

# MUMH 1610-003 – Music as Communication – Fall 2025

## Course Overview

In this course we consider music in the lives of people. We will explore the many ways music communicates and is assigned meaning by the people who perform and listen to it. All of this we examine through different thematic lenses and contexts – in the context of tradition, of spirituality, of politics, of technology, etc.

## Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of coursework, students will be able to

* Apply key theoretical frameworks (Turino, Peirce) to musical analysis
* Demonstrate critical thinking skills by identifying, synthesing, and taking a position on ideas and information in our readings and listening.
* Compare musical practices across Western art music and global traditions
* Communicate insights on music cultural, historical, and social perspectives through structured writing, discussions and group presentations (teamwork)
* Reflect on their own musical experiences with scholarly depth
* Design a socially-responsible major project that fosters community building

## Course Information

Meeting time: MWF 12:00 – 12:50 PM

Meeting Room: MUSIC 322

Instructor**:** Prof. Dawn De Rycke

Office: MU 143

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 1-2 PM, or by appointment

Email: dawn.derycke@unt.edu

## Required Textbooks:

* Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life. The Politics of Participation*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-226-81698-2

## Course Structure

Over the course of 15 weeks we will cover 8 broad topics, approximately 4-6 classes per topic. Each topic and its associated readings, viewings, homework, and discussions will be posted on Canvas, under MODULES (<https://unt.instructure.com/courses/134373/modules>). In addition to our textbook, additional readings, videos or recordings will be uploaded to the corresponding MODULES. You will complete four projects, and we will have regular writing prompts which you also can find in MODULES.

## Statement on Use of AI

The default for this course is that use of generative AI tools (GAI) such as ChatGPT is not allowed. In certain cases, which I will explicitly communicate (in writing) it may be used for specific assignments. In these cases, it 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.

## Late Work

Please try to complete all assignments on time. Late work will be accepted for full credit up until the next class period following their due date. After that, late work may be handed in for 60% credit. As the semester picks up steam, I understand that sometimes some assignments may fall by the wayside, and if I sense that this is happening, I will send reminders to the class with a grace period if necessary.

## Attendance Policy

Your success in this course depends on regular engagement with the lectures, readings, listening and various assignments. Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed 4 “free” unexcused absences. After more than 4 absences, each absence deducts 10 points from your “Attendance/Participation” grade. Additionally, there are many reasons you will want to attend regularly! Here are a few:

• 40 bonus points for students with fewer than 4 unexcused absences.

• The extra practice of in-class listening (and the discussions generated from it) will help you learn and deepen your understanding of the issues and cultures we discuss. Also, often these discussions are stimulating and fun.

• There will be graded in-class assignments.

• Class Participation and assignments cannot be made up outside of class; see below.

## Class Participation

Participating is essential and is, for most of the assignmentsworked into your grade (it is the same as completing an assignment). For our daily meetings, however, it is expected that you will be present, prepared, and participate. Together with attendance, participation in discussions and in-class activities counts for 10% of your grade and will be graded by the number of times you participate. Participation can take the form of speaking, presenting, asking questions, responding to another student or to me.

## Syllabus Change Policy

It is likely that the syllabus will be modified to adapt to the needs and interests of this specific group. Changes will be communicated in a Canvas Announcement (as well as in the document(s) in the affected Canvas Module)

## Grading

You will regularly divide up into groups (you will have the same group all semester) to discuss questions that are either provided by me or that you will pre-prepare and bring to class. Other times you will be given a writing prompt .

Writing Assignments: There are three types of individual writing assignments: regular paragraph development “essays”; one short essay and one concert review. In the short response essays, you will engage analytically an idea or theme from the readings and listenings in a given unit that you find most significant. In the concert review, you will attend a live performance and tie some aspect of the performance with the ideas we have touched on over the semester. Both papers are an opportunity to engage with the social and historical perspectives that we study in class and better understand how music functions in your own lives and communities.

Final Group Project: You will complete a group project that engages one or more social issues. Details will be provided during Week 3.

Grading Scale by Percent: A=90-100%, B=80-90%, C=70-80%, D=60-70%, F= below 60%

Writing prompts/Discussions 10 X 25 points 250 points (25% of grade)

Listening Quizzes 4 X 25 100 points (10% of grade)

Short Essay 1 X 100 points 200 points (20% of grade)

Concert Project 1 x 150 points 100 points (15% of grade)

Final (Group) Project 1 x 250 points 250 points (25% of grade)

Participation 100 points (10% of grade)

1000 points possible

## Late Work

You have one class period of grace if you fail to submit your work on time. For example, if an assignment is due on Friday, you have until the following Monday to submit it to Canvas. After that grace period, you will receive reduced credit for the assignment, up to 60%.

## Communication Policy:

If you have a question, concern, or need to discuss anything about the class, please speak to me after class or during my office hours. If in-person doesn’t work, email me. You can expect an answer within 48 hours, but often sooner. Make sure you check our Canvas course page regularly to stay apprised of assignments, quizzes, study guides, announcements, etc.

## University Policies and Other Useful Links / Information

### DEFIBRILLATORS IN THE COLLEGE OF MUSIC

* **Music Building:** 
  + Across from the west side of the Music Commons, directly across from the elevator
  + Third floor hallway, across from the staircase that comes up from the Copy Room. Next to Room 322
  + Across from the Copy Room next to Room 293
  + Voertman Lobby by the big double set of doors that lead out to the courtyard
  + 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, Fall 2025 See: Fall 2025 Registration Information Link: https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html

Final Exam Schedule, Fall 2025 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

### 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.

## Course Schedule\* (Three 50 minute classes per week MWF)

\*subject to changes

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| Week (M-F) | Topic | Readings & Discussion Topics |
| Week 1 Aug. 18-22 | Defining Music, Meaning, Communication; Musical Terms; Listening | Course Intro; Turino, Ch. 1 |
| Week 2 Aug 25-29 | Participatory vs Presentational Music | Turino Ch. 2 |
| Week 3 Sep. 1-5 | Music and Identity | Turino Ch. 4 |
| Week 4 Sep. 8-12 |  |
| Week 5 Sep. 15-19 | Music and Technology | Turino, Ch. 3 |
| Week 6 Sep. 22-26 |  |
| Week 7 Sep 29-Oct. 3 | Music and Spirituality | Turino, Ch. 5 |
| Week 8 Oct. 6-10 |  |
| Week 9 Oct. 13-17 | Music and Politics | Turino Ch. 7 |
| Week 10 Oct. 20-24 |  |
| Week 11 Oct. 27-31 | Music and Conflict | Turino, Ch. 6 |
| Week 12 Nov. 3-7 |  |
| Week 13 Nov. 10-14 | Music and Gender |  |
| Week 14 Nov. 17-21 |  |
| Nov. 24-28 | NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK |  |
| Week 15 Dec. 1-5 | Final Presentations |  |
| Week 16 Dec. 8-12 | NO FINAL EXAM |  |