MUS 129: Seminar in Music Theory  
Topic: The Psychology of Music  
Clustered with PSYC 101  
Course Syllabus  
Fall, 2009  
Course Meeting Time: MWF 3:10-4:10 PM  
Location: HSC 150

Professor:  
Dr. Daniel Perttu  
Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Composition  
Music Theory Program Coordinator  
Office: Patterson Hall Studio E  
Office Hours: MW 9:15-10:00; T 1-2 except first T every month; R 10-11, 1-2; and by appointment  
Office Phone: 724-946-7024  
E-mail: perttude@westminster.edu

Course Description:  
This cluster course considers human behavior from both the psychological and musical perspectives. Introductory Psychology provides a background for understanding human behavior in general, and MUS 129: Seminar in Music Theory is an introduction to understanding why music exists, why people listen to music, how people understand music, and how social relationships influence musical tastes. Both are introductory courses without any prerequisites. In particular, MUS 129 covers theories on the evolutionary origins of music, musical development, music and the brain, music and emotion, the role of music in our everyday lives, social influences on musical tastes, composers with psychological disorders, and a brief introduction to music therapy. This is an introductory course in music cognition; no musical talent or experience is necessary.

Course outcomes:

- Students will gain knowledge of how music is perceived, how music is understood, why emotional reactions to music occur and what causes them, and the psychological factors that affect music performance.
- Students will understand how social and cultural contexts influence music cognition, emotional responses to music, and social responses to music performance.
- Students will perceive how individual differences in personality, particularly in the realm of risk tolerance and levels of anxiety, will affect musical preferences.
- Students will develop critical thinking skills by reading about studies that use the scientific method and empirical research methods.
- Students will develop oral communication skills by discussing readings and controversial topics pertaining to the psychology of music in class.
• Students will develop written communication skills by writing about the aesthetic integrity of various pieces of music, and by writing about the origins of their own musical tastes and how their tastes reflect their own personality

Grading:

1. Class Participation (5 percent)
2. Review questions from readings (20 percent)
3. Two midterm exams (15 percent each x 2 = 30 percent total)
4. Paper I (10 percent)
5. Paper II (to be graded by Dr. Perttu and Dr. Gittis; 15 percent)
6. Cumulative Final Exam, but with emphasis on last portion of course (20 percent)

Grading Scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>93-100</th>
<th>73-76</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
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Note on due dates and late work: All written assignments are due at the beginning of the class period, or on Sakai as directed, unless I say otherwise. Late assignments are not accepted, unless the student has missed class due to an excused absence. In addition, homework assignments will not be accepted after class. Likewise, a missed test will count as a zero percent, unless the student has missed due to an excused absence. This course follows the policy regarding exams and excused absences that is outlined in the Westminster College Undergraduate Catalogue.

Textbook:


Attendance Policy: The attendance policy in this course follows the College policy, which is outlined in the Westminster College Undergraduate Catalogue. Students are expected to attend all classes. Research has shown that performing well in a course is associated with high attendance. Students should be aware that “showing up” is highly valued not only in this course and College, but in the workforce and society in general.

I will not accept any assignments from students who have missed class due to an unexcused absence. In addition, I will not re-teach—either in class or during office hours—material missed due to an unexcused absence.

I may excuse absences for the following reasons: course-related field trips; illness that is documented by a doctor’s note (not including the “self-reported sick in room”
Notice from the Student Health Center); death or serious illness in the immediate family as is verified by someone other than the student; appearance in court; co-curricular and extracurricular activities recognized and/or sponsored by the College; or another extraordinary reason as deemed appropriate by me. Students must make arrangements with me regarding the completion of missed work from excused absences.

**E-mail and Computer Use:** I will be e-mailing students in the course critical information and will also be posting important files to network accounts. This course will also use the Sakai Learning Management System (LMS). Students are required to use the Westminster.edu e-mail account and the Sakai LMS. In addition, students are required to check e-mail with reasonable frequency, preferably every day, as important course updates may occur via e-mail rather than in class, in an effort to preserve valuable class time. If e-mail accounts are too full or over quota, I will _not_ resend e-mails; students are required to monitor the quotas on their accounts.

**Academic Honesty:** I use TurnItIn.com to check papers for plagiarism if I suspect any. In addition, the standards in this course conform to the College’s policy, which states: “Academic dishonesty is a profound violation of the expected code of behavior. It can take several forms including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts or experimental results, unauthorized use of or intentional intrusion into another’s computer files and/or programs, intentional damage to a computer system, and unauthorized use of library materials and privileges. Academic dishonesty in any of these forms will not be tolerated. Students who engage in academic dishonesty face penalties such as failure in the course involved or expulsion from the College. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of the College.”

**Student Support Services and Special Accommodations:** Students who have special needs that may affect their academic or personal life should seek resources on campus to assist them, such as Disability Support, the Learning Center, Diversity Services, and Library Instruction. In this course, accommodations consistent with college policy will be made for students who are utilizing appropriate support services. After consulting with the appropriate support service, students are encouraged to speak with me in a confidential appointment about necessary accommodations.

**Note on Cellphone Use:** Cellphones must be silenced during class.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS (subject to change):**

Everyone must read the assigned pages, unless otherwise specified.

**Week 1:** 9/1 – 9/4
The Origins and Functions of Music
- Music and evolution
  - Read pp. 3-11, skip “Music as an object of evolutionary exploration”
- Universals in music processing
Read pp. 14-21, skip “Examples of hierarchical structure in Australian Aboriginal song”

**Week 2:** 9/7 – 9/11
The Origins and Functions of Music (cont.)
- Discussion of implications for aesthetic evaluations
  - Read pp. 151-157
- Music and meaning
  - Read pp. 24-32
- Cross-cultural studies of social and personal functions of music
  - Read pp. 35-42

**Week 3:** 9/14 – 9/18
Musical Development
- Overview of neuroanatomy and neurophysiology relevant to music psychology
- Prenatal development
  - Read pp. 219-226
- Studies of infants
  - Read pp. 229-233

**Week 4:** 9/21 – 9/25
Musical Development (cont.)
- Studies of children and the effects of music instruction on other skills
  - Read pp. 235-241; pp. 244-251
- Music and adolescence

**MIDTERM 1 on Friday, 9/25**

**Week 5:** 9/28 – 10/2
Music Perception, Cognition, and Memory
- Neurobiological foundations of music cognition
- Perception of pitch
  - Read pp. 47-56
- Perception of timbre
  - Read pp. 72-78

**Week 6:** 10/5 – 10/9
Music Perception, Cognition, and Memory (cont.)
- Perception of musical time
  - Read pp. 81-91
- Components of melodic processing
  - Read pp. 93-103
- Music and language
  - Read pp. 208-215

**Week 7:** 10/12 – 10/16
Music Perception, Cognition, and Memory (cont.)
• Music and memory; memorization
  o Read pp. 107-115 (Group A); pp. 352-357 (Group B)
• Music and brain plasticity
  o Read pp. 197-205

PAPER I DUE on 10/14

Week 8: 10/19 – 10/23
No class on 10/19 due to Fall Break
Musical Learning and Intelligence
• Musical potential and practicing
  o Read pp. 255-261 (Group A), pp. 265-271 (Group B)

Week 9: 10/26 – 10/30
Musical Learning and Intelligence (cont.)
• Motivation for musical learning and family support
  o Read pp. 285-292 (Group A)
• Musical performance
  o Read pp. 323-329 (Group B)
• Anxiety and musical performance
  o Read pp. 393-397 (Group B)

Week 10: 11/2 – 11/6
Music and Emotion
• Emotion in music performance
  o Read pp. 377-388 (Group B)
• Emotional responses to music
  o Read pp. 131-139
• Peak experiences in music
  o Read pp. 452-460 (Group A)

Week 11: 11/9 – 11/13
MIDTERM 2 on Monday, 11/9
Musical Disorders and Therapy
• Psychological disorders related to music
  o Read pp. 184-185 and pp. 190-193
• Music Therapy processes and practice
  o Read pp. 503-513 (first) and pp. 493-501

Week 12: 11/16 – 11/20
Musical Disorders and Therapy (cont.)
• Evaluation of effectiveness of music therapy
  o Read pp. 515-522
• Composers with psychological disorders
Week 13: 11/23 – 11/27
Social and Cultural Influences
• Ways in which music facilitates social bonding
• Musical identities

No classes on 11/25 and 11/27 due to Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: 11/30 – 12/4
Social and Cultural Influences (cont.)
• Musical identities
  o Read pp. 462-469; skip “Identities in Jazz”
• Music in community and educational settings
  o Read pp. 471-478 (Group B)
• Music and consumer behavior
  o Read pp. 481-489 (Group A)

Week 15: 12/7 – 12/11
Social and Cultural Influences (cont.)
• The influence of social factors on a listener’s emotional response to music
• The influence of group norms on musical tastes
  o Read pp. 160-167
• The perception of authenticity of composers and musicians

PAPER II DUE on 12/11

Week 16: 12/14 – 12/20
Review
FINAL EXAM: 12/17, 3:00-5:30