MUET 3090 / 5090: MUSIC OF INDIA
भारतीय शास्त्रीय, आध्यात्मिक, लोक, एवं फ़िल्मी संगीत

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

Email
VivekVirani@unt.edu

Office Location
Music 146

Office Hours
Tues, Thurs.
11am-12pm
(Other timings on Tues., Wed, Thursday available by appointment)

Course Overview
This course will explore the culture, performance practice, and history of several genres of music from South Asia, particularly India and Pakistan. The majority of the class will be dedicated to the “classical” genres of Hindustani and Carnatic music. The last third of the class will shift focus to religious, folk, and popular musics from different regions of the subcontinent. In addition to reading and listening to music, students will learn songs or compositions from most of the genres discussed in class. No musical experience is required to participate.

Course Materials
There is no textbook for this course. All reading and listening examples will be posted on Canvas. Students are responsible for regularly checking Canvas to ensure they are up to date with the material.

Evaluation
Your final grade will be based on the following criteria:

- Homework Assignments: 20%
- Quizzes: 10%
- Tests: 25% (2 during semester)
- Final Project: 20%
- Attendance and Participation: 25%
- Article Discussions: Graduate Students only (details on page 5)

Course Schedule

WEEK 1 – NO CLASS (JANUARY 14 & 16)

Preliminary reading:
Week 2 (January 21 & 23)
- Major concepts: Introduction to Hindustānī music, rāga (melodic framework), sapta-svara (musical notes), sargam (solfege)
- Performance focus: rāg Yaman

Week 3 (January 28 & 30)
- Genre focus: Dhrupad vocal
- Major concepts: ālāp (melodic improvisation) form, śhruti (microtonal) intonation, tāla (rhythmic cycle)
- Performance focus: dhrupad in rāga Bhūpali, chautāl

Week 4 (February 4 & 6)
- Genre focus: Hindustani Instrumental
- Major concepts: palta (permutations), vistār (variations), layakāri (rhythmic improvisation)
- Performance focus: instrumental gat in rāga Bageshri, rūpak tāl & tīntāl
- Guest lecture-lemonstration: Satarupa Basak, dilruba artist

Week 5 (February 11 & 13)
- Genre focus: Tablā solo performance
- Major concepts: laya (pulse/tempo/timing), tāla (rhythmic cycles), ṭhekā (characteristic accompaniment patterns), percussion solo repertoire
- Performance focus: tihais, chakradār tihais, qāidā variations

Week 6 (February 18 & 20)
- Genre focus: Khyāl vocal
- Major concepts: gharānā (musical lineage), alankār (ornamentation), Hindustani music and cultural nationalism
- Reading:
  - Selections from Khyāl Vocalism: Continuity within Change by Deepak Raja (2009)
  - Selections from Down Melody Lane by G. N. Joshi (1984)
- Performance focus: bandishes in rāg Malkauns and rāg Bhairav, tīntāl and ektāl
Week 7 (February 25 & 27)
- **Genre focus**: Hindustani “Airs”; Indo-jazz fusion
- **Major themes**: “East Meets West”; cross-cultural influence in composition and performance practice
- **TEST #1**

Week 8 (March 3 & 5)
- **Genre focus**: Ṭhumrī & Ghazal
- **Major concepts**: “light” music, tawaif (courtesan) culture, nautch girls, “Islamicate” culture and the Hindu bourgeoisie
- **Performance focus**: ṭhumrī in rāg Mishra Khamāj, jata / kaharvā tāl

=== SPRING BREAK ===

Week 9 (March 17 & 19)
- **Genre focus**: Introduction to Carnatic Music
- **Major concepts**: Carnatic rāgam, melakārta, rāgam-tānam-pallavī
- **Reading**: TBD
- **Guest lecture-demonstration**: Thanmayee Krishnamurthy, Carnatic vocalist
- **Guest lecture**: Professor Richard Wolf, Harvard University

Week 10 (March 24 & 26)
- **Genre focus**: Carnatic music continued: instrumental and percussion
- **Guest lecture-demonstration**: Srinivas Prabhal, Saraswati veena artist and composer
- **Guest lecture-demonstration**: Poovallur Sriji, Carnatic percussionist and cross-cultural composer

Week 11 (March 31 & April 2)
- **Genre focus**: Vedic chant, bhajan, abhang, kirtan
- **Major themes**: sacred heritage in South Asian music, saint-poets, Bhakti Movement
- **Reading**: TBD
- **Performance focus**: Sanskrit mantra chanting; Ram bhajan; Krishna kirtan; Viṭhala abhang

Week 12 (April 7 & 9)
- **Genre focus**: qawwāli, Sufiānā kalām, Gurbānī sangīt
- **Major themes**: Sufism, Sikhism, religious syncretism, devotional-classical music spectrum
- **Performance focus**: Khusravi qawwālī in rāg Shuddh Kalyān, Bulleh Shah kalām, Gurbānī shabad-kīrtan

**WEEK 13 (APRIL 14 & 16)**

- **Genre focus**: film music (Bollywood and others)
- **Major themes**: globalization; culture and mass media; classical, folk, and religious music in film
- **Performance focus**: Songs from *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960) and *Pakeezah* (1972)
- **TEST #2**

**WEEK 14 (APRIL 21 & 23)**

- **Genre focus**: Rajasthani folk music, Bengali Baul-Fakirs and Rabindra Sangeet
- **Major themes**: hereditary performers and commercialization, cultural authenticity, and transformations in identity
- **Performance**: Rajasthani Mīrabai bhajan, Rabindra gīt

**WEEK 15 (APRIL 28 & 30)**

- **Topics TBD**

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Attendance and Participation**

Your presence in every class session is absolutely essential to your success in this course. All absences must be approved by the instructor. **Any unexcused absence (beyond the first) will result in a 5% penalty to your overall grade.** Any student who accrues **5 unexcused absences will be asked to withdraw from the course.** Additionally, consistent lateness, inattentiveness, or lack of participation may result in a grade penalty.

**In-class Performance**

We will spend a lot of our time in class making music together. EVERYONE will be expected to sing. On some occasions, you may also be expected to learn short pieces by ear. Instrumentalists will be allowed to bring instruments to class from Week 4 on. You will NOT be assessed on the basis of your musical abilities, nor will your grade be penalized for missing a note or making any other musical errors. But **participation** is a must for all students, regardless of major or musical experience.
Homework Assignments

This class will include a variety of homework assignments to encourage you to approach the material from different perspectives. Individual assignments are not intended to be overly time-consuming, but they will require an understanding of major concepts to complete adequately. Assignments may include:

*Written responses:* You may be asked to write a brief response to a prompt based on our reading and class discussions.

*Listening responses:* You may be asked to write a response based on a selected piece of music, either to identify specific musical features, or to comment on the piece in cultural context.

*Composition:* You may be asked to write or complete a short segment of a composition to demonstrate your understanding of the genres under study.

Listening Examples

The best way – indeed the only way – to develop understanding of unfamiliar genres of music is through hours and hours of listening, both active and passive. For each genre introduced in class, I will post several optional listening examples on Canvas. These will usually be full-length performances by master artists, and typically will be sourced from YouTube or another highly accessible platform.

In addition, there will be a few required listening examples for each genre. These will be short segments and will be accompanied by detailed listening notes informing you precisely what you should be listening for and what you should be able to identify should the example occur on a quiz or test (e.g. instrumentation, musical structure, performance techniques). You should become very familiar with these examples and use the knowledge you gain from them to guide your listening of optional examples.

Exams and Quizzes

Quizzes will be very short and will be given almost every week. They will typically address terminology, major concepts, and listening examples from the previous week. They are designed to help you identify what to focus on during your exam preparation.

Two exams will be given during the semester. The majority of the content on tests will come from a) required listening examples, b) terminology listed on Canvas and c) cultural concepts discussed in class.

Graduate Article Discussions

Four times during the semester, graduate students will be assigned an article to read and discuss during a time TBD outside our regular class period. (If no suitable time can be found, we will hold the discussion via a Canvas thread). The planned times and articles are:


Week 14: Article TBD

How to Succeed in this Class

The two biggest tips I can offer are 1) attend class regularly and attentively, and 2) ask questions about anything you do not understand. Outside of the classroom, I expect you will require 5-6 hours of regular engagement with the class material, with more time spent on project or exam weeks. I recommend you spend this time as follows:

*Weekly reading: 1-2 hours*

*Homework assignment: 1-2 hours*

*Reviewing terminology: 30 minutes to 1 hour*

*Listening and Practicing: I recommend a minimum of 1-2 hours per week of *active* listening and as much time as you can spent on passive or background listening (e.g. while commuting or studying).*

Final Project

During the last week of class, you will submit a final project. To reflect the many intellectual backgrounds and goals of the students in the course, there are several options (listed below) for what your final project may involve. Not all options will be available to all students, but you might be granted permission (at the instructor’s discretion) to do a project that is not listed here. You will be provided with more information about the final project after the first month of the semester, and will be welcome to turn the project in as early during the semester as you like.

*Performance Analysis: A written paper presenting an analysis of a single performance or a comparison between two performances (e.g. the same rāg performed in two different genres). The paper should engage with both musical and cultural aspects of the performance. All students may select this option.*

*Essay on Cultural or Social Issue: A written paper presenting an argument related to a significant cultural or social issue in the South Asian musical genre of your choice. The argument must be well-supported through background research and engagement with social or cultural theory. All students may select this option.*
Critical Performance: The student will present a short performance from one of the genres studied during the semester. They will also submit a short paper describing their preparation for the performance, i.e., how they prepared, why they made certain decisions, what examples they listened to and what they learned from them. In most cases, this will involve some improvisatory component. If a student chooses this project, they WILL be assessed based on the quality of their performance (i.e., points will be deducted for errors in intonation, rhythm, or genre-specific conventions). Only performance majors may select this option.

Musician biography: The student will write a brief biography of a master musician chosen from a list to be supplied by the instructor. The biography should comment not only on historical details of the subject’s life, but should engage substantially with class discussions and outside research to comment on why the subject is both culturally and musically significant. The paper should also include a brief qualitative analysis of at least one performance by the subject, in which the author explains how the performance demonstrates the subject’s characteristic style, technique, or sound. Only undergraduates may select this option.

Music video analysis: The student will write an analysis of a commercial music video from South Asian film or popular music. The paper should engage with both musical and visual elements of the video, and should contextualize these within musical and cultural knowledge acquired through class discussions and outside research. The student should not merely describe what is happening, but must make an original argument about the music video. Only undergraduates may select this option.

Composition: The student will compose an original piece drawing from musical structures and ideas they have learned during the semester. They are not required to adhere strictly to the conventions of a traditional South Asian music genre, but in their accompanying writeup, they must specify which elements were inspired by specific South Asian styles or ideas and how those ideas have been approached and transformed in the compositional process. Only composition majors (or performance majors with instructor permission) may select this option.

POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Statement of Religious Liberty

Some of the songs we will sing during this class have texts that implicitly or explicitly refer to deities or other religious concepts. Our performance of this music does not, of course, amount to a profession of any particular faith. Within India, it is the norm for singers of all faiths to perform texts from any religious tradition, and to take their own aesthetic or spiritual meanings from these pieces.

If however, your own religious beliefs – including beliefs in secular humanism or atheism – prohibit you from singing these words, please talk to me and we will work out an alternative.
Academic Integrity

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students, 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.

Writing Lab

Strong writing skills are an important asset in academic and professional life in every field. During class, we will work to improve student writing skills through instructor feedback and group workshops. However, many students will benefit from intensive focus on writing skills that we will not have time to provide during class. I encourage all students who wish to further develop their writing skills to work with the UNT Writing Lab. http://writinglab.unt.edu/

Student Counseling and Testing Services

It is important to us for students to excel academically, but it is far more important that you maintain your physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Students face many demands and responsibilities from their academic and personal lives and sometimes the stresses or anxieties can be overwhelming if not dealt with. As your instructor, I am happy to be a part of your support network, and am always open to talk if you have issues you would like to discuss. Additionally, UNT provides its students many resources for mental and emotional health. http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-testing-services

Office of Disability Accommodation

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.