Sounds and Cinema

MUMH 2050.003
LIFE A117
MWF 1–1:50

Instructor Contact

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Office Location: Bain 109
Office Hours: By appointment
  Book In-Person Appointment
  Book Online Appointment

Teaching Assistants:
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Communication Expectations:
If you have a private question, please contact me via email, and I will respond within 24 hours on weekdays (usually sooner) and around 48 hours on weekends. I'm very quick with email, and that is my preferred method of contact.

Welcome to UNT!
As members of the UNT community, we have all made a commitment to be part of an institution that respects and values the identities of the students and employees with whom we interact. UNT does not tolerate identity-based discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. UNT's full Non-Discrimination Policy can be found in the UNT Policies section of the syllabus.

Course Description
This course focuses on the appreciation and analysis of film music as a creative work of the human imagination. In so doing, this course develops critical and analytical approaches to the soundtrack, music's role in the soundtrack, and the relation of the soundtrack and imagetrack (especially relating to music) on small-scale and large-scale (narrative) levels. The course develops critical listening and viewing abilities, so that students can effectively communicate interpretive ideas of the music at hand.

This course also offers a particular kind of film-music history survey, one that focuses on the three points in the history of film sound: the introduction of sound, the introduction of stereo, and the introduction of digital sound. The course will explore the thesis that each of these technological advances alters the structural relationships that obtain among the three relatively autonomous components of the soundtrack—dialogue, music and effects. In so doing, this course seeks to explore critical, creative, and innovative ways to analyze film music as a unique work of art.

The course is designed so that students can be successful without a background in music history and theory or a background in film history or theory. Musical performance background (reading music notation) is also not a prerequisite. *The main requirement is a willingness to listen carefully and to articulate what is heard.*

Course Structure

This course takes place in person over a normal 16-week semester. The course is divided into 8 modules, each of which lasts roughly two weeks.

Course Prerequisites or Other Restrictions

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course:

1. Through historical documents, contemporary scholarship, and particular film soundtracks, students will cultivate the critical thinking skills needed to introduce problems and questions; present, interpret, and analyze a variety of source material; consider the context of a variety of source material; develop arguments with a logical progression; and present conclusions and their implications. **(Core LO: Critical Thinking)**
2. Students will develop communication skills by writing and speaking about film music and its history with a clear statement of purpose, organization, developed content, and accuracy. **(Core LO: Communication)**
3. By exploring the role of the soundtrack and imagetrack in characterizing individuals and groups, students will learn social responsibility by acknowledging and assuming diverse cultural/intercultural perspectives; exploring aspects of civic responsibility; and reflecting personally on the ability to understand, recognize, and even challenge notions of cultural bias. **(Core LO: Social Responsibility)**
4. As team members, students will be asked to contribute, prepare, collaborate, foster constructive team climates, and respond to feedback constructively related to the music and sources studied in this course. **(Core LO: Teamwork)**

Materials

Optional: James Buhler, David Neumeyer, and Rob Deemer, *Hearing the Movies: Music and Sound in Film History, 2nd edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Information Literacy

A portion of the assignments in this course (including reading assignments) are intended to have students engage with and access UNT Library resources. Such resources may include, but are not limited to, primary source databases, UNT special collections, and ebooks, with the goal of learning how to independently seek out, assess, and interpret primary and secondary source material available in the UNT Library databases.

Statement on Use of AI

Throughout the semester, you will or may use specific Generative AI (GenAI) tools for certain select assignments, with guidance on responsible use. These assignments help build ethical resilience and GenAI literacy, preparing you for careers in a GenAI-oriented workforce.

I use GenAI to enhance materials, streamline tasks, generate prompts, create scenarios, brainstorm ideas, design Power Points, and gather information. I have also experimented with AI for writing

question drafts, data analysis, and editing. I will always disclose how I use GenAI, and I expect the same from you.

Certain assignments in this course will permit or even encourage the use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools such as ChatGPT. The default is that such use is disallowed unless otherwise stated. Any such use must be appropriately acknowledged and cited. It is each student's responsibility to assess the validity and applicability of any GAI output that is submitted; you bear the final responsibility. Violations of this policy will be considered academic misconduct. We draw your attention to the fact that different classes at UNT could implement different AI policies, and it is the student's responsibility to conform to expectations for each course.

You are allowed to use AI for the following purposes on all assignments:
- Grammar and proofreading – with citation (what LLM/program you used, and how).
- Input your own writing into LLM and ask for a summary, or to check for errors – with citation (what LLM/program you used, and how).
- Brainstorming ideas, music, or artwork for the final project – with citation (what LLM/program you used, and how).
- Generate artwork for the final project
  - With prompts and responses (at least 4, if applicable).
  - With citation (what LLM/program you used, and how).
- Generate sections music for the final project
  - With citation (what LLM/program you used, and how).
  - If more than 20 seconds used, please consult instructor on proper usage, prompts, and citations.

You are NOT allowed to use the following AI features
- Generate text for submission
- Generate initial (or final) response to a prompt
- Generate any music or video
- Generate shot lists, sound/music lists, or describe movies you are supposed to describe.
  - Note – it's bad at this anyway.

Course Technology & Skills
Minimum Technology Requirements
- Computer
- Reliable internet access
- Free iClicker account
- Microsoft Office Suite
- Canvas Technical Requirements (https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements)

Computer Skills & Digital Literacy
- Using Canvas
- Using email with attachments
- Downloading PDFs
- Interacting with online music platforms (Spotify/YouTube)

- Using an in-class response system (iClicker)
- Accessing UNT Library Databases

Technical Assistance
Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

UNT Help Desk: (http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm)
Email: helpdesk@unt.edu
Phone: 940-565-2324
In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130
        Walk-In Availability: 8am-9pm
Telephone Availability:
- Sunday: noon-midnight
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
- Friday: 8am-8pm
- Saturday: 9am-5pm

Laptop Checkout: 8am-7pm

For additional support, visit Canvas Technical Help (https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328)

Rules of Engagement
Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines:

- While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.
- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.
- Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for your instructor and classmates.
- Speak from personal experiences. Use "I" statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individual's experiences.
- Use your critical thinking skills to challenge other people's ideas, instead of attacking individuals.
- Avoid using all caps while communicating digitally. This may be interpreted as "YELLING!"
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.
- Avoid using "text-talk" unless explicitly permitted by your instructor.
- Proofread and fact-check your sources.
- Keep in mind that online posts can be permanent, so think first before you type.

See these Engagement Guidelines (https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips) for more information.

Grading Procedures

Assignment	Points Needed for 100%
Syllabus Quiz/Introduce Yourself	**40 points**
	15 points Introduce Yourself (Week 1)
	25 points Course Overview (Week 1)
RAT	**150 points**
	Seven 30-point opportunities
	Beginning of Weeks 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13
	Drop Lowest 2
iClicker	**175 points**
	7 points per class, 25 days needed
Individual Assignments	**410 points**
	125 points AI Microcredentials (Week 3)
	220 points Bi-Weekly Reflections.
	4/6 opportunities at 55 points
	Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14
	15 points Teamwork Reflection
Scoring Project	**275 points**
	125 points for midterm project (week 8)
	150 points for final project (week 16)

Assignment Details

The second module in Canvas has details and links to the place in Canvas where you submit your assignments. Additionally, rubrics are available in Canvas for biweekly reflections and the scoring projects.

Other Opportunities to Earn Points:

While all previously stated opportunities to earn points are guaranteed, there may be a few opportunities to earn extra points in the class. One such opportunity includes having 75% of the class complete the SPOT evaluation at the end of the semester. This happens frequently. If additional opportunities for points arise, I will let you know. Should any opportunities for points arise, they will be available to the whole class. I do not offer students opportunities to earn points that are not available to others.

Letter Grades

The grade of "A" will be assigned for excellent academic work. A grade of "B" will be assigned for good work. A grade of "C" will be assigned for fair work. A grade of "D" will be assigned for work that minimally passes. A grade of "F" will be assigned for failing work. (http://registrar.unt.edu/grades/understand-your-grade-report)

Grades will be calculated according to the following scale: 900-1000 A 800-899 B 700-799 C 600-699 D 0-599 F

Course Calendar

Week	Topic and Reading	Assignment
Weeks 1–2 Module 1	Course Overview Music and the Sound Track: Basic Terms and Concepts **Reading:** Selections from HtM Preface and General Introduction; Introduction to Part 1, Ch. 1	**RAT 1** Bi-Weekly Assignment Introduce Yourself Course Overview Quiz
Weeks 3–4 Module 2	Music and the Sound Track Music, Sound, Space, and Time **Reading:** Selections from HtM Chapters 2 & 3.	**RAT 2** Bi-Weekly Assignment AI Microcredentials
Weeks 5–6 Module 3	From 1895–1929: Music and Sound in Early Film From 1926–1932: The Transition to Sound Film From 1932–1950: Music and Sound Track in the Classical Studio Era **Reading:** Selections from HtM Chapters 4 & 5. HtM Chapter 7	**RAT 3** Bi-Weekly Assignment Soundbox Visit and SoundTrap Tutorials Checkpoint **RAT 4**
Weeks 7–8 Module 4	From 1950–1975: The Stereo Sound Track and the Post Classical Era **Reading:** Selections from HtM Chapters 9 & 10.	**RAT 5** Bi-Weekly Assignment **Midterm Scoring Project Due**
Weeks 9–11 Module 5	From 1975–2000: The New Hollywood, Dolby Stereo, and the Emergence of Sound Design **Reading:** HtM Introduction to Part 3 HtM Chapters 11 & 12.	**RAT 6** Bi-Weekly Assignment ClipChamp Tutorials Checkpoint
Weeks 12–14 Module 6	Music and Film Sound and Form since 2000 **Reading:** HtM Chapters 13 & 14.	**RAT 7** Bi-Weekly Assignment Bi-Weekly Assignment
Weeks 15–16 Module 7	Final Scoring Project	Final Scoring Project

Course Policies

Assignment Policy
Students can find all assignment information, submission guidelines, and due dates in the Introduction Module in Canvas.

Instructor Feedback
Due to the class size, I will return feedback on all written assignments within two weeks of the due date. If I see that I will be unable to return your feedback within that timeframe, I will post an announcement to let everyone know when it can be expected.

Late Work
In general, work due outside of class will receive a 24-hour grace period, after which it will not be accepted. This is in large part to facilitate grading in a class such as this. There are two caveats.

First, I will give an extension of two days to any assignment that is an individual assignment, without limit. The only caveat is that you must ask before the assignment is due. No reasons are needed, and I will work with you on a plan to get the assignment in. The key here is timely communication. Once the assignment is late, the best-case scenario for normal events is the loss of the missing points for the days you were late before contacting me, and no extension should be expected after the assignment is due. This does not apply to team assignments or in-class work.

With that said, there are unusual circumstances in all of our lives. When in doubt, reach out to me. Please do not email TAs – they just end up emailing me, and everything takes longer and involves more emails.

Attendance Policy
We will take attendance regularly, especially to monitor in-class team activities.

Should you miss class, you cannot earn in-class assignment points. **Because we will complete many more in-class assignments than required to earn the necessary points, it is not possible to make up missed in-class assignments. In other words, it's okay to miss a couple classes here and there – you'll be able to earn enough points for 100%. Please note that a substantial portion of your grade comes from attendance and participation. Indeed, a substantial of your final grade is related to forms of individual and team participation. Please don't make missing class a habit!**

Syllabus Change Policy
This syllabus can be modified. All modifications will be announced via Canvas and explained in writing.

UNT Policies

DEFIBRILLATORS IN THE COLLEGE OF MUSIC

- Music Building: Across from the west side of the Music Commons, directly across from the elevator
- Music Building: Third floor hallway, across from the staircase that comes up from the Copy Room. Next to Room 322
- Music Building: Across from the Copy Room next to Room 293
- Music Building: Voertman Lobby by the big double set of doors that lead out to the courtyard
- Music Building: Main Office (247) under the student worker's desk
- Music Annex: Next to room MA117, near the triple set of doors on the east side of the building
- Music Practice Building North: First floor on the Avenue C side
- Music Practice Building South: First floor on the Avenue C side
- Bain Hall: First floor by the restrooms
- Murchison Performing Arts Center: Located off the main lobby, beyond the grand staircase, across from the single occupancy restroom (next to the public water fountains)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam [or specify alternative sanction, such as course failure]. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students (Office of Academic Integrity), who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. See: Academic Integrity
LINK: https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

See: Student Code of Conduct
Link: https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – EAGLE CONNECT
Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at my.unt.edu. All official communication from the university will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect.
See: Eagle Connect
LINK: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

ODA STATEMENT
The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter. You can now request your Letters of Accommodation ONLINE and ODA will mail your Letters of Accommodation to your instructors. You may wish to begin a private discussion with your professors regarding your specific needs in a course. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access.
See: ODA
LINK: disability.unt.edu. (Phone: (940) 565-4323)

Health and Safety Information
Students can access information about health and safety at: https://music.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness

Registration Information for Students
See: Registration Information
Link: https://registrar.unt.edu/students

Academic Calendar, **Spring 2026**
See: Spring Academic Calendar
Link: https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-academic-calendar.html

Final Exam Schedule, **Spring 2026**
See above

Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress

Undergraduates
A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total hours registered.   Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

Students holding music scholarships must maintain a minimum 2.5 overall cumulative GPA and 3.0 cumulative GPA in music courses.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended that you to schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.
See: Financial Aid
LINK: http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap

Graduates
A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per term. Music scholarships require a 3.5 cumulative GPA. Students cannot exceed maximum timeframes established based on the published length of the graduate program. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. It is recommended you schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college, an advisor in UNT-International or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course.
See: Financial Aid
LINK: http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap

RETENTION OF STUDENT RECORDS
Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university's policy in accordance with those mandates.
See: FERPA
Link: http://ferpa.unt.edu/

COUNSELING AND TESTING
UNT's Center for Counseling and Testing has an available counselor for students in need. Please visit the Center's website for further information:
See: Counseling and Testing
Link: http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services.

For more information on mental health resources, please visit:
See: Mental Health Resources
Link: https://disparities.unt.edu/mental-health-resources

ADD/DROP POLICY

Please be reminded that dropping classes or failing to complete and pass registered hours may make you ineligible for financial aid. In addition, if you drop below half-time enrollment you may be required to begin paying back your student loans. See Academic Calendar (listed above) for additional add/drop Information.

Drop Information: https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html

STUDENT RESOURCES

The University of North Texas has many resources available to students. For a complete list, go to:
See: Student Resources
Link: https://success.unt.edu/aa-sa-resources

CARE TEAM

The Care Team is a collaborative interdisciplinary committee of university officials that meets regularly to provide a response to student, staff, and faculty whose behavior could be harmful to themselves or others.
See: Care Team
Link: https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care-team