

Introduction to Music Cognition

MUSICCOG 2A03
Fall (Term 1) 2008

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Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00-3:00 pm, Thursday 4:00-5:00 pm,
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Meeting Time/Place: Wednesday 9:30-11:20 pm, Thursday 10:30-11:20 in CNH 102

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Course Description

Introduction to Music Cognition presents an overview of the physical basis and cognitive processing of music. The course starts with a description of the basic acoustic features of musical sound, and then moves onto higher-level topics related to the processing of melody, rhythm, texture, and form in music. The course also discusses music's important relationships with dance and with language.

A second component of the course is a "Mini-Course in World Musics" – taking place during the Thursday sessions – that presents a comparative analysis of the major musical styles of the world. The goal of these sessions is not only to familiarize students with the principal music families of the world but to teach them how to think about music using a comparative approach.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, you should (a) understand the nature of sound waves, their propagation and their interactions during the generation of music; (b) have a general understanding of how to read waveforms and spectra; (c) be familiar with the basic components of melodic and rhythmic systems; (d) understand music's relationships with dance and language; and (e) be familiar with the stylistic features of the world's major musical styles.

NOTE: Students in this course are not expected to be able to read musical notation (even though it will be contained in the lecture slides and the textbook), nor will they ever be given sound examples to analyze as part of exam questions. So, students who are not able to "hear" the musical features being exemplified in lectures need not worry. This will not be used against them.

Textbooks

REQUIRED:

Howard and Angus's *Psychoacoustics and Acoustics*, 3rd Edition (2006). Focal Press.

OPTIONAL:

Karolyi's *Traditional African and Oriental Music* (1998). Penguin.

WebCT

This course uses WebCT to post the course outline, lecture slideshows, and other materials. Please go to webct.mcmaster.ca in order to find out how to log onto the course's home page.

Course Evaluation

Exams

There will be two **exams**. *Exam 2 will constitute one part of the final exam*. In addition, there will be a separate **comprehensive final** that will constitute the second part of the final exam and that will cover material from the entire course. The exams will consist of true-false questions, fill-in questions, and short-answer questions. The comprehensive final will consist of fill-in questions only.

Exams will cover the textbook, readings, and handouts. Lecture material that does not pertain to these three sources will not be tested. In addition to concepts, you will be tested on *graphical* material, such as spectra, waveforms, etc.

NOTE: The world-music part of the course will be tested on these exams. All the material you will need to know from these lectures will be contained on two summary slides at the end of each lecture.

Term Paper

You will be asked to write a 5-page (double-spaced) term paper on a topic of your choice in music psychology. A list of possible topics is presented on WebCT. The report will count for 20% of the final grade, and must be turned in by Wednesday, November 19. The topic for the paper must be submitted to the TA by week 9 (October 30).

The report should be *typed* double-spaced. Don't forget to put your name and student ID on any material submitted for course credit.

Problem Set

A problem set containing questions about acoustics and psychoacoustics will be distributed during week 3 and will be due on Wednesday October 22. It will count for 10% of the semester grade. Don't forget to put your name and student ID on any material submitted for course credit.

Contribution of Assessments to the Final Grade

2 exams (each one 25% of the grade)	50% of the grade
Comprehensive final	20% of the grade
Term paper	20% of the grade
Problem set	10% of the grade

McMaster University Grading Scale

A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	0-49

NOTE: The grading scale is fixed. There will be no curving of grades.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. The academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Weekly Lecture Schedule

Week	Wednesday Lecture Topic	Howard & Angus	Thursday "World Music" Session	Karolyi (optional)
1 9/4	(a) course overview; the "standard" model of music			
2 9/10-11	(a) Is music an art or a science? (b) music evolution		Classification of musics and instruments	
3 9/17-18	(a) sound waves (b) waveforms and spectra	Ch. 1 Ch. 1	Africa (sub-Saharan)	Ch. 1
4 9/24-25	(a) sound interactions (b) the auditory system	Ch. 1 Ch. 2	Aboriginal Australia and Melanesia	
5 10/1-2	(a) pitch and intervals (b) scales and tuning systems	Ch. 3 Ch. 3	Middle East (Arabic, Turkish, and Persian styles)	Ch. 2
6 10/8-9	(a) instruments: string and percussion (b) instruments: wind and voice	Ch. 4 Ch. 4	Old Europe	
7 10/15-16	(a) timbre (b) melody and harmony	Ch. 5	South Asia (India, Pakistan)	Ch. 3
8 10/22-23	(a) texture (b) form		East Asia (China, Japan, Korea, Tibet)	Ch. 4
9 10/29-30	(ab) rhythm in music and dance		Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia)	Ch. 5
10 11/5-6	Exam 1 (November 5), covering lectures 1a-7a, and Africa→South Asia in the world music series		No class (November 6)	
11 11/12-13	(ab) music and language		North America and the Circumpolar Region	
12 11/19-20	(ab) emotion and meaning in music		South and Central America	
13 11/26-27	(ab) performance and composition		Polynesia and Micronesia	
Final 12/??	Exam 2 (covering lectures 7b-13ab) + Comprehensive Final			