

MUSIC OF CHINA (HUMA 2108)

Spring 2025, Wed & Fri, 1:30-2:50 pm, Rm. 4579

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Office Hours: Tues, 3:30-6 pm
or by appointment

Approach & Objectives: This course will look at various forms of Chinese music, focusing on instrumental genres in particular. The goal is to provide students with a comprehensive knowledge of musical styles, concepts and recurring themes in Chinese music history. Although it is not the specific aim to present the history of Chinese music, the topical organization of the course will follow a chronological framework as attention is drawn to certain issues and prominent characteristics of music and musical life in China from the ancient times to the present.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

- Recognize and define/identify major Chinese musical terms, genres, and styles
- Intelligently explain and write about the historical development, distinct features, performance contexts, and sociocultural issues pertaining to some, if not all, of the Chinese music genres and styles studied in class
- Appreciate some, if not all, of the Chinese music genres and styles studied in class
- Describe and analyze the significance of music within Chinese culture

Readings & Listenings:

- There is no required textbook for this course. However, there will be assigned selected readings for the topic taken up each week. Much of the information needed for understanding this course's content is based on information contained in the reading, listening and music video assignments and in class lectures which will be presented in PowerPoint slide presentations. The readings **are required** and are meant to supplement the lectures and will serve as important source materials for the short, written assignments and the required concert report. The links of most journal article readings and PDF copies of chapter readings from anthologies or monographs are posted in Canvas under "FILES".
- Music listening is a necessary and important component of this course. Music listening examples are embedded in the PowerPoint (PPT) lecture presentations which will be made accessible after each lecture. Since these PPT files tend to be large because of the embedded audio and music video files, the links to them will be emailed to all from my cloud. Students are expected to review the PowerPoint lecture presentations each week.

Canvas Course Website: Make it a point to log on to our Canvas course site regularly every week to access the required readings, audio and video recordings, and read the assignment announcements, postings and discussion threads in preparation for class.

Course Requirements:

1. **Reading & Listening Assignments:** As stated above, there will be reading assignment(s) tied to each topic/module covered. Students are expected to complete all reading and listening assignments **before the class period for which they are assigned.** I reserve the right to give unscheduled pop quizzes based on the lecture, reading and listening assignments if I notice that students are not paying attention or reviewing the material. **Resulting scores of any pop quizzes will go towards “Participation”.**
2. **Short Written Assignments:** There will be 5 short written assignments in which students will answer 1 or 2 questions based on a lecture **or** a reading in 100-150 words. These writing assignments may also take the form of an exercise in *qin* zither notation reading. Students are expected to do and submit any written assignments **by the due date IN CANVAS.** Assignments handed in late will have 0.5 point deducted from the score for each day that they are late. **Late assignments will *not* be accepted beyond 1 month after they are originally due.** Please submit late assignments **in Canvas as an attachment in the “Comments” section of the assignment in question.**
3. **Midterm Exam & Final Exams:** There will be one midterm exam and one final exam. The midterm exam will cover the first half of the course. The final, however, will be comprehensive with emphasis placed on the second half of the course. Both midterm and final exam questions will be based on material from the reading and listening assignments and the lectures. Exam questions will be based on material from the lectures and reading assignments and will be in the form of enumeration, true or false and multiple-choice questions based on the music listening examples related to the topics covered. **MIDTERM EXAM: Mar. 28; FINAL EXAM (TBA).**
4. **Concert Report:** You are required to attend a live performance of traditional Chinese music, in concert or otherwise. Events pertaining to these will be announced and attendance will be checked. **The review must fill up of 4-6 pages of text in Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double-spaced.** Appropriate performance / concert events will be suggested in due course in Canvas.

The review is intended as an exercise which requires you to take the role of an ethnomusicologist reporting on and evaluating a musical event for an audience of non-

expert readers based on what you have learned in this course. It is expected to include the following:

- a) Relevant background information on the music culture
- b) Reporting of the event
- c) Interpretation/analysis and criticism

Specific guidelines for writing the concert review will be available in “FILES” in Canvas.

Grading Breakdown:

Class attendance & active participation	15%
Written assignments	15%
Midterm exam	20%
Concert Report	25%
Final exam	25%

Class Policies:

- Attendance will be taken throughout the semester.
- In the case of any recorded lectures, viewership will be checked.
- You may miss three classes without penalty, but **starting from your fourth absence, 1 point will be deducted from your “Attendance” grade for each absence.**
- NO make-up exam or test will be offered ****unless the absence is due to an emergency, medical or otherwise, and a valid medical certificate signed by a doctor and/or other valid written proof attesting to the emergency is submitted. ****
- **Absolute grading system** will be used to calculate your final letter grade. The University has strictly forbidden faculty from grading on a curve due to grade inflation in the past. **Pay attention to how each aspect of the course is weighted in the grading breakdown.**
- If you are being dishonest in the course, the penalty is an “F” for the COURSE. Cheating and plagiarism are grounds for being given an “F” and failing the course.

Cheating: a) If you look at other students’ papers or materials (ex. notes) during exam or test; b) If you claim credit for another student’s work in group projects.

Plagiarism: If you copy sections and/or ideas from a source without referencing it.
Excerpt from <http://www.ust.hk/vpao/integrity/Links to an external site.>

Sample Readings:

Dujunco, Mercedes M. 2001. “Ensembles: *Xianshiyue*.” From *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Vol. 7: East Asia: China, Japan and Korea*. Ed. By Robert Provine, Yoshiko Tokumaru, and J. Lawrence Witzleben (New York: Routledge), pp. 211-16.

Silverberg, Ann. 2023. *A Contemporary History of the Chinese Zheng*. HK: Hong Kong University

Press (relevant pages TBA).

Thrasher, Alan. 1981. "The Sociology of Chinese Music," *Asian Music* 12(2).

Witzleben, J. Lawrence. 1987. "Jiangnan Sizhu Music Clubs in Shanghai: Context, Concept and Identity." *Ethnomusicology* 31(2).