

MUS 55A:

Music in Film Hearing American Cinema

Contact Details

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Communication

Please email from your @brandeis account. I will do my best to respond within 48 hours Monday-Friday. Emails received over the weekend will be responded to at the beginning of the week.

Meeting Times/Locations

Classes

This class is held entirely asynchronously. All materials are posted on Moodle

Student Hours

Office hours are available by appointment. Before meeting please email me to let me know when you would like to meet and how I can help you. This way I can prepare accordingly and avoid multiple students trying to meet via zoom at the same time.

Course Description

Learning Goals:

In this course we will explore the many connections between music, film and culture in the United States. We will work to consider how visual media use sound and music to express, reify and construct ideas and ideology. Of particular interest will be how film and sound work together to shape how people in the United States view themselves and each other, especially in terms of race, class, gender and sexuality. Through this course students will:

- Learn about the history of American film music in regard to artistic, cultural and technological developments
- Analyze film music as both a reflection of and a commentary on history
- Develop tools and vocabulary to write about and discuss music and film as well as issues of identity and politics
- Have the opportunity to participate in guided discussions about these topics and to present their work to their peers

Credit Hours:

Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of nine hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for the exams, etc).

Course Requirements**Materials**

Most of our readings will come from *Celluloid Symphonies* by Julie Hubbert, which is available online via the Brandeis Library. Additional reading materials will be posted on LATTE. You will not be required to view full length movies for every assignment, but every film we discuss is available for viewing through the Brandeis Library via this courses LATTE page.

Assignments

Throughout the semester there will be three assignments where students will be asked to view an entire film and respond to it based upon lectures, readings and personal experience. Additionally there will be one In-Class Group Presentation. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be given in class.

Discussion Posts

For most weeks there will be a graded Discussion forum with an open-ended question based on an assigned film. You can respond to the prompts or to something one of your peers writes. This works best when these forums develop into a conversation, but please be respectful at all times.

Final Project

At the end of the semester students will write an 6-8 page essay about a film of their choice. Students are encouraged to draw upon their own interests (including other courses you have taken) to create an interdisciplinary analysis of the use of sound and music in a particular film.

Accommodations

Brandeis seeks to create a learning environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all students, and I want to support you in your learning. Live auto transcription is available for all meetings or classes hosted on Zoom and you can turn it on or off to support your learning. Please [check for Zoom updates](#) to take advantage of this new feature. To learn more, visit the [Zoom Live Transcription webpage](#). For questions, contact help@brandeis.edu

If you think you may require disability accommodations, you will need to work with Student Accessibility Support (SAS) (781-736-3470, access@brandeis.edu). You can find helpful student FAQs and other resources on the [SAS website](#), including guidance on how to know whether you might be eligible for support from SAS. If you already have an accommodation letter from SAS, please provide me with a copy as soon as you can so that I can ensure effective implementation of accommodations for this class. In order to coordinate exam accommodations, ideally you should provide the accommodation letter at least 48 hours before an exam.

Evaluation and Grading

Student performance will be evaluated in six categories shown below. For specifics see **Course Requirements** or ask the professor:

<u>Class Element</u>	<u>Grade Percentage</u>
Assignments	30%
Project Proposal	10%
Discussions	30%
Final Project	30%

Course Plan

This Syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

WEEK 1, 6/2-6

Musicality

Read: Kathryn Kalinak, "Introduction" in *Sound, Dialogue, Music, and Effects*. 1-8.
Michel Chion "Sound on Screen" in *Audio-Vision*. 3-21

Space: Diegetic/Non Diegetic

Read: Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*, 11–30.

WEEK 2, 6/9-13

Time: Transitions

Read: David Neumeyer, "Tools for Analysis and Interpretation," in *Meaning and Interpretation of Music in Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 50- 96.

Submit: Using some of the approaches Neumeyer discusses, do an analysis of a scene from one of your favorite movies. (Please choose a scene that is available on YouTube, Vimeo, etc.)

1895-1929: Early Years

Read: James Wierzbicki, Ch. 1: "The Silent Screen: 1894-1927" from *Sound, Dialogue, Music, and Effects*. 15-36.

Celluloid Symphonies:

"Incidental Music for Edison Pictures" (1909) p. 39-41

Louis Reeves Harrison, "Jackass Music" (1911) p. 42-44

Eugene A. Ahren, What and How to Play for Pictures (1913) p.45-52

Watch: Edison Studios *Frankenstein* (1910) and Edison Studios *The Land Beyond the Sunset* (1912)

WEEK 3, 6/16-20

1895-1929: Later Silents

Read: Martin Miller Marks, "Erik Satie's Score for Entr'acte"

Watch: *Entr'acte* (1924)

1926-1932: Transition to Sound

Read: Excerpts from *Celluloid Symphonies*:

“New Musical Marvels in the Movies” (1926)

“Musicians to Fight Sound-Film Devices” (1928)

“Present Day Musical Films and How They Are Possible” (1931)

Watch: *The Jazz Singer* (1927)

WEEK 4, 6/23-27**1926-1932: Transition to Sound Cont.**

Read: Oscar Micheaux in *Encyclopedia of African American History 1896 to the Present*
J. Green, “The Exile (1931)” from *With a Crooked Stick*.

Watch: *The Exile* (1931)

“The Golden Age”

Read: Kalinak, Kathryn. “Classical Hollywood” in *Sound, Dialogue, Music, and Effects* 37-58

Max Steiner, “Scoring the Film” (1937) in *Celluloid Symphonies*

Claudia Gorbman, “Classical Hollywood Practice: The Model of Max Steiner” in *Unheard Melodies*

Watch : *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938)

Submit: As you watch *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, think about the seven principles Gorbman describes in her chapter. Identify at least one example of each principle throughout the film.

WEEK 5, 6/30-7/4**Music and Animation**

Read: Prendergast, Roy. “Music in the Cartoon and Experimental Animated Film” in *Film Music: A Neglected Art*. 180-212

Watch: *Skeleton Dance* (1929)

Music and Animation Cont.

Read: Goldmark, Daniel. Ch. 5 “What’s Opera, Doc?”

Watch: *Bugs Bunny Rides Again* (1947) and *What’s Opera Doc?* (1957)

WEEK 6, 7/7-11**3/17 – The Golden Age Cont.**

Read: *Celluloid Symphonies*, “Music in the Films” (1941)

Copland. Aaron. “Film Music” in *What to Listen for in Music*.

Rózsa, Miklós. “Quo vadis” (1951), in *The Hollywood Film Music Reader*. 165-71

Watch: *Of Mice and Men* (1939)

Quo Vadis (1951)

WEEK 7, 7/14-18**Music and Film Form: Branching Out**

Read: "Vertigo: The Music of Longing and Loss" in Jack Sullivan, *Hitchcock's Music* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006)
Bernard Herrmann, "A Lecture on Film Music," in *The Hollywood Film Music Reader*, ed. Mervyn Cooke

Watch: *Vertigo* (1958)

Read: McQuiston, Kate "The Stanley Kubrick Experience: Nuclear Bombs, Disorientation, and You" in *Music, Sound, and Filmmakers: Sonic Style in Cinema*.

Screen: *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968)

WEEK 8, 7/21-25**Jazz, Rock, Pop Scores**

Read: *Celluloid Symphonies* Excerpts:
"The Recession Soundtrack: From Albums to Auteurs, Songs to Serialism (1960-1977)
Arthur Knight, "Movie Music Goes on Record" (1952)
Elmer Bernstein, "The Man with the Golden Arm" (1956)
Alan Freed, "One Thing's for Sure, R 'n' R is Boffo B.O." (1958)
Gene Lees, "The New Sounds on the Soundtrack" (1967)
David Raksin, "Whatever Became of Movie Music?" (1974)

Submit: Jazz, Rock, and Pop Scores presentation. Detailed instructions available on Moodle

WEEK 9, 7/28-8/1**New Hollywood**

Read: "The Shark in the Music," *Music Analysis* 29 (2010): 306-33

Watch: *Jaws* (1975)

New Hollywood Cont.

Read: James Buhler, "Star Wars, Music, and Myth," *Music and Cinema*. 33–57.
John Williams and Star Wars 1977 Interview in *The Hollywood Film Music Reader*

Watch: *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980)

WEEK 10, 8/4-8**The End of the 20th Century**

Read: Collins, Austin "20 Years After Its Release, Spike Lee's Basketball..." in *Vanity Fair*
Gabbard, Krin "Race and Reappropriation: Spike Lee Meets Aaron Copland" in *American Music*.

Watch: *He Got Game* (1998)

Music and Film Sound Since 2000

Read: "Hollywood Sound" in *Celluloid Symphonies*

"The Postmodern Soundtrack: Film Music in the Video and Digital Age(1978- Present)" in *Celluloid Symphonies*

Important Policies and Resources

Academic Integrity

Every member of the University community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. A student shall not submit work that is falsified or is not the result of the student's own effort. Infringement of academic integrity by a student subjects that student to serious penalties, which may include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension from the University or other sanctions. Please consult [Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities](#) for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work via TurnItIn.com or similar software to verify originality. A student who is in doubt regarding standards of academic integrity as they apply to a specific course or assignment should consult the faculty member responsible for that course or assignment before submitting the work. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Department of Student Rights and Community Standards. Citation and research assistance can be found at [Brandeis Library Guides - Citing Sources](#).

Classroom Health and Safety

- Register for the [Brandeis Emergency Notification System](#). Students who receive an emergency notification while attending class should notify their instructor immediately. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, call 911. As a precaution, review [this active shooter information sheet](#).
- Brandeis provides [this shuttle service](#) for traveling across campus or to downtown Waltham, Cambridge and Boston.
- On the Brandeis campus, all students, faculty, staff and guests are required to observe the university's policies on physical distancing and mask-wearing to support the health and safety of all classroom participants. Review up to date [COVID-related health and safety policies](#) regularly.

Course Materials/Books/Apps/Equipment

If you are having difficulty purchasing course materials, please make an appointment with your Student Financial Services or Academic Services advisor to discuss possible funding options, including vouchers for purchases made at the Brandeis Bookstore.

Moodle

[Moodle](#) is the Brandeis learning management system. Login using your UNET ID and password. For Moodle help, contact Library@brandeis.edu.

Library

[The Brandeis Library](#) collections and staff offer resources and services to support Brandeis students, faculty and staff. Librarians and Specialists from Research & Instructional Services, Public Services, Archives & Special Collections, Sound & Image Media Studios, MakerLab, AutomationLab, and Digital Scholarship Lab are available to help you through consultations and workshops.

Privacy

To protect your privacy in any case where this course involves online student work outside of Brandeis password-protected spaces, you may choose to use a pseudonym/alias. You must share the pseudonym/alias with me and any teaching assistants as needed. Alternatively, with prior consultation, you may submit such work directly to me.

Student Support

Brandeis University is committed to supporting all our students so they can thrive. If a student, faculty, or staff member wants to learn more about support resources, the [Support at Brandeis](#) webpage offers a comprehensive list that includes these staff colleagues you can consult, along with other support resources:

- The [Care Team](#)
- [Academic Services](#) (undergraduate)
- [Graduate Student Affairs](#)
- Directors of Graduate Studies in each department, School of Arts & Sciences
- Program Administrators for the Heller School and International Business School
- [University Ombuds](#)
- [Office of Equal Opportunity](#).