

American Music/Mus 117-001

Spring 2012/MW 3:30 - 4:45/CA 1023/Three Credits

Instructor: Dr. B. Salwen

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Office Hours: By appointment, during hours to be posted, or otherwise if needed

Simply see me after any class, call, or email me to make a time.

Course Overview

Welcome to American Music! This is a course intended to introduce you to a sampling of the wide variety and large quantity of music produced in the U.S. Our earliest music will be that of the Native Americans, followed by the story of the immigrating Europeans in the 1600s. From there we will move forward, exploring a wide spectrum of styles. Along with composers, we will look at who was performing music, and the music they used. Publishers, preachers, pianists, bands, and the history behind them, these and more form the panorama of the field. Historical background to the musicians and their eras is an important part of the material. Our end point will be the music of today – and performers offered for hearing by you, the class.

This is a basic studies course. Previous musical background is not required. Note, however: this course is not an easy A. Music is an emotional experience, and it is also a discipline. Expect to apply yourself seriously to the material, just as you would in a history class, for instance. If you want a good grade, plan to work!

Required Text: *America's Musical Landscape*, by Jean Ferris, 6th ed., along with a set of 3 CDs.

Course Goals

- Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze, appreciate, and make cogent subjective judgments about musical works, using the terms and language of music. (AIL 1, LDN1)
- Develop a familiarity with the basics of American musical history. (AIL 1)
- Understand the larger socio-historical contexts of the musical works, and the lives of their composers or the nature of their society of origin. (AIL 2, LDN1, LDN2, LDN3)
- Develop critical and analytical listening skills through analysis and evaluation of music of many kinds, originating and being performed in a wide variety of social contexts. (AIL 2, LDN1, LDN2, LDN3, LDN4)
- Discuss works that sometimes contain substantially innovative content. (AIL 3, LDN1, LDN4)
- Grasp the role of the composer and performer of music in society, sometimes as one challenging the conventions of society. (AIL 3, LDN1, LDN2, LDN3, LDN4)

AIL stands for Aesthetic, Interpretive, & Literary; LDN stands for Living in Our Diverse Nation. Both are components of the new University Studies Curriculum. Link for full detail on this:

<http://uncw.edu/universitystudies/curriculummain.html>

Classroom note: NO ELECTRONICS. No cell phones, no texting, no laptops. None. Turn them off and put them away before class begins; they need to stay there until after class is over. I will make an exception and allow use of a laptop on an individual basis if you talk to me first and have a strong reason that a laptop will help you in the class. Any inappropriate use will be grounds for ending the privilege.

Reading: Please keep up with the assigned readings, which are modest in quantity. These are the framework for the material. They will provide essential facts that you need for class presentation, discussion, and tests. The book also contains good summary sections, listening guides to the music, and a glossary of musical terms, so you should find it very practical.

Listening: This is a music class, so of course we will hear music. Again, the amount is fairly modest. Some will be familiar, much will not be. It is crucial that you spend enough time listening to the assigned music to learn and know it. Repeated listening is key. Tests will include multiple choice, listening questions, and an essay. There may also be fill-ins or short lists for chronological ordering.

Concert Attendance: There is a great difference between hearing music in front of speakers and experiencing it in performance. Hearing music is a vital, often exciting part of this course, which will expand on the material you learn in class. FOUR concerts are required, and American music needs to be a significant part of each program you attend for credit.

Your two sources of concerts will be 1) the recital hall in the cultural arts building. Consult the music department events calendar for listings and updates: <http://appserv02.uncw.edu/caic/events-MUS.asp> Things can change, so check in regularly. All or most concerts taking place in our recital hall are free to UNCW students; bring your ID card. 2) There are also performances in Kenan Auditorium, though these usually have a (modest) student admission charge. Consult the Kenan performance calendar for events information: <http://www.uncw.edu/arts/kenan.html> Click on performance calendar on the bottom left to get to the list of events. Ask the box office (962-3500) if needed information isn't on the website.

Following is a list of the types of concerts required. Easiest and best is to go to performances right here on campus, the majority in the recital hall of the cultural arts building (the building where this class is taking place). That is called Beckwith Recital Hall, abbreviated BRH.

1) One concert for large ensemble. Possible dates:

Saturday, 11 February, Wilmington Symphony, 8:00 Kenan Auditorium; modest charge for student tickets

Thursday, 1 March, Wind Symphony, 7:30 Kenan Auditorium (free)

Tuesday, 1 May, Wind Symphony, 7:30 KA (free)

2) One for small ensemble (about 5 instruments or fewer). I will give you possibilities later, when I know which programs include American music.

3) One jazz concert. A number of possibilities are on the music department events calendar. Concerts in this category will have the word jazz, combo, or the phrase big band in the heading. Notice especially the annual jazz festival, with performances on 29 and 30 March. With Chick Corea! Also, there is the Wilmington Symphony on Saturday, 17 March (if you are not away at that time for spring break). The orchestra will be performing with jazz artists, so it goes in this category.

4) One concert of your choice, does not have to include American music. Preferably in the Cultural Arts building recital hall. Others can be considered on request, but a printed program must be available. Some excellent possibilities out of a longer list:

Tuesday, 7 February, flute and piano recital, 7:30 BRH

Monday, 20 February, violin and piano recital, 7:30 BRH

Saturday, 14 April, senior student voice recital (terrific singer), 7:30 BRH

Monday, 23 April, Atlantean piano trio (violin, cello, piano), 7:30 BRH **Includes Salwen, pianist.**

To get credit for attending a concert:

- a) Arrive ON TIME and get a program. Staff will stop handing out programs shortly after the concert begins. Don't be late;
- b) Stay for the entire concert; do not leave in the middle.
- c) At the end of the concert, have your program stamped. There will be a staff person in some fairly obvious position for doing this. Don't fail to get your program stamped. Credit deduction! If no one is stamping, and only in that case, ask an usher to sign your program instead.
- d) Put your NAME on your program and give it to me within one week of the event. If you wait longer and lose it, you'll need to go to another concert. If you forget to bring a program to class, you can go to the music office and ask them to leave it in my box.

No program = no credit, unless the venue staff informs us that they ran out of programs. If that happens, there should be a list for you to sign indicating your attendance.

No stamp = half credit, unless staff informs that nobody was there to stamp programs.

If you attend a concert off campus, then a program without stamp will suffice, plus a short (1/2 to one page) description of the event. But this will probably not happen often.

Concert attendance equals 15% of the course grade. So if you attend and properly submit programs with stamps for four concerts, you get 15 points. Note that going to 3 concerts gives you quite a few points less than going to 4. Plan ahead, and go to all your concerts! It's good for your grade, and can definitely be fun!

Short concert write-up: Go to at least one concert and turn this in on or before Monday, 5 March. The purpose of this is to discuss live music using the terms and concepts introduced in class. Use as much musical terminology as possible. Be as specific as possible. Keep non-musical points to a minimum. Make notes while you are listening; it is hard to rely on memory alone. Do not try to write about a whole concert. Discuss one or two pieces and try to get some detail. Also: plan to attend at least one other concert before writing this; you will have experience to draw on. Alongside the objective particulars, a few subjective reactions can contribute as well. Music is, after all, an emotional experience. What did you particularly like or dislike? Why? How did the music make you feel? Why?

Specifications. At the top, put your name, the date and location of the concert, the title and composer of the piece(s), the name(s) of the performer(s), and the instruments appearing. (For a large group, just give the name of the ensemble.) This should take just a few lines. Then the rest of the write-up will be as described above. Length: 1 - 2 pages, Times 11 font or similar. Double-spaced, 1-inch margins on all sides. Organization, grammar, and spelling are important aspects of writing and will be considered in grading. Do not copy from the program notes, though you may use one or two excerpts if properly cited. Otherwise, these are your own observations, using the terms we have applied in class.

Paper: Your projected topic and a tentative bibliography for the term paper are due on Monday, 2 April. Send via email by the class time on that date. A paper of this kind should be planned and thought through, and the interim deadline is intended to keep you on schedule. It also ensures that materials you want to use are actually available. Submitting this material late (or not at all) will result in a 3-point grade deduction. It needs to include 1) a brief description of your topic; 2) a working title; 3) a list of your sources; and 4) the music you plan to discuss.

The term paper is due Wednesday, 25 April. You may choose any topic with a reasonable connection to American music. The idea is to give you an opportunity to explore an American-music related subject of

interest to you. Perhaps a composer discussed in class piqued your curiosity, or you have always wanted to know more about where a favorite tune came from. Your topic could be a composer, a performer, a type of music, or even a polemic. You can study an area from any period, 17th century to the present. Topics going beyond popular music of the present are definitely encouraged! Whatever the topic, the essential characteristics are 1) there will be a research component; 2) you need to write at meaningful length (at least half a page) about a specific piece of music using musical terms. This is meant to be a piece of music that you have heard and know, and about which you can write *your own observations*.

I would prefer that your choice of music not be a piece we have discussed in class, but something new to you. If you have strong interest in a piece studied in class, I would want you to bring something different to it. Don't duplicate the listening guide in the book. Also, it should be short: between 3 and 10 minutes.

Specifications. Length: 3 – 4 pages. Font: Times New Roman 11 (the font in which this syllabus is written). Format: One-inch margins on all sides, double spaced text, left justified. Use a cover page with your name and the paper title; text begins at the top of the following page. Citations for all quoted or paraphrased text are expected. Randall Library has workshops if you need help; failure to cite will reduce your grade. Bibliography: in any standard format on a separate last page; include your sound source.

Research sources: At least three, besides your sound source(s). These should be qualitative scholarly materials: books or articles. No more than one may be the internet; don't use the class textbook. Please adhere to all the guidelines accurately. I reserve the right to deduct from your grade if you do not. The only exception is length. If your paper is longer, I'll read every word!

*Please be attentive to the quality of your writing. Full sentences, a logical flow to the material, and clarity of expression contribute to a good paper. Also, be sure to proofread. Spelling mistakes and confused grammar detract from a paper. **Spellcheck on its own is not sufficient!** You need to actually proofread with care. Numerous or glaring writing errors will reduce your grade.

If you feel you need help in crafting a good paper, do not hesitate to consult Writing Services. Their web address is <http://www.uncw.edu/ulc/writing/index.html> I am also willing to look over your paper and give you feedback that could improve your grade. Please submit to me by 18 April (one week before the paper due date).

An excellent starting point for any topic: The New Grove Dictionary of American Music (4 vols.). This will give you an article and bibliography for most any topic in the field. It is in the reference section of the library; its catalogue number is ML101.U6 N48. The reference librarians can be very helpful in leading you to books and articles. I may also be able to give you research source ideas individually if you need further guidance.

Class Attendance: It is up to you to take your study seriously and come to class. For this reason, I have no graded attendance requirement; you do not lose points for absences. However, if you are absent, you will need to get notes from a classmate, rather than expect me to go over missed material with you.

That said, attendance is highly recommended. Just as important: consistent attendance - and attentiveness - mean you are serious about learning and are likely to do your best. Hearing and seeing the material presented adds a great deal to reading on your own. Furthermore, your text is a condensed history, and I will often amplify on its contents. Material will be regularly presented in class that is not in your book. People who create and perform music are affected by the larger world, and I will often provide historical context to the works and composers we consider. (I often give dates, but only a few key ones need to be remembered precisely.)

The only exception to voluntary attendance is tests. Missing a test without a documented emergency = 0 for that test.

Tests: Four. The dates are: Wednesday, 8 February; Midterm: Monday, 5 March (cumulative); Wednesday, 4 April; Final Exam: Friday, 4 May, 3:00 same room. Please enter these dates into your schedules and plan to keep them.

Tests will be principally multiple choice, approximately 20 to 30 questions. Normally there are also short answers, a few fill-ins, or short lists of events for chronological ordering. There will always be an additional listening section, which I typically give as an essay. Some questions may be easy, some not. Know your material. I might well ask you to think and synthesize.

The first and third tests last about 45 minutes each. The second test (midterm) will be cumulative to that point, so a bit longer. The final will be cumulative to the term, with some exclusions to be itemized in class; length, 60 - 75 minutes.

Please note carefully. Unless something specific and unavoidable forces a change, I will adhere to the scheduled dates. This includes the final exam. Do NOT buy a plane ticket which will require you to miss any test date, unless you plan on getting a 0 for that test. The only exception will be an emergency. Should such a situation arise, I will handle that with you individually. You will need to provide documentation in order for a make-up to be considered.

Grading: +/-, 10 point scale. Each test = 15%. Your paper = 20% of the grade. (3-point deduction for submitting your topic and bibliography after the due date.) Short concert write-up = 5%. Concert attendance is 15%. Grading scale for concert attendance: 4=100%; 3=60%; 2=40%; 1=20%; 0=0.

If you are interested in a grade bonus, then you will want to know that I especially value class participation, and will round up final grades for people who participate. Ask questions about the material, react to it, raise your hand and speak up when I pose a question to the class. Having 1 or 0 absences also gets you bumped up. By rounding up, I mean raising, for instance, a B average, if you're within a point or so of B+, to that higher grade - in other words, a three-point grade level up. Once in a while I have even raised a grade two levels. Be present in class, and speak up!

End Notes:

1) Every student has a UNCW student email account. This is the official method of communication between faculty and students. You should check this account often. If I need to communicate with you, it will probably be via a message to this email account. Failing to check email, or having a full inbox, is not accepted as an explanation for failing to respond to class notices.

2) If you have studied the material and feel you need help beyond class, please feel free to make an appointment to see me. Also, don't overlook a quick way of getting help: raise your hand in class and ask when you have a question. Sometimes that can clear things up promptly and easily. For less elaborate questions, e-mail works too.

ENJOY THE COURSE!

University-required notices.

THE UNCW Student Academic Honor Code: All members of UNCW's community are expected to follow the academic Honor Code. Please read the UNCW Honor Code carefully (as covered in the UNCW Student Handbook). Academic dishonesty in **any** form will not be tolerated in this class. Please be especially familiar with UNCW's position on plagiarism as outlined in the UNCW Student Handbook. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty in which you take someone else's ideas and represent them as your own.

Campus Respect Compact: UNCW has recently instituted a Respect Compact to affirm our commitment to a civil community, characterized by mutual respect. That Compact may be accessed at: <http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/pdc/documents/SeahawkRespectCompact.pdf> Further information about the respect Compact is available from the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion.

Students with Disabilities: Students with diagnosed disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (962-7555). Please give me a copy of the letter you receive from Office of Disability Services detailing class accommodations you may need. If you require accommodation for test taking please make sure I have the referral letter no less than three days before the test.

Statement regarding violence and harassment: UNCW practices a zero tolerance policy for any kind of violent or harassing behavior. If you are experiencing an emergency of this type contact the police at 911 or UNCW CARE at 962-2273. Resources for individuals concerned with a violent or harassing situation can be located at <http://www.uncw.edu/wsrc/crisis.html>.

