

HUMA 1100 – MUSIC OF THE WORLD

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology | Division of Humanities

Spring 2026 | 3 Credits

Lectures:

L1: Wed & Fri, 3:00–4:20 PM

L2: Wed & Fri, 4:30–5:50 PM

Location: LTL, CYT Building (354)

Instructor: Dr. YiFan Shao

Email: yfshao@ust.hk

Office Hours: By appointment/TBA

Course Description

This course surveys a range of folk and traditional musics from the non-Western world through an ethnomusicological perspective. It examines how music is created, performed, and experienced within specific cultural contexts. Individual music cultures will be studied in turn, while maintaining a cross-cultural and cross-regional perspective to identify shared themes and processes, as well as the distinctive features that give each tradition its unique character.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- develop an informed appreciation of world music traditions
- demonstrate an understanding of the relationships between music and culture
- comprehend basic ethnomusicological terms and concepts, as well as background information on the cultures studied
- aurally identify key characteristics of the music traditions studied

Course Materials

- Most course materials will be available on CANVAS.
- **Textbook:** Titon, Jeff Todd. *Worlds of Music: An Introduction to the Music of the World's Peoples*. Cengage Learning, 6th Edition. ISBN-13: 978-1305855540.

Assessments:

Intended Learning Outcomes	Measured by
Demonstrate an informed interest in and appreciation of world music.	Attendance of Lectures, participation in class discussion (10%) * PRS will be used
Demonstrate an understanding of the relationships between music and culture in diverse social and historical contexts. Explain basic ethnomusicological terms and concepts, as well as relevant background information of the music cultures studied.	5 Graded Quizzes 10% (Mostly M.C.) Midterm 20% (Mostly M.C.) – April.1 st Final Test 25% (Mostly M.C.) – May.8 th
Identify aurally key characteristics of the music traditions examined in the course.	Discussion Posts 10% Case Study 25% - due April 22 nd and 29 th

Attendance and Participation

Attendance will be taken randomly 13 times throughout the semester.

In the case of any recorded lectures, viewership will be monitored.

No exceptions: Students should not ask the IAs to sign them in if they miss an attendance check.

From the 13 attendance checks, students may miss up to three classes without penalty. Starting from the fourth absence, 1% will be deducted from the final course grade for each additional absence, up to a maximum deduction of 10%.

Students may also be called on at random during class to answer questions related to the assigned readings and/or listening materials, or to otherwise participate in class discussion.

Online Quizzes

Online quizzes are due on the following dates:

- February 20
- March 6
- March 20
- April 10
- April 24

The online quizzes—primarily multiple-choice—are designed to verify completion of the assigned readings and listening materials, and to help students prepare for the Midterm and Final Tests. Students are advised to review the lecture slides as well as the assigned readings when preparing for the quizzes.

Tests and Examinations

- No make-up tests or exams will be offered. If you miss the Midterm, the total score will be transferred to the final test (i.e. the weight of final test will become 45%).
- The Case Study consists of **two components**.
 1. **Written Script**
Students are required to submit a **minimum 1,000-word written script** outlining their case study research by **April 22, 23:59PM**.
 2. **Video Essay**
Based on the written script, students will produce a **video essay** presenting their case study. The video essay is due **April 29, 23:59PM**.
- All materials must be submitted electronically via CANVAS. Written scripts should be uploaded in **PDF format**. Further expectations and guidelines for both components will be explained in class.
- Absolute grading system will be used to calculate your final letter grade.

Academic Honesty:

If you are being dishonest in the course, the penalty is an F for the COURSE.

Cheating includes:

- 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.
- c) Plagiarism: If you copy sections from a source without referencing it.

Excerpt from <http://www.ust.hk/vpao/integrity/>

"If you are discovered cheating (Lo: Plagiarism is considered to be cheating also), however minor the offence, the course grade will appear on your record with an X, to show that the grade resulted from cheating. This X grade stays with your record until graduation. If you cheat again and "earn" another X grade, you will be dismissed from the University. In serious cases, your department may ask the Student Disciplinary Committee to look at the case. The Student Disciplinary Committee can require you to docampus community service; take away your eligibility for a degree with honors, or scholarships and prizes; suspend you from the University, or simply dismiss you right away."

Content

1. Music, Culture, and the Concept of “World Music”

- What is “world music”? What is “traditional music”? What is “music”?
- Music cultures
- Music as an embodiment of a way of life
- “World music” in everyday life

2. Elements of Music

- Music as a technology: systems of organizing sound
- Pitch and scale systems, intervals, temperament
- Rhythm, texture, form, and notation (where applicable)

3. Africa

- Features of traditional West African musics
- From Africa to the Americas and back: Afrojazz, Juju, and Highlife

4. North America: African American Traditions

- Spirituals, Gospel, and Blues
- Jazz

- Hip Hop

5. Europe

- The Balkans: folk music and totalitarianism
- European art music (“classical music”) as an ethnic tradition

6. The Middle East and the Arab World

- Categories and terminology: Middle East, Arab World, Muslim World
- Religion and music in the Arab world
- Poetry and core values of Bedouin culture

7. Latin America

- Traditional Latin American and South American musics

8. South Asia: India

- Aesthetics of Indian music
- Raga and tala: melodic and rhythmic systems of North and South India
- Indian instruments: sitar and tabla; veena and mridangam

9. East and Southeast Asia

- Indonesian gamelan
- Japanese gagaku
- Chinese jingju and Suzhou tanci, among other traditions