect on the communicative powers of music, connecting the sounds we hear with the living world that surrounds them.

Your Learning Goals

1. Listen to music carefully and respond thoughtfully, expressing your ideas and formulating arguments about music clearly.
2. Develop a vocabulary necessary to communicate the attributes of music as they relate to the various elements in music and historical periods.
3. Gain a greater understanding of music as a product of culture and society; be able to describe the significance of music in the societies that created them.
4. Explain historical, religious, and social conditions that influenced the development of music.
5. Articulate how meaning is created in musical sound and how the experience of music is interpreted and conveyed.
6. Use appropriate technologies to conduct research and to communicate your results; practice and improve your skills on developing and supporting your arguments and ideas in writing.
7. Develop intellectual and creative skills for lifelong musical listening and learning.

Course materials

This class will draw from two main textbooks that are free and accessible to download on any electronic device. **Please download and save the pdf version of both as we will refer to them throughout the semester.** They are available in Blackboard, in the “course documents” tab.

1. Esther M. Morgan-Ellis (ed.), *Resonances: engaging music in its cultural context*. Dahlonega: University of North Georgia Press, 2020.
2. Ray Allen, et al., *Music: Its Language, History, and Culture*. New York: Brooklyn College CUNY, 2015.

Other reading, watching, or listening materials assigned will also be freely accessible or provided through Blackboard. Communications regarding the course are done through Blackboard, which connects to your Brooklyn College email account. **Please make sure to check Blackboard and your email regularly.**

How to contact me and ask questions

- Please check the **"How to...?" document** to see whether it answers your question.
- If you have any **questions that apply to the whole class**, please post them in the **Q&A forum** (found in the 'discussion board' section of our Blackboard site). Subscribe to this Blackboard thread to receive notifications when someone asks or answers a question.
- If you have **questions that apply only to you**, please email me: amujicalafuente@gradcenter.cuny.edu. Please note that I answer class emails twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays.
- I am also available during **office hours via Zoom** (Thursdays 11am to 12 via Zoom). Please schedule a meeting 24 hours prior via email.

Class structure

The class is divided in synchronous (zoom meetings) and asynchronous (things you do in your own time) portions described here. **A semester and weekly outline to guide you in organizing your time are provided in page 6 of this syllabus.**



1. Zoom meetings (“synchronous” portion)

The class will meet once a week on **Thursdays from 9:30am to 10:45am via Zoom**. It is strongly recommended to **attend synchronous classes as all assessments will draw from its contents**. If for any reason you are not able to attend a class, please reach out by email.

Please download Zoom here: <https://zoom.us/download>. You do not need to open/buy a Zoom account to attend meetings. The same link, meeting ID, and passcode provided here will work for every class.

Please log in at least two minutes in advance as the classes start at 9:30am sharp.

Link: <https://gc-cuny-edu.zoom.us/j/85694982176?pwd=UkJSNENIT252TnQrOUEvSmVueGFwdz09>

Meeting ID: 856 9498 2176

Passcode: iLoveMusic

2. Weekly course schedule (“asynchronous” section)

Link to access the course schedule Google Docs, this is **how you know what to do week by week**: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ldzkDz2CLrwC98gB91K6djigtjBIErQI3EV2s-EvXCk/edit?usp=sharing>

Every week you will have listening/watching, reading, and writing assignments. Writing assignments relate to the previous class, reinforcing what you learnt, and reading/listening assignments prepare you for the following class. This Google docs includes a **weekly “to do” list** updated every week. Make sure to **check this document every Thursday after class**. Readings will be either from the textbook and/or other authors. I will provide any reading **that is not in the textbook** through Blackboard. Music and/or videos will be provided through YouTube or Spotify links in the google docs.

Assessment

Weekly assignments: 8 blog posts and 6 discussion questions	25 %
A one-minute oral comment and class discussion	10 %
Four quizzes	20%
Playlist proposal	10%
Partial playlist and peer review	10%
Playlist final	25%

1. **Weekly assignments [25%]:** due Wednesdays before 11:59pm. You are required to complete **8 blog posts** and **6 discussion questions of your choice** out of all the options in the semester. **If you do more than that**, you will get **up to 5 extra points**. Prompts are posted in the “discussion board” of the class site in Blackboard every Thursday at the end of class.
 - a. **Blog posts:** The word-count requirements will be specified in each post, the majority being from 180 to 250 words. The post will draw directly from the material covered in class, which you will expand on or apply in a different way. **Blog posts are evaluated** for their strength of argument, length, and use of material from class contents and associated readings.
 - b. **Discussion questions:** Each of your discussion question answers should be minimum 90 words and maximum 120 words long. The discussion question relates to the reading assignments of the week helping you prepare for the next class session. **Discussion questions are evaluated** for their length and your engagement with the week’s readings – you are welcome to refer to them but please use your own words.

2. **One-minute oral comment and class discussion [10%]:** once in the semester you will comment on the week's assigned reading to the class. Detailed **instructions and rubric for this are available in Blackboard**. On the first class we will make a schedule to assign a day/reading to each student. It is available here:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WkbVulnvtTZHrZ0vNdaplE08HpQJ377Ss85QriXlXo/edit?usp=sharing>
Your comment can be about anything you might have found interesting from the assigned reading. Choose one aspect or idea to discuss; please do **NOT** summarize the entire reading. Your comment **must conclude with one question** about the reading in relation to your comment, your classmates will answer and discuss with you. You will have **one minute** to present your comment and question orally to the class.
3. **Four quizzes [20%]:** In weeks with quizzes, there won't be a discussion question; this will be indicated in the Google Docs course schedule. Quizzes consist of multiple-choice questions and will be based on the three "music and..." classes prior to the quiz as well as the current week's reading. **Quizzes will be available for four days on Blackboard, from Sunday to Wednesday.** You have three attempts to take the quiz within those days. **Only the best grade of your three attempts will be considered.**
 - **Quiz 1:** available Sunday February 12th at 9:00am to Wednesday February 15th at 11:59pm.
 - **Quiz 2:** available Sunday March 19th, at 9:00am to Wednesday March 22th at 11:59pm.
 - **Quiz 3:** available Sunday April 23rd at 9:00 am to Wednesday April 26th at 11:59pm.
 - **Quiz 4:** available Sunday May 14th at 9:00 am to Wednesday May 17th at 11:59pm.
4. **"Music and ____" Playlist:** The "Music and ____ Playlist" is the ultimate product of your hard work this semester, the project that you will be gradually developing over the next few months. In its final stage, the "Music and... Playlist" will consist of a paper six pieces of music that illustrate a social phenomenon involving music (the "____" in the assignment title). You get to choose your topic and pieces, **with some requirements specified in the playlist guidelines (available in Blackboard).** **A list of possible topics for your playlist assignments is also available in Blackboard.**

This project is divided into several assignments and due dates throughout the semester, outlined here below. Make sure you **read the guidelines for each of these assignments carefully as they are my rubric**; if you follow the instructions and requirements in the guidelines, you are sure to have a good grade and to get the most out of the class!

- a. **Playlist proposal [10%]:** Due Wednesday March 1st, before 11:59pm.
- b. **Partial playlist paper:** Due March 22nd, before 11:59pm. This paper will not be graded. However, **if you do not turn it in by the deadline, you will not be considered for the "peer review" assignment, which is graded.**
- c. **Playlist peer review [10%]:** The two papers that you will review will be available in the Blackboard assignments section on Friday March 24th, 8am. Your reviews of your classmates' papers is due on Wednesday April 5th, before 11:59pm.
- d. **Final playlist paper [25%]:** Due Wednesday Dec. 14th, before 11:59pm.

It is **your responsibility** to ensure that your assignments have been successfully submitted through Blackboard before the deadline. Please submit with enough time before the deadline to deal with eventual technological issues. **Do not assume your assignment was submitted until** a) you receive a

confirmation email from Blackboard and b) you log out and back into Blackboard to check the submission status of your assignment.

5. Optional: Extra Points

- a. Turn in **more blog posts and discussion questions** than the minimum required (see above). You can earn up to 5 extra points.
- b. **Optional extra credit test:** Open questions covering the contents of the entire semester. It will be available for one week at the end of the semester. You can earn up to 20 extra points.

Assessment Policies

The blog posts and discussion questions are a means for you to stay present in the classroom and to engage with the material. The total of blog posts and discussion questions are cumulatively worth 25% of your final grade. You are required to write a minimum of 8 blog posts (out of 11 prompts available of the semester) and 6 discussion questions (out of the 9 total available prompts in the semester) to get the 25%. I encourage you to do all of them as the blogs and the discussion prompts will cover material that will help you prepare for the higher stake “playlist project”. If you do more than the minimum required posts, you can get up to 5 extra points (see extra points section). **Late posts and discussion questions will not be accepted.**

- **Always provide a link** to the recording you referred to for your post or discussion question. Any comments, descriptions, or timestamps regarding a piece of music for which you do not provide a link will not be counted towards your post's grade. This is because every recording is different and, if you don't provide a link, I cannot grade your comments nor give you accurate feedback.
- **When I ask you to discuss musical characteristics** or events, the BPM and Key of the piece **do not count** towards the required number of characteristics. This is because I am interested in characteristics and musical events that you can listen to and that you can practice describing with the tools and vocabulary seen in class.

The four quizzes in the semester will help you revise the vocabulary and repertoire we have seen in class and that you will have to use for the playlist project. Only the best grade of your three attempts will be considered. Use this as an opportunity for self-assessment. You have four days to complete each quiz (see specific dates above). **The quizzes will not be available outside the specified dates.**

For the **different stages of the playlist project**, please note that the **due dates are “set in stone.”** These are larger assignments, and you will need to budget time for them throughout the semester.

- **If you need an extension:** please contact me well in advance of the due date and explain your difficulties. Unless I hear from you **at least one week before the work is due**, I cannot make an allowance.
- **If a last-minute crisis derails your completion:** please submit your current draft along with an explanation of what is missing. I will give you a prorated grade based on what you managed to complete.

It is **your responsibility** to check that your assignments have been successfully submitted through Blackboard before the deadline. **Do not assume your assignment was submitted until** a) you receive a confirmation email from Blackboard and b) you log out and back into Blackboard to check the submission status of your assignment. **If you realize that your assignment was not successfully submitted days after it was due, there is nothing I can do for you.**

Semester Outline:

	Synchr. classes	Topic	Playlist Stages	Weekly Assign.*	Due Wednesdays:
1	Jan.26	Introduction: Asynchronous class		B1 + D1	Feb 1
2	Feb. 2	Elements of music I: rhythm, melody, harmony		B2 + D2	Feb 8
3	Feb. 9	Elements of music II: texture, timbre, ensembles		B3 + Qu1	Feb 15
4	Feb. 16	Playlist workshop: research about music		D3	Feb 22
5	Feb. 23	Music and spirituality: Medieval and Renaissance	Proposal	B4 + D4	March 1
6	March 2	Music, science, and representation: The Baroque		B5	March 8
7	March 9	Playlist workshop: writing a playlist entry		D5	Mar. 15
8	March 16	Music, balance, and humor: The Classical Period	Partial PL	B6 + Qu2	Mar. 22
9	March 23	Music, nation, and exoticism: The Romantic Period		B7 + D6	Mar. 29
10	March 30	Musical stories: program music and song cycles	Peer Review	B8 +D7	April 5
-	April 6	NO CLASS: Spring Break			-
	April 13	NO CLASS: Spring Break			-
11	April 20	Music and drama [<i>Invited Professor: Diana Maron</i>]		B9 + Qu3	April 26
12	April 27	Music and race: jazz and the civil rights movement		B10 + D8	May 3
13	May 4	Music and technology: recording and electronic music	Final PL	B11 + D9	May 10
14	May 11	Music and migration: salsa music		Qu4	May 17
15	May 18	NO CLASS: exam week	Optional: Extra Credit Exam		May 18

*Weekly assignments: B = Blog Post // D = Discussion Question // Qu = quiz // PL = Playlist (Only **8 blog posts and 6 discussion questions of your choice are required**. If you do **more = extra points**). I encourage you to **use this table to keep count of what you do**.

Weekly Outline:

You should aim to dedicate about seven hours a week to this class (including synchronous and asynchronous activities). Here you will find a **weekly plan to help you organize your time**. This table does not include **time for the playlist project**, which **you should budget accordingly**.

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
9:30-10:45: Synchronous meeting. 11am-12: Office hours Check the weekly schedule and plan your week. Read the blog post prompt and think about it.			Finish the required readings and listening for the next synchronous meeting. Answer the discussion question.			11:59 pm: deadline to post blog post and discussion question.
	1) Write and post your blog post 2) Listen to the assigned music.		During "quiz weeks": Finish the required readings and listening for the next synchronous meeting. Prepare for and take quiz at your convenience.			

Important Dates

Important Dates to Include in Syllabi

- Wednesday, January 25 First day of Spring 2023 classes
- Tuesday, January 31 Last day to add a course
- Sunday, February 12 No classes scheduled
- Monday, February 13 College Closed – No classes scheduled
- Monday, February 20 College Closed – No classes scheduled
- Tuesday, February 21 Conversion Day – Classes follow a Monday schedule
- Wednesday, April 5 *through* Spring Recess – No classes scheduled
- Thursday, April 13 – Tuesday, May 16 Last day to withdraw from a course with a “W” grade
- Wednesday, May 17 Final Examinations Begin
- Tuesday, May 23 Final Examinations End / End of Spring Semester

The full academic calendar, including many other important dates, is available on the Office of the Registrar’s website:

<http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/about/administration/enrollment/registrar.php>

Brooklyn College Library

As a Brooklyn College student you have access to online and in-person services and resources of the library: <https://library.brooklyn.cuny.edu/resources/>

Grading Scale

A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	0-59

Brooklyn College Policies

All students should read the “Academic Regulations and Procedures” section on the Brooklyn College website.

Recording

Video and/or audio recording of class lectures and review sessions without the advanced consent of the instructor is prohibited. Upon written request, the instructor may grant in writing permission for students to record course lectures, on the condition that these recordings are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Students with approved accommodations from the Center for Student Disability Services permitting the recording class meetings must present the accommodation letter to the instructor in advance of recording. On any days when classes will be recorded, the instructor will notify all



students in advance. Distribution of recordings without written permission of the instructor is a violation of educational law.

Behavioral Policy

Treat the classroom as you would your future workplace. University is a place to practice behavior appropriate for the workplace. In that light, **there will be no language or behavior that might be deemed unlawful, unethical, inappropriate, or disrespectful to me or your peers.**

Attendance

The New York State Education Law provides that no student shall be expelled or refused admission to an institution of higher education because he or she is unable to attend classes or participate in examinations or study or work requirements on any particular day or days because of religious beliefs. Students who are unable to attend classes on a particular day or days because of religious beliefs will be excused from any examination or study or work requirements. Faculty must make good-faith efforts to provide students absent from class because of religious beliefs equivalent opportunities to make up the work missed; no additional fees may be charged for this consideration.

Academic Integrity

The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for policy implementation can be found at www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member **MUST** report the violation. Students should be aware that faculty may use plagiarism detection software.

Learning Accommodations and Disability

The Center for Student Disability Services (CSDS) is committed to ensuring students with disabilities enjoy an equal opportunity to participate at Brooklyn College. In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with CSDS. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to schedule an interview by calling (718) 951-5538 or emailing Josephine.Patterson@brooklyn.cuny.edu. If you have already registered with CSDS, email Josephine.Patterson@brooklyn.cuny.edu or testingcsds@brooklyn.cuny.edu to ensure accommodation emails are sent to your professor.

Student Bereavement Policy

Students who experience the death of a loved one must contact the Division of Student Affairs, 2113 Boylan Hall, if they wish to implement either the Standard Bereavement Procedure or the Leave of Absence Bereavement Procedure (see below). The Division of Student Affairs has the right to request a document that verifies the death (e.g., a funeral program or death notice).

Health and Wellness

University can be a challenging transition for new and even not so new students alike. As a result, maintaining one's mental health can be difficult. Follow this link to see Brooklyn College's many health and wellness services:



<https://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/about/offices/studentaffairs/health-wellness.php>

For someone to talk to in regard to thoughts of self-harm, please see this link with several numbers to reach out to:

http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/off_dosa_pc/HowYouCanHelpaSuicidalPerson.pdf