

Sam Houston State University | School of Music
Psychology of Music | Spring 2018
MUSI 2339, section 02: 3 credits

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Office Hours: To be announced.

Course Description:

While this course has “psychology” in the title, it is not a true psychology course. Rather, the course presents an integrated approach to the study of music from many different disciplines’ lenses, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, biology, philosophy, physics, education, and music. By exploring music within this multi- and interdisciplinary framework, students will gain a greater appreciation for music as a uniquely human experience.

Throughout the semester, we will address questions such as:

- Where does music’s meaning lie – in the music itself or in the music’s reference to external elements?
- To what extent does human musicology confer survival benefits?
- How does the human nervous system perceive and translate sounds in the environment into musical experiences?
- Does music evoke or induce emotional states? How?
- Why do we like some songs at first but then grow to dislike them?
- Why do many people have such strong musical memories?
- How are musical skills acquired?
- Are some people inherently non-musical?
- What are similarities and differences among different cultures’ musical behaviors and traditions?
- How is music used to address health-related concerns, and why is it effective in doing so?

Prerequisites:

None.

Course Objectives:

As a result of completing this course, students will be able to (pertinent American Music Therapy Association Professional Competencies are in parentheses):

1. Discuss the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary model of music psychology in terms of each discipline's contributions to better understanding music as a uniquely human behavior (10.5);
2. Utilize various models and theories of music perception, cognition, and emotion to explain observable musical phenomena (10.3, 10.4);
3. Argue their personal philosophical positions regarding music’s meaning, value, survival benefits, and societal contributions (10.5);

4. Compare and contrast the varying ways that music functions across different cultures (1.2, 10.5);
5. Apply the scientific method to examine various research questions related to music's influence on human behavior (20.1-20.3);
6. Summarize the processes involved in music skills acquisition (10.3); and
7. Assess potential therapeutic applications of music to health (10.5).

Instructional Methodology

Online

Required Text

Hodges, D.A., & Sebald, D.C. (2011). *Music in the human experience, an introduction to music psychology*. New York: Routledge. (ISBN: 9780415881869)

This book comes with a CD loaded with interactive media tutorials. Please ensure that you purchase the book with the CD, as we will use it throughout the semester.

Additional readings and course materials will be available through the course's Blackboard site.

Students are responsible for obtaining course materials by the first day of class. Exceptions regarding due dates will NOT be granted to students who fail to purchase the textbook on time.

Course Policies

Attendance: Success in any online course requires regular access to and engagement with the online learning environment, and your engagement (or lack thereof) in this class affects both you and your peers. In addition to being responsible for accessing course content and completing course activities according to the syllabus schedule, students should do the following items at least twice per week:

1. Check the course Blackboard (Bb) site, including the Virtual Office, for any announcements, updates, or other information;
2. Review the weekly discussion board for new peer responses; and
3. Check your email for personal communications from the professor.

Communication: You should familiarize yourselves with the various ways you can communicate with your peers and with the professor. Please use the "Virtual Office" discussion board to post course-related questions so that all students can benefit from reading the information. For personal course-related issues, please email the professor directly. You can also individually meet with the professor face-to-face or virtually during Office Hours or by appointment.

Your professor typically responds to emails and Virtual Office posts within one business day (i.e., within 24 hours on Monday - Thursday). Emails and/or Virtual Office posts initiated on Friday afternoon may not receive a response until the next business day (Monday).

Late work: This online course follows a consistent weekly schedule wherein all assignments maintain the same due dates across units. This consistent schedule allows you to know exactly

what to expect from the beginning of the semester, and sets you up to plan your time accordingly. Students are expected to turn in all assignments on time. Any assignment turned in after the assigned due date and time will automatically receive “0” points. Exceptions to this policy may be granted for extended major illnesses and/or emergency situations that are validated through the Dean of Students office.

Academic Honesty: Each student should independently complete all course activities. Each assignment you turn in should reflect your own, original work that you have not shown to another student. Conversely, you should not receive help from your classmate to complete your assignments. Exceptions to this policy will be clearly communicated to you if/when appropriate.

SHSU expects all students to engage in academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in academic experiences in and out of the online learning environment. Any student suspected of and/or found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work may be subject to disciplinary action. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work that is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All assignments will be processed through Blackboard’s SafeAssign application. For more information on SHSU’s student academic integrity policy, refer to [Academic Policy Statement: Procedures in Cases of Academic Dishonesty](#)

Classroom Demeanor: As an online class, our “classroom” consists of the course Blackboard site and all of its various components. Within this environment, students are expected to engage in behavior that contributes to developing a positive, collaborative, and collegial space where all class members feel welcome to share their perspectives and experiences. Students who engage in behavior in the online learning environment that disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university, may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days: Since ours is a fully-online class, student attendance is not taken. Moreover, since the course follows a consistent schedule from week to week, students should be able to plan ahead to complete learning assignments so that they do not interfere with potential religious holy day observances. Should you require extended time away from your computer and/or the internet due to a religious holy day observance, please contact your professor to discuss accommodations. [For more information, refer to SHSU’s policy for details regarding Student Absences on Religious Holy Days.](#)

Disabilities: Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should **register with the SHSU Counseling Center** as soon as possible. Arrangements can then be made to ensure full participation and to facilitate a complete educational opportunity.

Writing Assistance: The SHSU Writing Center, located in Farrington 111, provides free writing assistance to the university community. The Sam Houston Writing Center, located in Farrington 111, provides writing assistance free of charge to SHSU students. Writing tutors will

work with you one-on-one to help you generate, organize, or revise a draft of any assignment in any subject. [Students can schedule a Writing Center appointment online via MySuccess Planner/CampusConnect.](#)

Course Structure

The semester consists of 14 full weeks (plus one week for spring break). To reflect this timeline, the course is divided into 14 distinct units that each run from Monday through Sunday. Each unit has its own Blackboard folder that contains learning activities and information necessary to complete said activities. A suggested sequence is provided that outlines the order in which you should plan to view content and complete activities.

In addition to weekly learning activities, a project -- the Mini-Experiment -- consists of multiple components that are completed in a logical order throughout the semester, culminating in a final written report and multimedia presentation. An overview of this project will be introduced to you during Week 2 and its various components will be explained and assigned at various points throughout the semester.

For more information regarding the course structure, please view the Weekly Schedule attached to the syllabus.

Assignments

Discussion Board Posts and Peer Responses:

Weekly readings are an important component of this course. You must submit one reading-related discussion board post and responses to two peers' discussion board posts per week. Your initial discussion board post must be submitted by 11:59 pm on Thursday, while your responses to two peers' discussion board posts must be submitted by 11:59 pm on Sunday. *Please note that Blackboard is set up to not display your peers' discussion board posts until after you have submitted your initial post. Thus, your ability to respond to your peers' discussion board posts is contingent upon you first submitting your own post. Even if your initial post is submitted after the Thursday deadline (earning "0" points), you can still receive credit for responding to your peers' posts if those responses are submitted on time.*

Specific information regarding Discussion Board Posts and Peers Responses, including instructions, expectations, sample posts and responses, and a grading rubric, are detailed in the "Discussion Board Posts and Peer Responses Information" document that is available on the course Blackboard site.

Unit Learning Activities

Each weekly unit includes a collection of Learning Activities. These activities may include 1) viewing content such as book chapters, articles, video lectures, online material (e.g., YouTube clips), podcast episodes, and interactive websites; and 2) completing a variety of assignments, such as written responses to various prompts, experiential tasks, short quizzes/assessments, and creative exercises. All weekly Unit Learning Activities are due by 11:59 pm on Sunday, with the exception of the initial Discussion Board post, which is due by 11:59 pm on Thursday as outlined above.

Mini-Experiment Project

You will design and conduct a simple experiment that explores the effect of music on an everyday, non-musical behavior. This assignment is broken up into multiple, smaller assignments throughout the semester, including generating research questions, conducting and compiling a review of related literature, planning the research method, and culminates in a final written report and multimedia presentation. As described above, an overview of this project will be introduced to you during Week 2 and its various components will be explained and assigned at various points throughout the semester. *Because each smaller assignment builds on the next, students are required to turn in and receive feedback on each assignment before they can move on to the next one. For example, students need to turn in their tentative research questions and receive feedback before they can complete the review of literature, and so on.*

Grading Policies

Each course component is weighted according to the following schema:

Course Component	Weight
Discussion Board Posts and Peer Responses	30%
All Other Learning Activities	50%
Mini-Experiment Project	20%

Grading Scale: Grades will be determined through calculation of total percentage out of a possible 100%:

90 – 100% = A 80 – 89% = B 70 – 79% = C 60 – 69% = D 59% and below = F

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Weekly Schedule

	Week	Unit (Associated book chapter is in parenthesis)	Discussion Initial Post (by 11:59 pm)	Discussion Responses & Unit Assignments (by 11:59 pm)	Mini-Experiment Project
	1/17 - 1/21	0: Getting Started	Complete all Learning Activities in the “Getting Started” folder by 11:59 pm on 1/21		
1	1/22 - 1/28	1: Introduction to Psychology of Music (Ch. 1 - What is Music Psychology?)	Due: 1/25	Due: 1/28	
2	1/29 - 2/4	2: Music Philosophy (Ch.2 - Philosophical Issues in Music Psychology)	Due: 2/1	Due: 2/4	Project overview presented
3	2/5 - 2/11	3: Environmental and Human Musicality (Ch.3 - How We Came to Be Musical)	Due: 2/8	Due: 2/11	
4	2/12 - 2/18	4: Cultural Musicking (Ch.4 - Music Around the World and Across Time)	Due: 2/15	Due: 2/18	Research question(s), definitions, and hypotheses due
5	2/19 - 2/25	5: Hearing (Ch.6 - Musical Hearing)	Due: 2/22	Due: 2/25	
6	2/26 - 3/4	6: Music and the Brain (Ch. 9 - Music and the Brain)	Due: 3/1	Due: 3/4	
7	3/5 - 3/11	7: Music Perception/Psychoacoustics (Ch. 5 - Acoustical Foundations of Music; Ch. 7 - Psychoacoustics and the Perception of Music)	Due: 3/8	Due: 3/11	Review of literature due
Spring Break					
8	3/19 - 3/25	8: Music Cognition (Ch. 8 - Music Cognition)	Due: 3/22	Due: 3/25	
9	3/26 - 4/1	9: Physiological/ Emotional Responses to Music (Ch.10 - Bodily Responses to Music;	Due: 3/29	Due: 4/1	Method due

		Ch. 11 - Musical Emotions)			
10	4/2 - 4/8	10: Being Musical (Ch.12 - The Musical Person)	Due: 4/5	Due: 4/8	Begin data collection
11	4/9 - 4/15	11: Music Performance (Ch. 13 - Music Performance)	Due: 4/12	Due: 4/15	
12	4/16 - 4/22	12: Music Learning (Ch.14 - The Psychology of Music Learning)	Due: 4/19	Due: 4/22	
13	4/23 - 4/29	13: Music and Health (Ch.15 - Music and Health; Ch. 16 - Music in Social Contexts)	Due: 4/26	Due: 4/29	
14	4/30 - 5/6	14: Wrap Up	Due: 5/3	Due: 5/6	Final written report and multimedia presentation due
	Finals Week				