

Music 1101: Elements of Music

Lectures: Mon & Wed, 11:15–12:05 in Lincoln Hall B20

Discussion sections: Fri 11:15–12:05 (x3), 12:20–1:10 (x3) in Lincoln Hall B20, B21, and 124.

Prof. Andrew Hicks

Lincoln Hall 106 (mailbox in 101 Lincoln)

ajh299@cornell.edu — (607) 351-6297 (cell: emergencies only!)

Office hours: F 10:00–11:00 or by appointment

TA: Lizzy Lyon

142 Lincoln

ell67@cornell.edu

Office hours: T 2:30–3:30

(or by appointment)

TA: Matthew Hall

142 Lincoln

mh968@cornell.edu

Office hours: M 12:15–1:15

(or by appointment)

TA: David Miller

142 Lincoln

dhm93@cornell.edu

Office hours: M 4:00–5:00

(or by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course offers a diverse set of approaches to the “elements” of music and the ways in which music has been practiced as art, craft, and culture across the centuries and around the globe. Its focus is the act of deliberate and practiced listening, which we will apply to a broad range of sounds, traditions, and ways of thinking and behaving musically, both familiar and unfamiliar, local and global. The listening exercises in this course will isolate and integrate five basic elements of musical activity: pitch, timbre, harmony, rhythm, and form. Through hands-on (and ears-on!) activities – including experimentation with instruments, ear training, dancing, notating, composing, and improvising – we will explore the complex history of these seemingly elemental concepts, with the following three questions always ringing in our ears:

- How has the human experience of musically organized sound changed along with changing technologies of sound production and music making?
- How are those experiences culturally specific?
- How do cultural, technological, and economic forces shape why we listen, when we listen, and what we listen to?

By the end of the term you will have acquired: (1) the aural skills necessary for listening attentively and critically to musically organized sound (broadly construed); (2) a basic technical vocabulary for notating, describing, and analyzing those sounds; and (3) a conceptual framework for thinking about and interrogating the many factors (cultural, technological, economic, and political) that have shaped *both* the sounds themselves *and* our experiences of them.

This class is open to all students, regardless of prior musical background and musical literacy (a fancy way of saying the ability to read and write musical notation). If you have had little or no previous experience reading, making, or analyzing music, and you would like to develop your abilities using Western notation, please consider taking the one-credit mini-course MUSIC 1100, Elements of Musical Notation. This four-week course (meeting Aug 29–Sep 26, MW 8:00–8:50am) will cover topics such as treble and bass staves, intervals and triads, scales and chords, tonal centers and keys, rhythm and meter. Any students considering the music major or minor, or who are planning to take MUSIC 2101 (Theory, Materials, and Techniques I) and/or MUSIC 2201 (Introduction to Music Studies) in the future, are especially urged to take this course if they do not have prior experience reading and analyzing written music.

COURSE OVERVIEW

I. Music at the Extremes

Week 1 (Aug 24): Course Introduction

Week 2 (Aug 29–Sep 2): Music beyond the human (extraterrestrial music?)

Week 3 (Sep 7–Sep 9): Music before the human (proto-music 500,000 years ago?)

II. Sounding Alone (Pitch and Timbre)

Week 4 (Sep 12–Sep 16): From sound to note

Week 5 (Sep 19–Sep 23): Technologies of sound production

First Musical Activity Report must be submitted by 24 Sep, 11:59pm

Week 6 (Sep 26–Sep 30): Technologies of sound reproduction

III. Sounding Together (Harmony)

Week 7 (Oct 3–Oct 7): Notation

Midterm project due Oct 7, 11:59pm – before Fall Break

Week 8 (Oct 12–Oct 14): Improvisation

Week 9 (Oct 17–Oct 21): Rule making, rule breaking

Week 10 (Oct 24–Oct 28): Harmony, civility, and colonialism

Second Musical Activity Report must be submitted by Oct 29, 11:59pm

IV. Sounding Time (Rhythm)

Week 11 (Oct 31–Nov 4): Entraining the body: music, dance, and fitness

Week 12 (Nov 7–Nov 11): Cultures of rhythm: who's got rhythm?

V. Sounding Structure (Form)

Week 13 (Nov 14–Nov 18): Repetition and contrast

Week 14 (Nov 21): Cadence and closure

Third Musical Activity Report must be submitted by 22 Nov, 11:59pm – before Thanksgiving Break

Week 15 (Nov 28–Dec 2): Listening to (your) listening, or Hearing algorithms: Apple Music, Spotify, Pandora, etc.

Final project due TBA

WORKLOAD SUMMARY

Your day-to-day work for this course will include listening to music, reading texts, and thinking about the ideas presented therein. You will contribute regularly to an online Listening Journal (very short informal responses), and you will complete three short musical activity reports, a midterm project (no more than five pages), and a final project (no more than seven pages). There will be no prelims or final examinations.

COURSE POLICIES

Your continued enrollment in this course constitutes your agreement to the following course requirements and policies:

- to attend *all* lectures – attendance is a required component of this course, and there will be many in-class projects, performances, and guest lectures that are integral to your successful completion of the course (there will be a sign-in sheet for all lectures);
- to keep cell phones, tablets, and laptops silent and out of sight;
- to come prepared to take notes (lecture slides will be available to all students but they will not be posted to Blackboard);
- to complete all listening and reading assignments *before* the relevant lecture(s);
- to attend and participate actively in your discussion section, which includes contributing to an online Listening Journal (in small groups of 5–7 students).

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

- three musical activity reports, each 1000–1250 words – detailed instructions will be posted on Blackboard on the Written Assignments page;
- one mid-term project with a written component of no more than 1250–1500 words (there will be no prelims in the course);
- one final recording project with an accompanying essay of no more than 1750–2000 words (there will be no final exam in this course) – you will be taught how to use the music library’s Zoom H4n and Sony PCM-D50 records, and the free, online recording and mixing software Audacity as a means of preparation; no previous experience making or recording music is expected.

GRADING

I will use the following guidelines in the determination of your final mark:

- Class and section participation = 20%
- Group projects and online listening journals = 16%
- Three musical activity reports = 24% (8% each)
- One mid-term project = 15%
- One final project = 25%

All written assignments will be assessed according to:

- your thoughtful engagement with all reading, listening, and creative components of the assignment;
- your success in finding (when required) appropriate sources and citing them according to the guidelines provided (remember: the reference librarians, your TAs, and I are happy to answer questions and help you learn how to use library resources and cite them correctly);
- and the quality of the writing, including mechanics. I am aware that for some of you English is a second language, and we will bear that in mind as we read. But all of you can use spell check and can proofread with your own eyes. Please take advantage of the writing resources provided by Cornell, including the *Knight Institute for Writing* (http://www.arts.cornell.edu/knight_institute/walkin/walkin.htm).

- A tip: The way to a good grade does not depend on trying to figure out what we want to hear and agreeing with us. We want signs of a personal but informed engagement with the music (ideas, concepts, arguments, etc.) that we encounter throughout the course.

GRADING SCALE

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

LATE WORK AND SLIP-DAYS

Late work is *not accepted* without prior arrangements. You are, however, allowed two *slip-days* (a no-questions-asked extension) for the submission of assignments. That means you may hand in any *one* assignment *two* days late, or *two* assignments *one* day late, without penalty, without question. Use them wisely.

COURSE MATERIALS

There is *no* textbook for this class. All readings will be available online through our Blackboard pages. That makes lecture and section attendance *all the more crucial*.

BLACKBOARD

This course is supported by a Blackboard website. If you are enrolled in the course, you are already enrolled in our Blackboard site. Login at <http://blackboard.cornell.edu>. There you will find (via the navigation panel at left-hand side of the page):

- Course Information: Course syllabus, classroom policies, and contact information for the instructor and TAs.
- Listening Journals: In the second week of class you will be assigned to a small journal group, which you'll find here.
- Weekly Class Assignments: All readings and listening assignments for the lectures and discussion sections. These will be updated weekly.
- Written Assignments: All instructions and Blackboard submission guidelines for the writing assignments, including Musical Activity Reports. All assignments will be submitted through Blackboard on this page.
- In-Class Musical Examples: Lectures will often include additional listening examples, which will be posted here after the lecture.
- Links: Links to many web-based resources that will help you with the readings, listening assignments, and written assignments.

HOW TO LISTEN TO THE LISTENING (AND VIEWING) ASSIGNMENTS

Careful and repeated listening is *crucial* for this course. You should listen to everything several times, as it typically takes several hearings for you to grasp the assigned pieces. You may find it helpful to listen before *and* after completing the assigned readings, thinking about what you may have heard in the second listening that you didn't hear in the first instance. It is also important to listen *actively*, not while you are doing problem sets, reading, or otherwise engaged (at least for the first hearing). You may also find it helpful to take notes while you listen.

DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Discussion sessions will be held on Fridays 11:15–12:05 (x3) and 12:20–1:10 (x3) in LH B20, B21, and 124. You should have enrolled in a discussion section when you enrolled in the course. Sections begin in the **second week of classes (Sept. 2)**. The primary purpose of the discussion section is not to introduce new material, although this may happen. Rather, sections present the opportunity to create, extend, and facilitate critical debate about the topic, readings, and music for a given week. Some people are shyer than others, by inclination or training. If you find it difficult to enter the discussion because of natural shyness or hesitation about whether your comment is relevant or important enough, this is a safe space to challenge these assumptions. Try to add your voice regularly. We really want to hear everyone!

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All the work you submit must have been written for this course and not another, and must originate with you in form and content. All sources on which you have relied, for ideas as well as for direct quotations, must be fully and specifically acknowledged. You can find the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity online at <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>. If you fail to adhere to the code, you risk failure in the course. If you have any questions about what to document or how to do so, please come see one of us.