

**Department:** Music

**Course No:** 190

**Credits:** 3

**Title:** Introduction to Music in World Culture

**Contact:** Glen Stanley

**Content Area:** CA1-Arts and Humanities

**Diversity:** CA4 International

**Catalog Copy:** MUSI 190 Non-Western Music Either Semester. Three credits. Intended primarily for students who are not music majors. Not open for credit to students who have passed MUSI 292W. Folk, popular, and classical musics of selected non-Western cultures, with an emphasis on the distinctive characteristics of each culture.

**Course Information:** a. Music, as we know it today, is no longer confined by conventional geopolitical boundaries. Increasingly, individual and unique localities support a range of musics of different styles and histories. Nowhere are diverse musical traditions more prominently represented in public performance and maintained in private practice than right here in the United States. Centuries of immigration and a rapidly growing multi-ethnic population have resulted in multiple musical “soundscapes,” some of which have sustained and transformed traditions that no longer exist in their original homelands. Whole others have given rise to newer styles.

This course consists of two streams, one exploring the musical traditions both in the United States and elsewhere, the other designed to develop students’ ability to research and write. Students will be introduced to musical traditions that have resulted from the transformations cited earlier. They will explore their transmission at home in North America and other geopolitical and ethno-linguistic areas of the world. During the course of this semester, we will explore how these traditions are shaped by and how they give shape to the cultural settings in which they are performed. Since different musical styles have different structures and meanings, students will be introduced to new way of listening to these musics. Learning to listen means not just learning to hear characteristics of sound, but also learning to interpret these characteristics in a manner congruent with the sensibilities of those who transmit and perform the music.

b. The course is organized around familiar, cultural themes and scenes; in most instructional units, there will be a major case study from a musical tradition located in the United States—a tradition that has a historical or present-day connection somewhere outside of the United States. Each topic will be framed by a general discussion and illustrated by brief examples from traditions that complement and contrast with the major case study. This course is based primarily on class discussion, with background lectures for each unit. All reading should be completed before class, and participation in class discussion is expected of everyone.

c. From a disciplinary standpoint, this course serves as an introduction to the study of music in its cultural context. It draws specifically on a set of principles basic to the field of study known as ethnomusicology, a discipline that draws on and interacts with several other fields, including historical musicology, anthropology, sociology, and the relatively young field of cultural studies. From an interdisciplinary standpoint, a principal aim of this course is to introduce students to ways of thinking, methods of research and documentation, and forms of writing. Our purpose is to explore music as a form of human expression and as a meaningful aspect of daily life.

d. Course goals:

- To introduce students to the theories and methods used to study world music, as they have been drawn from musicology, anthropology, folklore, sociology and psychology.
- To aid students in the developing an awareness of several characteristics of most music traditions, including western music: (a) their pluralistic nature, (b) their value systems, (c) their logical relationships, and (d) their grammar, structure, and, if they exist, their notation systems. Within each individual context, students will also examine the relationship of music to other arts and to religion, philosophy, and human values.
- To help students make informed decisions as performers, listeners, composers, consumers, patrons, taxpayers, and voters by exposing them to the political, social, and economic factors that affect the arts disciplines in their own country and the rest of the world.
- To assist students, by means of comparative study, in developing their ability to perceive links and connections that synthesize and extrapolate information gained from different disciplines and specialties.

**Meets Goals of Gen Ed:** 1. Students become articulate through class discussion, oral reports and presentations, and written papers.

2. Students acquire intellectual breadth and versatility by developing a broader understanding of the cultural and social context for the expressive arts. Students come to understand that music, like all arts, cannot be transmitted or have meaning without associations between people.

3. Acquiring critical judgment: In addition to class discussion of readings and of oral reports, students will recognize that the world is full of variety that can be as different as men are from women, societies from societies, the cold of the north from the warmth of the tropics. Yet, all are tied together by a common humanity that shares a capacity for creation, imagination, and expression.

4. Students acquire moral sensitivity through a discussion and interrogation of musical processes from social, economic, and cultural interactions. Such interactions traverse a wider terrain than is immediately occupied by music makers. Additionally, students acquire moral sensitivity by recognizing that relationships between groups of human beings are more than “sound” and historical fact.

5. Acquiring awareness of their era and society: The nature of cultural contact in the globalization process is to a large extent mediated. That is, music can be experienced by people all over the world without their ever having experienced the people who created or performed the music. In a broad sense, media that not only transmits the sound of the composer to the recording studio, the living room, to head phones, television, and MP3 players, but it also conditions the mode of existence of sound itself. In a very real way our musical life depends on various types of mediation. So it is entirely appropriate to ask, what do we experience in our “media-saturated”

world? Is it different from what one experienced in pre-industrial society? How have media such as the recording and entertainment industry, technology, journalism, advertisement, shaped the space/place in today's world for the others and us?

6. Students acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience by understanding creative and expressive acts in their own context and on their own terms, thus avoiding the imposition of their own aesthetic or social standards.

7. Students continue to acquire and use knowledge by viewing current and future issues related to the expressive arts within a larger historical and social context.

**CA1 Criteria:** Music is one part of a complex cultural whole which includes knowledge, belief, the arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by member of a group or society. It is also an art form and aesthetic mode of inquiry like dance, painting, sculpture, pottery, cloth, storytelling, verse, prose, drama, and comedy. As such, music manifests the human creativity through which people express themselves.

Investigations and historical/critical analyses of human experiences:

Students will be introduced to a concept that may be relatively new to them. Musical relationships are correlates that reflect social relationships; both may be generated by cognitive process which are used in other fields of human behavior in the analysis of the human experience. Although the secret of tonal relationships can be found in the notes, the notes are more than patterns of sound. They are sonic units that are signs and symbols of the interaction of human beings and the workings of human minds. As such, these notes cannot be adequately understood unless they are subjected to context-sensitive cultural analysis.

Comprehension and appreciation of written graphic and/or performance arts forms:

We learn to comprehend and appreciate creative and expressive acts in a variety of ways. In the case of music, we hear it when we eat and try to talk in restaurants; we hear before, during and between films in theaters; we hear in it in airports; we listen to it all day on radio and television, and in church and temple where it punctuates various levels of ritual. And yet, "our" society claims that only a few of the divinely selected are musical, but, at the same time, it behaves as if everyone, music maker and non-music maker alike, possesses the capacity to listen to, distinguish, and make "value" decisions about the patterns they hear.

Notwithstanding this seemingly contradictory dichotomy and the important contributions of written notation, students will be helped to understand that music, preserved through notation, survives in part because it can be handed down by a hereditary elite without a need for listeners. This view will be contrasted with another that considers social situations in musical traditions that have no notation. These are traditions where the creation and performance of music are generated by the human capacity to discover patterns of sounds and to identify them and their social function on subsequent occasions.

3. Creation or "recreation" of artistic works culminating in individual or group publication, production, supplemented by written oral analysis/criticism.

If people could hear any music they wanted to at any time, they would probably become astute judges of what works musically and what doesn't. However, contemporary digital technology in

the world of our students also enables them to turn what they hear in their heads, on their computers, and through their MP3 players into recordings, sometimes of high quality, without waiting for other humans or for history to catch up. This technology also changes the importance of place, since the traditional venues for creative production no longer require the sanction of others. All this has often led to disenfranchisement and systematic exclusion. Consideration of these are important issues should figure prominently in any discussion wri

**CA4 Criteria:** Music 292W examines music as a cultural tradition. Cultural traditions include customs and opinions, developed over generations, about proper and improper behavior. Music 292W asks the following questions: (1) How do we, how do they do things? (2) How do we, how do they interpret the world? (3) In a broad sense, how do we, how do they explain social and cultural similarities and differences through the creative and expressive arts?

Specific Criteria:

1. The course emphasizes that there are varieties of human experiences, perceptions, thoughts, values, and/or modes of creativity. Without biological processes of aural perception, and without cultural agreement among at least some human beings on what is perceived, there can be neither music nor musical communication. This course places great importance on creative listening. Listening is a skill that is all too often ignored in discussions of music and musical ability, even though it is as fundamental to music as it is to language. 2. The course emphasizes that interpretative systems and/or social structures are cultural creations.

The variety of interpretive systems for creative and expressive acts among many groups are systematically modified over time. For example, contrasting the written theoretical system of notation, rhythm and dance of northern India with the aural/oral tactile pedagogical system of the Yoruba of Southwest Nigeria and Cuba, provides excellent examples of both continuity and change over time. And yet, each in its own venue is equally effective in its approach to making music in a social context.

**Role of Grad Students:** Four graduate assistants will conduct discussion sections; they will assist in the composition and scoring of quizzes and tests and in addressing student questions and concerns. Periodically, discussion sessions will be observed and critiqued, by the instructor of record. In addition to availing themselves of the training opportunities offered by units such as the Institute for Teaching and Learning, all graduate assistants will be required to attend all lectures by the instructor of record.