

MUET 4500: Introduction to Ethnomusicology

Instructor

Dr. Vivek Virani
(pronouns: he/him/his)

Email

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Class Time

Tues/Thurs 2:20-3:40pm
MUS 2006

Office Hours

Tues and Thurs.
10-11am
Or by Appointment

MUS 108

or over Zoom

Course Overview

This course introduces students to the history, theory, and practice of ethnomusicology. It includes foundational texts from the discipline and current literature on emerging issues and topics. Students will be exposed to multiple perspectives from ethnomusicology and its related disciplines, including musicology, anthropology, folklore, critical theory, and cultural studies.

The primary objective of this course is to provide students with a richer understanding of the various roles, meanings, and functions of music in human life. Students who intend to pursue research in music will develop a diverse analytical toolkit to aid in their future endeavors, and all students should develop a greater appreciation for the many ways music may be practiced and understood as a meaningful human activity.

Evaluation

Your final grade will be based on the following criteria:

- Music Interview Assignment: 15%
- Article Analysis and Presentation: 20%
- Ethnography Project (Multiple Components): 40%
- Class Participation: 25%

COURSE INFORMATION

Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to attend class sessions regularly, to come prepared and participate actively in all activities. Your presence in every class session is absolutely essential to your success in this course. **Any student who accrues 4 unexcused absences will be asked to withdraw from the course.** In case of a foreseeable absence, students should notify the instructor as soon as possible to arrange a way to make up for content or activities missed during a class session. In addition, *consistent* lateness, inattentiveness, or lack of participation may result in a grade penalty.

Absences will generally be excused if a) the instructor is notified ahead of time and approves the absence, or b) in cases of illness or emergency. In cases of multiple illness-related absences (i.e., more than two consecutive absences), students will be required to provide a doctor's note.

Students who do not participate in class discussions, are unprepared for class (e.g., have not completed required readings), or are inattentive during class may be deducted some or all participation points for that day.

Required Materials

Required Readings

All required readings will be made available on Canvas. Students are responsible for completing each week's assigned reading before Tuesday's class.

Course Outline

Part I: History and Major Concepts in Ethnomusicology

During this part of the course, students will read and discuss material about the history of the discipline of ethnomusicology. Authors and scholars discussed include:

- Comparative Musicologists: Alexander John Ellis, Richard Wallaschek, Curt Sachs, Erich von Hornbostel
- Early Musical Ethnographers: Bela Bartok, Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Fletcher, John & Alan Lomax
- Post-War Ethnomusicologists: Mantle Hood, Alan Merriam, John Blacking

Part II: Current Issues in Ethnomusicology

During this part of the course, student will work in small groups to select articles related to major issues and themes in modern ethnomusicology. These themes may include:

- Community and Social Space
- Cultural Economies
- Sensory and Affect Studies
- Media and Technoculture
- Nationalism and Transnationalism
- Embodiment and Cognition
- Social and Political Action
- Post-Coloniality and Decoloniality
- Collaborative Scholarship

Part III: Mini Musical Ethnography

In the final part of the semester

Assessment

“My Music” Interview

In the first part of the semester, students will interview another person about the role of music in their life. Their goal is to learn about and to communicate in writing this person's musical life, include:

1. The interviewee's **conceptions of or ideas about** music.
2. Interviewee's **behaviors** related to music.
3. The role music plays in your interviewee's **social relationships**.

They will summarize the findings of the interview in a 1000-word essay, supplemented with an appendix containing a partial written transcription of the interview.

Article Analysis and Presentation

In the second part of the semester, students will read articles from academic journals about major topics and issues in the field of ethnomusicology. Each student will write an analysis of their selected article in the form of an essay (~1000 words) that a) summarizes key ideas and theories, b) analyzes methods / research approaches, and c) offers personal reflection and/or critique.

Mini Musical Ethnography

In the second half of the semester, students will engage in a small-scale musical ethnography about a local musical community. Their goal is to learn about the music culture of this community through multiple visits and interviews, and to present their findings through multiple forms. These include:

- Field notes / recordings
- In-class presentation (during Week 15 and Finals Week)
- Final Paper

Policies and Resources

Respectful Discourse

During class sessions, respectful discourse is expected at all times. Academic discourse is most productive and vibrant when all participants feel empowered to explore ideas and think through new possibilities without fear of judgment or condemnation. Differences of opinion are bound to occur, and should be treated as opportunities for mutual growth and learning rather than intellectual competitions.

Academic Integrity

Students caught committing academic fraud, plagiarism, or other forms of cheating as detailed in the UNT Academic Integrity policy will receive a **failing grade for the course**. 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 the use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations. 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](#)

Note on Generative AI Usage

Generative AI tools such as LLMs (e.g. ChatGPT, Copilot) have become widely used in many industries. Reliance on these tool for academic research is risky, as they rarely guarantee verifiable, traceable information. Furthermore, any use of these tools to generate text or ideas that are submitted as if they are the product of a student's original thinking is a clear violation of Academic Integrity Policy.

Any uses of LLMs not specifically approved by the instructor will be considered cheating and (depending on the severity of the infraction) result in a grade of '0' for the assignment or a failing grade for the course. If a

student plans to use LLMs (such as Grammarly or ChatGPT) for grammatical or stylistic editing, they are required to submit A) their original text (as it was entered into the LLM) in addition to any LLM output, and B) an indication of changes/revisions they made to the LLM output before submitting their final version.

Technology-Free Classroom

The time and space we are given to learn together is a privilege that we try to honor by being as present and attentive as possible. Toward that goal, the use of technological devices in class is limited. Students (and the instructor) may use laptops or tablets to refer to readings and notes only. In-class notes should be taken by hand. Phones and headphones are strictly not allowed in class. Exceptions will be made for emergencies or ODA-approved accommodations.

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: disability.unt.edu. Phone: (940) 565-4323

Counseling and Testing

UNT's Center for Counseling and Testing has an available counselor whose position includes 16 hours per week of dedicated service to students in the College of Music and the College of Visual Arts and Design. Please visit the Center's website for further information: <http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>.

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. After the 12th class day, students must first submit a completed "Request to Drop" form to the Registrar's Office. Information about add/drop may be found at:

Student Resources

The University of North Texas has many resources available to students. For a complete list, go to:

[HTTPS://WWW.UNT.EDU/SUCCESS/RESOURCES/](https://www.unt.edu/success/resources/)