

MUHI 4302 Seminar in Music History (Topic: Film Music)

When: Daily 9:30am-1:30pm; May 16-17, 20-24, 28-31, 2019
Where: OFAC 2061
Professor: Peter Kupfer
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Office Hours: Set up an appointment at <https://www.timetrade.com/book/MPKFL>

COURSE DESCRIPTION & GOALS

In this course we will study the historical development of film music, including its deployment in different film genres and the styles of various composers. Our goal will be to understand not only the ways that music functions in film and the meanings it engenders, but also how these are reflections of cultural, social, and technological changes. We will focus primarily on American cinema, but draw examples from other traditions as well.

The typical prerequisites for MUHI 4302 will be waived for this topic. No previous music courses or music reading ability are required. Indeed, one of the main goals of the course will be to develop a vocabulary and context for discussing how music of different kinds functions in films of different genres from different time periods.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course fulfills the following UC 2016 learning outcomes:

History, Social and Behavioral Sciences Option A (Depth):

- A1a. Using extensive primary and/or secondary sources students will explain, in their own prose, how and why historical changes occur in a particular time and society.

Humanities and Fine Arts Option A (Depth):

- A1. Students will analyze and construct clear and well-supported interpretations of creative or innovative works within a particular discipline.
- A2b. Students will demonstrate the ways in which creative works reflect values and modes of thought in individual or cultural contexts.

Information Literacy

1. Students will select and use the appropriate research methods and search tools for needed information.
2. Students will evaluate sources for quality of information for a given information need.

Writing

1. Through multiple opportunities supervised and/or directed by a professor, an editor or other authority, students will demonstrate proper use of language through completion of a substantial amount of purposeful writing appropriate for a specific or targeted audience.

TEXTS/FILMS

There is no require textbook, all readings will be made available to you on Canvas as pdfs. We will watch most, if not all, of many of the films we'll discuss in the second half of each class meeting. You will, however, be responsible for completing the viewing of these films, as well as a few additional films, outside of class. All films are either available via online streaming and/or will be on course reserves at the library.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, EXPECTATIONS, AND POLICIES

Viewing, Listening, and Reading

It is important that you engage closely with the assigned films and texts. This means close, undistracted viewing, listening, and reading. You are responsible for having done any assigned readings and/or viewing *before* the day on which they will be discussed in class (see class schedule below for details).

Attendance

Attendance is required at all class meetings. Absences will only be excused if there are legitimate and documentable extenuating circumstances or severe illness. More than one unexcused absence will result in failure of the course. Absences for religious reasons will be excused as long as they are communicated before the university deadline. See below for absences related to University Extracurricular Activities.

Late Work

Given the compressed nature of the May Term course, late work will not be accepted.

Electronic Devices

Research has shown a) that hand-written notes lead to better retention and recall of information and b) that the use of laptops or other internet-connected devices can lead to greater distraction, not only for the user but for those seated around the user (see the research review here: <https://tinyurl.com/yaedprex>, esp. pp. 13-15; this research review also includes some great tips on how best to take notes). Thus, *electronic devices will generally not be allowed in class without express permission from the instructor*. Any student observed using such a device may, at the discretion of the instructor, be counted as absent for that class.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Professionalism (15%)

To succeed in this class you must act *professionally*, which means:

- Participate effectively: this means coming to class having completed and thought critically about all readings and assignments, making every effort to grapple with any confusing or difficult issues,

and engaging the instructor and fellow classmates in collegial discussion about the topic at hand; participation that reflects this kind of critical engagement with the readings, discussion, and issues of the course is the most valuable kind. A well-timed or well-formulated question, for instance, can be as valuable as, if not more so, than continual banal commentary.

- Be on time
- Respect the views and opinions of others
- Communicate clearly, early, and respectfully with the instructor
- Complete your work on time

If you have issues with participation or have any other needs or issues related to Professionalism, please come see me as soon as possible so we can work out a mutually agreeable solution. See also the Disability Accommodations section below.

Annotations (35%)

As mentioned above, research shows that handwritten engagement with a topic leads to better understanding and recall. Thus, 35% of your course grade will comprise handing in annotated, hard copies of 7 assigned readings (5% each). See the Annotation Guidelines at the end of the syllabus for details.

Writing (50%)

You must submit five response essays (ca. 500 words each) over the course of term on designated dates (see below). Each is worth 10%. See the Assignment Guidelines at the end of the syllabus for details.

Grade Distribution

Professionalism	15%
Annotations	35% (7 x 5% each)
Response Essays	50% (5 x 10% each)

Grade Scale

A	100-93.33	B+	89.94-86.66	C+	79.94-76.66	etc.
A-	93.33-90	B	86.66-83.33	C	76.66-73.33	
		B-	83.33-80	C-	73.33-70	

UNIVERSITY-WIDE POLICIES

Academic Honesty and Misconduct

You are bound by the Honor Code and the SMU Student Code of Conduct. For complete details, see: <https://www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/StudentLife/StudentHandbook/HonorCode>

Disability Accommodations

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS> to

begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible, present a DASS Accommodation Letter, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement.

Religious Observance

Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. ([See University Policy No. 1.9](#))

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities

Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (See [2018-2019 University Undergraduate Catalogue](#))

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

Larsen = Larsen, Peter. *Film Music*. Translated by John Irons. London: Reaktion, 2007. Pdfs of this and all other readings available on Canvas.

Please bring with you to class hard copies of all Larsen readings, regardless of whether you plan to submit them for annotations.

Th 5/16

Introduction: Theories, Terms, and Concepts

Mini-lecture: Silent Cinema Scores

In class begin watching: *Metropolis* (dir. Fritz Lang, mus. Gottfried Huppertz, Germany, 1927, 148m)

F 5/17

Discussion of *Metropolis*

Mini-lecture: Sounds comes to Hollywood, Classical Hollywood Style

In class begin watching: *King Kong* (dir. Merian Cooper, mus. Max Steiner, 1933, 100m)

Reading for today:

- Larsen, 13-35 (Chapter 1), 47-65 (Chapter 3)

Over weekend watch:

- *Casablanca* (dir. Michael Curtiz, mus. Max Steiner, USA 1943, 102m)

M 5/20

Discussion of *King Kong* and *Casablanca*

Mini-lecture: Film Noir

In class begin watching: *The Big Sleep* (dir. Howard Hawks, mus. Max Steiner, USA, 1946, 116m)

Reading for today:

- Larsen, 76-97 (Chapter 5)
- Marks, Martin. "Music, Drama, Warner Brothers: The Cases of *Casablanca* and the *Maltese Falcon*." In *Music and Cinema*, edited by James Buhler, Caryl Flinn, and David Neumeyer, 161-78. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000. **NB - only listed pages on *Casablanca*.**

Due today (by 9am): Response Essay #1

Tu 5/21

Discussion of *The Big Sleep*

Mini-lecture: Hollywood Film Musical

In class begin watching: *Top Hat* (dir. Mark Sandrich, mus. Irving Berlin, USA, 1935, 100m)

Reading for today:

- Larsen, 98-122 (Chapter 6)

W 5/22

Discussion of *Top Hat*

Mini-lecture: Post-WWII Changes, The Theme Song, Westerns

In class begin watching: *High Noon* (dir. Fred Zinnemann, mus. Dmitri Tiomkin, USA, 1952, 85m)

Reading for today:

- Altman, Rick. "4. The Style of the American Film Musical." In *The American Film Musical*, 59-89. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Due today (by 9am): Response Essay #2

Th 5/23

Discussion of *On the Waterfront*

Mini-lecture: Hitchcock, Herrmann, and the Sounds of Suspense

In class begin watching: *North by Northwest* (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, mus. Bernard Herrmann, USA, 1959, 136m)

Reading for today:

- Allison, Deborah. "'Do Not Forsake Me': The Ballad of High Noon and the Rise of the Movie Theme Song." *Senses of Cinema* 28 (2003).

F 5/24

Discussion of *North by Northwest*

Mini-lecture: The Spaghetti Western; Compilation Scores I (Pop Songs)

In class begin watching: *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (dir. Sergio Leone, mus. Ennio Morricone, Italy, 1966, 177m)

Reading for today:

- Larsen, 123-45 (Chapter 7)

Due today (by 9am): Response Essay #3

Over weekend watch:

- The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, USA, 1967, 105m)
- American Graffiti* (dir. George Lucas, USA, 1973, 110m)

Tu 5/28

Discussion of *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, *The Graduate*, and *American Graffiti*

Mini-lecture: Scoring Outer Space; Compilation Scores II (Classical Music)

In class begin watching: *2001: A Space Odyssey* (dir. Stanley Kubrick, USA, 1968, 141m)

Reading for today:

- Larsen, 146-65
- Smith, Jeff. "Every Gun Makes Its Own Tone: Ennio Morricone, The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly, and 'L'esthétique du Scopitone'" and "Sixties Pop Songs and the Compilation Score." In *The Sounds of Commerce*, 131-72.

W 5/29

Discussion of *2001: A Space Odyssey*

Mini-lecture: Neo-Classical Hollywood; The Blockbuster Score

In class begin watching: *Star Wars* (dir. George Lucas, mus. John Williams, USA, 1977, 121m)

Reading for today:

- McQuiston, Kate. "Strains of Transcendence in *2001: A Space Odyssey*." In *We'll Meet Again: Musical Design in the Films of Stanley Kubrick*, 128-62. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Due today (by 9am): Response Essay #4

Th 5/30

Discussion of *Star Wars*

Mini-lecture: The 1980s

In class watch: Excerpts from films by Ridley Scott (*Blade Runner*), Peter Weir (*Witness*), Spike Lee (*Do the Right Thing*), Robert Zemeckis (*Back to the Future*)

Reading for today:

- Larsen, 166-83 (Chapter 8)

F 5/31

Mini-lecture: Postmodernism and the last 25 years

In class watch: Excerpts to be taken from films by Quentin Tarantino (*Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Kill Bill*, *Inglorious Basterds*), Baz Luhrmann (*Moulin Rouge!*, *Great Gatsby*), Christopher Nolan (*Inception*, *Interstellar*, *Dunkirk*), Tom Hooper (*The King's Speech*), Wes Anderson (*The Life Aquatic*, *Moonrise Kingdom*, *The Grand Budapest Hotel*)

Wrap up Discussion

Reading for today:

- Excerpt TBA from: Hickman, Roger. *Reel Music: Exploring 100 Years of Film Music*. Second edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2017.

Due today (by 9am): Response Essay #5

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Response Essay Guidelines

You must submit five response essays over the course of the Term, on M 5/20, W 5/22, F 5/24, W 5/29, and F 5/31. Each response essay is worth 10% of the overall grade, should be at least 750 words, and should address the following:

1. Describe and interpret the primary function(s) of the music in the films from the past two classes (discussing at least two cues from each as examples). [SLO HFA A1]
2. How are these functions similar to/different from previous films we have studied (i.e., what has changed)? [SLO HFA A2b/HSBS A1]
3. What accounts for any differences? Here you can (and should) invoke what you have read about the films and their historical context in the assigned readings (or elsewhere). [SLO HFA A2b/HSBS A1]

You will also be graded on your writing, so be sure to write logically, correctly, and clearly. This means correct usage, grammar, and proofreading. The Writing Proficiency will be assessed via improvements in the writing over the course of the Term based on instructor feedback. [SLO W]

Grading Rubric

Content	75% (~25% per area above)
Writing	25%

The assignments are **due to Canvas on the above dates 30 minutes before** the start of class (i.e., 9am).

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Annotations Guidelines

You must submit annotated hard copies of one chapter from the Larsen (you may pick any one) and all other assigned readings (for a total of seven). In addition to the annotations, I would like you to write up and submit before class the following:

1. The main argument/point(s) of the reading summarized in your own words in a few sentences. This should be big picture, not blow-by-blow recall of the reading.
2. One question/curiosity that arose during your reading of the text.
3. Is this a reliable source and how did you go about verifying this? [SLO IL]
 - We will discuss strategies for assessing this during the first two classes.

I ask for annotated hard copies of readings because research has shown (see above) that close, written engagement with texts enhances retention and recall of ideas, and because experience shows me that classroom discussion and student engagement is better when students have carefully read and thought about assigned texts. If you're unfamiliar with annotating texts or would like a refresher on best practices, useful guides for effective annotating can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Write-ups are due to Canvas 30 minutes before the start of class annotated hard copies at the end of class meetings. Each set is worth 5% (for a total of 35% of the overall course grade). Annotations will not be accepted late.