Syllabus - MUSC 1300 – Summer II 2025 - Asynchronous

Music: Its Language, History and Culture.
Instructor: Jeryl Johnston - jeryljohnston@gmail.com
Office hours via Zoom by appointment
Brooklyn College – 2NTA 4077

What is a Syllabus? The main purpose of a syllabus (this document) is to give a clear and transparent explanation of the rules that I, the instructor, will follow while running this class so that you, the student, know what to expect and how to proceed. Additionally, a syllabus tells you what your responsibilities in the class are. Topics include: Course objectives and description, grading and rubrics, explanation of grading categories (assignments, midterm, final), and a course schedule.

Course Objectives: You will learn basic musical vocabulary and use it to describe, in writing, what you hear and see in musical performances. As part of the class, you will consider how music is used and how its use affects people both positively and negatively. You will study music from several different cultures and observe how these traditions influence each other. While doing this, you will prepare a final paper which includes research into an approved music-related topic that you and I will choose together. As part of your final paper, you will use peer-reviewed and other sources with bibliography and in-text citations.

No Textbook required. Materials will be provided via Brightspace.

Brightspace, Zoom, and YouTube will be used regularly throughout this course.

This course will be asynchronous (fully online with no synchronized class meetings), so it is important that you are available to log into and work with the platforms mentioned above daily for the duration of the course.

All assignment, midterm and final paper due dates are listed in the “Calendar” link, found in the course menu on Brightspace. They are also listed under Content>Course Schedule>Full Schedule starting from the same course menu. These are the best tools for keeping track of all due dates in the course.

You are always welcome to email me (jeryljohnston@gmail.com) with any questions you have or situations that arise.

If you find that you are unable to complete an assignment on time and you have a documented reason for this, such as a note from a doctor or a religious circumstance, then send me a copy of the document or notify me of the situation and we will work something out. It is OK to ask for help. Asking for help in

advance of a due date, especially if you do not have documentation of the circumstance, is a responsible thing to do and will work in your favor.

Summer 2025 is the first session in which Brooklyn College is using Brightspace rather than Blackboard, so it is likely that we will all experience technical difficulties as we become used to the new platform. If you are having any problem with Brightspace or other tools then **let me know that there is a problem before twelve noon on the due date of the assignment in question**, and I'll be glad to both troubleshoot with you, and make exceptions for late submissions because of software issues. If you do not notify me of the problem before noon on the due date of the assignment, and you submit the assignment late, then your submission will be considered late (see "assessment" below). I hope that you'll be willing to bear with me in return as I learn to teach asynchronously on Brightspace instead of Blackboard.

Accessibility

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Brooklyn College Center for Student Disability Services (Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538 or vstewart@brooklyn.cuny.edu) as soon as possible. I will be glad to work with this office in order to facilitate your progress.

Academic Integrity

The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. **Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both.** The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for policy implementation can be found at www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.

Using any kind of artificial intelligence to generate any sort of material which you present as your own work is unethical and will be treated as academic dishonesty.

Office Hours:

Office hours are available via zoom and can be scheduled with me by anyone who wishes to do so. The purpose of office hours is to give students a one-on-one opportunity to study material from class that they are having difficulty with. This may be especially useful prior to the composition of the midterm vocabulary essay and the final paper. Office hours may be scheduled at other times and for other purposes as well. To schedule an office hour send me an email at jeryljohnston@gmail.com.

Assessment:
Your grade will be calculated mathematically according to the percentages defined below, and your scores will always be available to you via the "Grades" link in the course menu on Brightspace. "Final Calculated Grade" is your percentage score for the course. This is the actual score that you will receive for the course, which reflects the grading scale in the syllabus. I will not alter your grade from the percentage that you see under "Final Calculated Grade."

Assignments	70%
Vocabulary Essay Midterm	10%
Final Paper	20%

Pluses and minuses. For example:

97% - 100% = A+
92% - 97.9% = A
90% - 91.9% = A-

This pattern is applicable to the letters B, C and D.

Assignment Rubrics:
A rubric is a written explanation of how an assignment will be graded. The vocabulary essay, conversation forums and the final project will be graded according to rubrics that are available for you to view at any time. The rubrics explain specifically and precisely how you will be graded on each assignment, or type of assignment. The conversation forum grading rubric and final paper grading rubric can be found by selecting "Rubrics" from the course menu. Other rubrics are posted along with the assignments that they pertain to.

Homework assignments will usually be graded using a point system. Occasionally there may be assignments that are graded according to a pass/fail structure, meaning that you either did the assignment according to the simple instructions, or you didn't do the assignment at all. See specific assignment instructions for details.

Assignments - 70%. Assignments will be posted on Brightspace, and they will be collected and graded via Brightspace as well. These will often take the form of short sets of questions designed to make sure that you have read/viewed and understood the material at hand. Homework is due by the end of the day (11:59pm) on the due date specified. Late homework will be accepted for half credit of the points earned. No homework will be accepted after the day that the final paper is due. Three attempts will be available for each assignment and the attempt with the highest score will be counted.

Some assignments will be conversation forums in which you are expected to participate. You will be given one or more questions/ideas to consider and will then be expected to post a well composed, relevant, and thoughtful comment or question by a specified due date. Having done this, you will be expected to post a specified number of replies to the comments of other members of the class by the same due date.

For more details, please see the "Conversation Forums Grading Rubric" posted in the course menu on Brightspace. Late participation will be accepted for half credit until the due date of the final paper.

The three lowest assignment scores will be dropped. Note that the Vocab Essay Midterm and Final paper each comprise their own category. Neither of these is considered a part of the "assignments" category, so neither the Vocab Essay Midterm score nor the Final Paper score will be dropped for any reason.

Vocabulary Essay - 10%. 250 - 500 words. Choose one or two videos from the options provided in the vocabulary essay prompt. If you choose only one video, then write a description of this video. If you choose two videos, then compare and contrast them. Correctly use 20 different words from the course vocabulary list found on Brightspace. You will be awarded one point for each correctly used word. Using a word incorrectly will result in a point being subtracted from your score. Music vocabulary not found on the course vocabulary list will not earn points. Submissions must be in .pdf or .docx format to facilitate annotation in grading and scanning for plagiarism. Other formats will not be accepted. For more details, click on the "Vocabulary Essay" link in the course menu on Brightspace and consult the complete vocabulary essay prompt. Five points are possible for editing/proofreading/formatting. Late submissions will be accepted but the score will be lowered by ten percent for each day late. Vocabulary essays that are more than five days late will be accepted for half credit. 25 points possible.

Final Paper - 20%. You will be working on a final research paper. You and I will decide upon your topic together. Submissions must be in .pdf or .docx format in order to facilitate screening for plagiarism. Other formats will not be accepted. A conversation forum assignment is part of the final paper and participation in this forum will be reflected in the final paper grade. Please see the "Final Paper Instructions" and the "Final Paper Grading Rubric" posted on Brightspace for details. Late submissions will be accepted but the score will be lowered by ten percent for each day late.

Course schedule on next page.

Course Schedule:

Week 1 (7/14 – 7/18): Orientation, Introductions.
Pulse - Time in Music.
Vocabulary I, II and III.
Vocab Q&A.

Week 2 (7/21 – 7/25): Vocabulary Practice, Music and Bias.
Documentary: Blacks in Vaudeville
Reading: Performing Africa, Overture – Ebron
Reading: Race and Ethnicity; Music Sex and Sexism - Manuel/Largey.
Reading - Redeeming the Study of African Essentialism – Diaz
Documentary: The Girls in The Band

Week 3 (7/28 – 8/1):
Vocabulary Essay Due Monday 7/28, 11:59 pm.
Reading: The Highest Priced Slaves – Sublette
Reading: Throw Yo' Voice Out – Porco
Conversation Forum: Letter to the Class.
Final Paper Topic Proposal Due

Week 4 (8/4 – 8/8): Africa
Brief Introductory Tour, Clave
Reading: The Music of Africa (Excerpt) - Nketia
Clave Listening List
TUBS – Time Unit Box System
Blues

Week 5 (8/11 – 8/15): European Classical Music.
Final Project Formatted Bibliography, Title, and Thesis Paragraph Due
Video: The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra – Britten
Medieval and Renaissance.
Baroque and Classical
Romantic and 21st Century.

Week 6 (8/18, 8/19):
Europe – Gendering Musical Instruments.

Final Paper and Conversation Forum Submissions Due Wednesday 8/19.

For more details about class assignments please see the "Calendar" link and the links under "Content" on Brightspace.