Music 151 – Introduction to Music
For Music Majors
San Diego State University
Fall Semester 2013 – TTh 11:00-11:50, Music Room 207

Course Syllabus

Instructor: Prof. Michael Gerdes
Phone: (619) 594-4681
E-mail: mgerdes@mail.sdsu.edu

Office: Music 222
Office Hours: By Appointment
Final Date: Dec. 17

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Music is a complex phenomenon that offers a rich assortment of perspectives from which to examine the human condition. A vital branch of the humanities, the academic study of music complements the applied facets of composition and performance by providing an opportunity to consider how musical practice reflects key values of different cultures and historical periods. How and why do we participate in musical activities? What terminology have we adopted to identify and discuss musical elements, and what are its advantages and limitations? By what criteria do we evaluate music, and how do we communicate these values? How do musical styles, activities, and values differ from one period or culture to another? How have advancements in technology impacted our engagement with music and our interaction with previously unfamiliar musical ideologies? By exploring these questions as they relate to a globally inclusive range of musical styles, students will have an opportunity to engage the academic practice of critical inquiry by contextualizing, expanding, and communicating musical experiences.

This course, which is required of all first-year music majors, serves as an introduction to principles of critical listening, research, and analysis necessary for the advanced study of music in academia. Through lectures, group discussions, collaborative projects, and individual research exercises, students will explore factors of history, culture, style, documentation, technology, and aesthetics as they apply to the broad range of classical, popular, and world music traditions that comprise the contemporary musical experience. Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be eligible to enroll in the upper-division sequence of music history classes (Music 308A, 308B, and 408A).

LEARNING OUTCOMES
Students who complete the course will:

• Develop awareness of a broad range of musical genres, styles, and traditions
• Develop and apply an appropriate vocabulary to describe musical elements
• Discuss cultural and historical factors that contribute to different musical practices
• Identify stylistic distinctions among works from different historical and cultural contexts
• Analyze the musical and extra-musical components of a wide-ranging repertoire
• Enhance critical listening skills
• Communicate critical interpretations of music in written, oral, and collaborative formats
• Enhance critical listening skills to evaluate music and communicate those values
• Navigate the information resources of the University Library to conduct basic research
GRADING
Final grades will be based on the following scale:

20% Presentation(s)
50% Research Paper
   10% Initial Draft
   40% Final Copy
15% Critical Reflection Writing/Responses
15% Participation*

*I take class participation grades seriously. Keeping quiet in class deprives your colleagues of your perspectives and stifles dialogue. Only those who consistently contribute to class discussions will receive full marks.

COURSE POLICIES
• Attendance is taken in the first five minutes of class. If a student arrives to class after attendance has been taken, it is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor of their presence after class. Students arriving after attendance has been taken will be counted as tardy. Each unexcused tardy is counted as one half of an unexcused absence.
• Come to class on time and prepared. Bring your textbook and course reader every day.
• All electronic devices, including MP3 players, cellular telephones, and pagers, must be turned off or in silent mode during class.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM
I welcome and encourage you to discuss course materials and concepts with your colleagues. However, all evaluated work for this course (including homework, quizzes, and exams) is expected to be the sole production of each individual student, unless otherwise directed by me. If after due consideration, I am convinced that cheating or deliberate plagiarism has occurred on some homework, quiz, or exam, then the offending student will receive zero credit. Further, the student’s action will be referred to the proper administrator for consideration.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS and MATERIALS
Due to the unique approach to this class, as well as the overall scope of this course, no single text (or even a set of resource recordings) can be utilized to cover everything that we will discuss. Much of the material will be brought together from a variety of sources. As such, you are required to purchase one text and one course reader packet for the class.


COURSE OUTLINE
Unit 1 (Weeks 1–4): Exploring Musical Practices
Unit 2 (Weeks 5–8): Analyzing Musical Elements
Unit 3 (Weeks 9–12): Synthesizing Musical Styles
Unit 4 (Weeks 13–15): Project Presentations
PRESENTATIONS AND FINAL PAPER

The Presentation
Each student will present a work (or portion thereof) to the class. Due to the size of the class, time limits may be imposed. The presentation will be closely related to the initial Critical Reflection assignment. More details will be provided.

The Paper
Students will write an analytical paper based on a musical work of their choosing. The paper will set forth an analysis that conforms to the methods for listening to music outlined in Aaron Copland’s *What to Listen for in Music* and uses appropriate analytical, critical, and scholarly methodologies. The paper will also incorporate research from the current scholarship in the areas of performance practice and historical context. Students will submit an initial draft of the paper and meet with me to discuss the initial draft before submitting the final version.

When choosing musical works for the presentation and paper, you have great freedom. I am amenable to topics that are off the beaten path. The idea is choose an approach that will serve your own needs.