

MUSIC & FILM (HUMA 1107)

Fall 2024, Tues & Thurs, 16:30-17:50, Rm. 2306

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 3:30-6 pm
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Approach & Objectives: This course explores the relationship between music and film, delving into the historical development of production and the dramatic function of film scores from mainstream to independent cinema. Focusing on the work of a variety of composers and film directors, the course will examine the collaborative process between these artists to achieve these goals.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

- Develop a deeper appreciation for the collaboration between music and film
- Describe the historical and technical development of the craft of film composition
- Critique the role and use of music in film
- Effectively communicate topics in music and film through writing
- Apply analytical skills in this course to other disciplines

Readings & Viewings: There is one textbook for this course – *Hearing the Movies: Music and Sound in Film History*, 2nd ed. by James Buhler and David Neumeyer (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) – a significant part of which you are required to read. PDFs of the first three chapters and important parts of other chapters are available for you to access on Canvas. However, you are responsible for accessing the other sections which you are required to read by checking the book out from the Course Reserve section of the HKUST library. You may also purchase a 6-month access to an e-copy of the book at Chegg.com).

There are also a few suggested selected readings pertaining to some of the topics covered, but these are not compulsory although reading them would further enhance your understanding of film music and film theory. The readings are tied to and supplement the lectures. They are also intended to serve as important source materials for the occasional short take-home written assignments and the required film critique. Weekly viewing assignments are also a necessary and important component of this course. The required video excerpts to be viewed are embedded in the PowerPoint lecture presentations which will be made available after each lecture. You are responsible for taking notes in class pertaining to these video excerpts. Access to the videos of the films to be critiqued will also be given via Canvas. Much of the information needed for understanding this course's content is based on information in the reading and viewing assignments and in class lectures. It is therefore advisable that you take thorough lecture notes and viewing notes.

Canvas Course Website: To ease administration of the class and facilitate communication, a Canvas website will be set up for this course. Registered students must enroll and be listed as authorized users to access the site. Make it a point to log on to our Canvas course site regularly every week to access the required readings, audio and video recordings as well as read the announcements, postings, and discussion threads in preparation for class. Students are expected to review the PowerPoint lecture presentations posted on Canvas.

Course Requirements:

- **Short written assignments:** There will be 4 short written assignments in which students will answer 1 or 2 questions based on a lecture **or** a reading **or** a video in 100-150 words. These writing assignments may also take the form of parts of a film analysis in preparation for doing the complete film critique which is one of the main requirements of this course. Students are expected to do and submit any written assignments **by the due date**. Assignments handed in late will have 0.5 point deducted from the score for each day that they are late.

I will often give **ungraded** online quizzes **or** short paper quizzes to assess students' knowledge and understanding of the material throughout the semester and to help familiarize students with the different types of questions which they will encounter in the midterm exam. **However, I reserve the right to give graded pop quizzes based on the lectures if I feel students are not paying attention or reviewing the material.** Therefore, make it a point to regularly review the PowerPoint lecture presentation slides, your class lecture notes and viewing notes. **The resulting scores for these graded quizzes will go toward "Participation".**

- **Midterm Exam:** There will be one written midterm exam. It will cover the first half of the course. Exam questions will be based on material from the lectures and viewing assignments and will be in the form of enumeration, true or false and multiple-choice questions based on the video examples included in the PowerPoint lecture presentations. **Review the PowerPoint slides, your class notes and reading & film viewing notes periodically** so that the material does not pile up and you end up cramming on the night before the midterm exam. **MIDTERM EXAM DATE: Tuesday, OCTOBER 15, 2024**
- **Scene Analysis Paper:** In lieu of a final exam, You are also required to view and analyze the relationship of the sound and music tracks of a scene from a film not covered in the course to its visual components and submit a 600-word written essay. Appropriate film scenes for this project will be announced at some point later. Detailed guidelines will be posted under "FILES" on Canvas. **SUBMISSION DATE: Friday, DECEMBER 6, 2024**

Grading Breakdown:

Class attendance & active participation	20%
Short written assignments	20%
Midterm exam	25%
Film Analysis Paper	35%

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.
- Participation in class will also play a factor in your attendance score.
- 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.
- 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/vpaao/integrity/Links to an external site.>

Sample Readings:

- Buhler and Neumeyer, *Hearing the Movies*, 2nd ed. by James Buhler and David Neumeyer. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Kalinak, Kathryn. "The Silent Film Score: A Structural Model" from *Settling the Score: Music and the Classical Hollywood Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).
- Gorbman, Claudia. "Classical Hollywood Practice: The Model of Max Steiner" from *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

WEEKS 1-3: INTRODUCTION – BASIC TERMS & CONCEPTS

1. The Soundtrack and Film Narrative (Sept. 3, 5)

Image Track, Soundtrack and Narrative

Soundtrack Components and Narrative

2. The Musicality of the Soundtrack (Sept. 10, 12)

Music and sound – tempo, rhythm & meter, volume

Timbre – filters and “distortion”, pitch, orchestration, timbre & sound

Texture – density & liveness, monophony, homophony, polyphony, a-melodic,
texture background & foreground

3. Music, Sound, Space and Time (Sept. 17, 20)

Audio-vision

Diegetic/Non-diegetic Sound and Music

Onscreen/Offscreen Sound and Music

Offscreen Sound and Music in Relation to the Diegesis

WEEKS 4-6: MUSIC & THE SOUNDTRACK FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE EARLY '30S

4. The Early Years (1895-1929) (Sept. 24, 26)

Venue-Mediated Sound Practices in Early Cinema

Characteristic Music Practices in the Later Silent Era

5 & 6: The Transition to Sound Film (1926-1932) (Oct. 3, 8, 10)

Issues of Technology and Economics

Production

Mastering the Soundtrack and Elements of Style

The Jazz Singer (1927)

****MIDTERM EXAM: Tuesday, Oct. 15 ****

WEEKS 7-11: MUSIC & THE SOUNDTRACK FROM THE CLASSICAL TO THE POST-CLASSICAL ERA

7 & 8: Music and the Soundtrack in the Classical Studio Era (1932-1950) (Oct. 17, 22, 24)

Issues of Technology and Economics

Production

The Soundtrack in the Studio Era and the Elements of Form and Style

Mildred Pierce (1950)

9 -10: The Stereo Soundtrack & Film Form in the Post-Classical Era (1950-1975) (Oct. 29, 31, Nov. 5, 7)

Issues of High Fidelity and Stereo Sound

Stereo Sound, Magnetic Tape, and Elements of Style

Hollywood Studio Musical Films – *The Sound of Music* and *Grease*
Music in Battle Scenes in Four War Films – *D-Day the Sixth of June*, *The Longest Day*, *Patton* and *A Bridge Too Far*
A Nonconventional Hollywood Film – *Psycho*
A Hollywood Style Japanese Film – *Rashômon*

WEEK 11-13: MUSIC & THE SOUNDTRACK: 1975 TO THE PRESENT

11-12: The New Hollywood, Dolby Stereo & the Emergence of Sound Design (Nov. 12, 14, 19)

Sound in the Multiplex, Dolby Sound and Home Video
Aesthetics and the Stereo Field
Music Video Style and the Rise of Rap
The New Hollywood Films – *Out of Africa*, *When Harry Met Sally*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, and *The Matrix*

13: Music and Film Sound & Form Since 2000 (Nov. 21, 26, 28)

Digital Sound and Digital Sound Formats
Digital Sound and Elements of Style
Mainstream Dramatic Film – *The Hours*
Action Films – *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, *Batman* and *Batman Begins*

****SCENE ANALYSIS PAPER DUE Friday, DECEMBER 6, 2024****