

**Living a Musical Life**

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11 am–12:15 pm

**Instructor**

Dr. Eduardo Sato

Student Hours: Thursday 3–4 pm and by appointment

**Course Description**

In this course, we will embrace a wide variety of music and sounds while learning how they are fundamental parts in shaping our lives. Students can expect to develop listening skills and vocabulary to analyze a broad range of musics and sounds. The course offers an interdisciplinary perspective to several concepts that unfold in a variety of musics and sounds. No prior musical training required to succeed.

**Learning Goals**

In this course, students will:

1. Develop listening skills and learn vocabulary to describe a variety of sounds and musics.
2. Reconsider the role of music and sounds, how people listen and create music, and how these practices connect with a variety of social practices.
3. Investigate unfamiliar sounds and music, and thereby explore a diversity of sources.
4. Analyze the role of music in the formation of identity, contestation of identity, and other sociopolitical contexts.

**Course Materials**

Students are not required to purchase any texts for this course. I recommend students to buy a package of index cards that will be used for attendance and communication. All reading and listening materials will be hosted on the course Canvas site or distributed in physical format.

**Our classroom is a laptop free environment**

Please take all your notes by hand. You are welcome to contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office (see below) or approach Eduardo, if your learning needs technological devices in the classroom setting. Whenever laptops and other electronic devices will be required, you will be informed in advance.

## Housekeeping

*On names:* Please call me Eduardo, I am an Assistant Professor of Musicology and Ethnomusicology. Let me know in writing or in person, how would you like to be called.

*Classroom environment and community:* Classes will mix lectures, discussion and activities, providing students opportunities to develop skills in writing, speaking, and building community.

*Attendance and Participation:* Attendance is mandatory for this class. You may miss up to two unexcused classes without penalty. Participation is crucial for the formation of a learning community and may have different forms. Participation acts include, but are not limited to, speaking in discussions in class, coming prepared for classes, and maintaining written or visual communication with the instructor.

*Preparation:* You are expected to arrive to class prepared to actively participate. This means having engaged with listening and reading materials, bringing questions for discussion, and being ready to listen to others in the classroom.

*Communication:* Please email me with questions, comments, or if you would like to meet. I will respond to logistical and administrative questions via email but would rather discuss other types of questions through conversation in class or office hours.

## Assessment

The final grade will be calculated as follow:

Sound Map 1	15%
Sound Map 2	15%
Concert Portrait	10%
Listening Journal	20%
Research Project and Presentation	20%
Final Reflection	10%
Attendance and Participation	10%

## Assignments

More instructions for every assignment will be provided in class.

### *Sound Maps*

In groups, you will create two Sound Maps of the campus in two different moments. The sound map will have two components: a multimedia part that includes a visual and audio representations of a specific location, and a narrative portion that describes in words the place and its sounds.

*Concert Portrait*

Attendance to a live music performance is required for completing this assignment. During the semester I will circulate a list of approved concerts that require no permission. In case a student wants to attend a concert that is not part of the list, they will consult Eduardo. The Concert Portrait is a written narrative about a musical performance in which students will apply concepts discussed in class.

*Listening Journal*

The listening journal is a semester long practice that will collect your thoughts as a listener. For each week, you will write two entries related to music or sounds that you engaged. These entries can be as short as you want, but they should reflect some kind reflection of what you have been listening.

*Research Project and Presentation*

By the final weeks of the semester, you will develop a short research project that will culminate in a short presentation in class. You will choose a sound (or musical) object and present an analysis in class. Your analysis may engage with different methodological approaches from your own choice, which will be defined in discussion with Eduardo.

*Final Reflection*

In lieu of a final exam, you will submit a written final reflection in which you will critically assess your learning throughout the semester. Your reflection will connect topics discussed in class with your listening practices and engagement in assignments.

*Participation and Attendance*

As stated above, participation in classes is an important component of our learning community. You may participate in a variety of forms and attending classes and engaging with materials and assignments are a good way to demonstrate it. Attendance is mandatory, but you are allowed to have two unexcused absences. Beyond that you will lose 1% of the final grade for each unexcused absence. Excused absences must be communicated before the class meets.

## **SCHEDULE**

(Note: there are different actions requested for different types of sources in the schedule. Reading, Watching, Listening and other action verbs refer to preparation required prior to each class. Sources are ideas that will be discussed in class and might be consulted by students who want to learn more about the subject)

## **INTRODUCTION**

### Week 1

#### **Introductions, Expectations, and Goals**

- Soundwalk and Introduction
- Sources:
  - Frauke Behrendt, "Soundwalking" from *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies*, 2018

#### **Music in Everyday Life**

- Instructions: Listening Journal and Sound Map
- Reading:
  - Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, 2000, excerpt
- Listening:
  - Brian Eno, "Ambient 1: Music for Airports" (1978)
  - Georges Bizet, Habanera from *Carmen* (1875)
  - Lofi Girl (2017 to the present)

## **CONCEPTS IN MUSIC AND SOUND**

### Week 2

#### **Vibrations, Pitches, and Sound Waves**

- Instructions: Concert Portrait and Sound Map Project
- Listening:
  - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, 12 Variations "Ah, vous dirai-je, maman" (1761)
  - Arnold Schoenberg, Suite for Piano (1921)
  - Tim Follin, "Gauntlet III" (Amiga) Soundtrack (1991)

#### **Scales and Harmony**

- Instructions: Sound Map Groups
- Reading / Watching:
  - Two Minute Music Theory: Intro to the Harmonic Series
- Listening:
  - Guido D'Arezzo, "Ut queant laxis," (11th century)
  - I Nyoman Senen, "Manuk Anguci" (19th century)

Week 3**Sound, Silence, and Noise**

- Reading:
  - David P. Brown, "Noise Orders: Jazz, Improvisation, and Architecture" (University of Minnesota Press, 2001), excerpt.
- Listening:
  - John Cage, *4'33"* (1952)
  - Lou Reed, *Metal Machine Music* (1975)
- Source:
  - David Novak, "Noise" in *Keywords in Sound* (Duke University Press, 2015), 125–138.

**Time, Rhythm, and Syncopation**

- Reading/engaging:
  - Tempo and Genre, Learning Music Blog (Ableton)
  - Fundamentals of Music for Electronic Music, Red Means Recording (YouTube)
- Listening:
  - Leonard Bernstein, "America" from *West Side Story* (1957, 2021 version)
  - John Cage, *As Slow as Possible* (1987)
  - MC Kevin o Chris, *Eu vou pro baile da gaiola* (2021)
- Source:
  - Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Harvard University Press, 1993)

Week 4**Genre, Music Taste, and Aesthetics**

- Genre discussion and creation of collective playlist
- Listening:
  - Miles Davis, *Sketches of Spain* (1960)
- Sources:
  - Nick Prior, "Bourdieu and the Sociology of Music Consumption: A Critical Assessment of Recent Developments," *Sociology Compass* 7/3 (2013): 181-193
  - Richard A. Peterson and Roger M. Kern, "Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore," *American Sociological Review* , 61/5 (1996): 900-907.

**Musical Transmission and Notation** (Visit to Special Collections in the Library)

- Listening / Reading / Engaging (in case a library visit is not possible):
  - Hurrian Hymn, c. 1400 B.C.
  - Hildegard von Bingen, *Ordo Virtutum*, c. 1150
  - Cantigas de Santa Maria, 13th century
  - Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Refrain* (1959)
  - Wadada Leo Smith, *Four Symphonies* (2016)

## **SOUNDING, RESONATING, AND LISTENING**

### Week 5

#### **Listening, Recording, and Writing**

- Reading:
  - Mark Katz, *Capturing Sounds* (2010), ch. 1
- Listening / Watching:
  - Rob Scallon, Recording on 100 Year-Old Equipment (You Tube)

#### **Spaces**

- Sound Map Presentations
- Reading:
  - Tim Blanning, *The Triumph of Music* (Harvard University Press, 2008), Ch. 3: Places and Spaces.

### **Campus Sound Map 1 due**

### Week 6

#### **Musical Instruments I: Organology.**

- Reading / Engaging:
  - Musical Instrument Museum Online: <https://mimo-international.com/MIMO/>
- Listening:
  - Open Reel Ensemble, "Magnetic Phunk" (2021)
  - Yann Tiersen, "La Noyee" (1997)
  - Radiohead, "How to Disappear Completely" (2000)
  - Piotr I. Tchaikovsky, "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" from *The Nutcracker* (1871)
  - John Cage, "Sonata V" from Sonatas and Interludes (1948)

#### **Musical Instruments II: The Social Life of Musical Instruments**

- Reading / Watching:
  - Paul Huta, "Black Musicians' Quest to Return the Banjo to Its African Roots," *Smithsonian Folklife Magazine*, November 2020
  - Rhiannon Giddens, "Uncovering the History of Banjo"
- Listening:
  - The HU, "Yuve, Yuve, Yu"
  - Clara Rockmore, "The Swan"
- Sources:
  - Clara Latham, "Instrument or Appliance? The RCA Theremin, Gender, Labor, and Domesticity," *Journal of Musicology* 39/1 (2022): 35-65.
  - Eliot Bates, "The Social Life of Musical Instruments," *Ethnomusicology* 56/3 (2012): 363-395.

Week 7**Voices and Embodiment**

- Reading:
  - Bonnie Gordon, “The Castrato: Some Basics” from *Voice Machines: The Castrato, the Cat Piano, and Other Strange Sounds* (Chicago University Press, 2023)
  - Nina Eidsheim, “Introduction: The Acousmatic Question, Who is This?” from *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music* (Duke University Press, 2019), excerpt
- Listening:
  - G. F. Handel, “Ombra ma fui” from *Serse* (1738)
  - Prince, “If I Was Your Girlfriend” (1987)
  - Hatsune Miku, “Last Night, Good Night” (2008)

**Spaces, Soundscapes, and Mediascapes** (Potential Guided Visit to a Concert Hall or Immersive Audio Facility)

- Reading:
  - Ryan Blakeley, ““Welcome to the Sound Wellness Revolution”: Endel’s AI-Generated Soundscapes and the Commodification of Passive Listening,” *Musicology Now*, 18 January 2024.
- Sources:
  - Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900–1933* (MIT Press, 2002), selection
  - Steven Feld, “Voices of the Rainforest” (1991 2019)

Week 8**Acoustic and Digital Sources**

- Reading:
  - Eric Harvey, Pitchfork, Interview with Jonathan Sterne, 9 August 2012.
- Listening / Watching:
  - Alvin Lucier, “I Am Sitting in a Room” (1969)
  - Marques Brownlee, “This Is What Happens When You Re-Upload a YouTube Video 1000 Times!” (2019)
- Source:
  - Jonathan Sterne, *MP3: The Meaning of a Format* (Duke University Press, 2012), Ch. 1 Format Theory.

**Formats and Streaming**

- Reading:
  - “Behind the Music Recommendation Curtain: *Computing Taste* with Nick Seaver,” *Musicology Now*, 22 June 2023.

- Sources:
  - Maria Eriksson, Rasmus Fleischer, Anna Johansson, Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau, *Spotify Teardown: Inside the Black Box of Streaming Music* (MIT Press, 2019), selection
  - Tom Johnson, "Chance the Rapper, Spotify, and Musical Categorization in the 2010s," *American Music* 38/2 (2020), 176-196.

### **Concert Portrait Due**

#### Week 9

#### **Bioacoustics and Environmental Futures**

- Readings:
  - Rachel Mundy, "Why Listen to Animals? *Musicology Now*, 17 October 2018.
  - "It Took a Musician's Ear to Decode the Complex Song In Whale Calls," NPR, 6 August 2015.
- Listening:
  - Olivier Messiaen, *Catalogue d'oiseaux* (1956-1958)

#### **Disability Studies and Ways of Sounding**

- Reading and Listening:
  - "Disability as Diversity: A Conversation with Musician Gaelynn Lea," NEA Blog, 28 October 2021.
  - Gaelynn Lea, "I Wait" (2016)
- Sources:
  - Blake Howe, Stephanie Jensen-Moulton, Neil Lerner, Joseph Straus, "Introduction: Disability Studies in Music, Music in Disability Studies," in *Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 1-12.
  - Jennifer Iverson, "Mechanized Bodies: Technology and Supplements in Björk's Electronica," in *Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 155-175.

### **MUSIC AND SOCIAL LIFE**

#### Week 10

#### **Musicking, Music, and Identity**

- Reading:
  - Christopher Small, "Prelude: Music and Musicking," from *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*
- Watching:
  - Friday Night Jamboree, Floyd Country Store, Floyd VA (YouTube)
  - Ornette Coleman, *Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation* (1961)
  - BTS, "Mikrokosmos," *Speak Yourself in Seoul* (2021)



**Music, Politics, and Social Change**

- Reading:
  - B.G. Rhule, “On the Recording Registry: ‘A Change is Gonna Come (1964),” Library of Congress Blog
- Listening:
  - The Beatles, “Revolution,” “Revolution 1,” “Revolution 9” (1968)
  - Bob Dylan, “Blowing in the Wind” (1963)
  - Sam Cooke, “A Change is Gonna Come” (1964)

Week 11**Race and Blackness**

- Listening:
  - Paul Robeson, “Ol’ Man River” (1936)
  - Aretha Franklin, “Respect” (1967)
  - Nina Simone, “I Wish I Knew How to Be Free” (1967)
- Watching:
  - Sun Ra, “Space is The Place” (1972)

**Gender and Womanhood**

- Listening:
  - Yoko Ono, “Sisters, O Sisters” (1972)
  - Bikini Kill, “Rebel Girl” (1993)
  - Mitski, “Your Best American Girl” (2016)
  - Janelle Monáe, “Pynk” (2018)
- Source:
  - Jessica A. Holmes, “Billie Eilish and the Feminist Aesthetic of Depression: White Femininity, Generation Z, and Whisper Singing,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 76/3 (2023): 785–829.

**Campus Sound Map 2 Due**Week 12**Expressing Dissent: What is a Protest Song?**

- Reading:
  - *The Chile Reader* (Duke University Press, 2013), excerpt.
- Listening:
  - Sergio Ortega, “El pueblo unido jamás será vencido” (1970)
  - Frederic Rzewski, “The People United Will Never Be Defeated!” (1975)
  - Big Sean (ft. Kendrick Lamar and Jay Electronica), “Control” (2013)

**Expressing Support: Fandom in Popular Music**

- Reading (choose one):
  - Paula Harper, "BEYONCÉ: Viral Techniques and the Visual Album," *Popular Music and Society* 42/1 (2019): 61-81.
  - Nate Sloan, "Taylor Swift and the Work of Songwriting," *Contemporary Music Review* 40/1 (2021): 11-26.
  - Patty Ahn, Michelle Cho, Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez, Rani Neutill, Mimi Thi Nguyen, Yutian Wong, "Intro: On Bangtan Remixed: A Critical BTS Reader" (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2024), 1-27.

### **Listening Journal Due**

Week 13

**Student Presentations**

### **Research Report and Final Reflection Due**