

FU/BEST Program

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Course title: Film Music: Listening Outside the Frame

Course number: FU-BEST 28

Language of instruction: English

Contact hours: 45

ECTS-Credits: 5 **U.S. semester credits:** 3

Course description

Film is often understood as a primarily visual art form, with the development of novel visual technologies, such as 3D, being heavily advertised and well known to mainstream international audiences. In this course, we will uncover an equally important, yet often overlooked, component of film: music. Over the course of the semester we will examine how music has contributed to the success and evolution of films throughout the history of the film industry in North America and Europe.

We will begin with a discussion of the stylistic origins of film music in the Western (and specifically Germanic) classical music tradition, with particular focus on the influence of Richard Wagner. This will be followed by an investigation into the intertwining histories of film and sound-recording technology during their infancy, in which we will examine groundbreaking techniques and works developed in Germany, France, and the United States. Our second task will be to situate the role of film music in some of the most vital movement and moments in film history. For example, we will consider Prokofiev's music in Soviet Russian war epics, as well as the naturalistic "folk" music present in neo-realist Italian films. In our third unit, we expand our investigation beyond film drama to survey how music and sound are used to construct genre. Each week will focus on one genre—for example, action/adventure, horror, musicals—with detailed discussions of representative works in these genres from a variety of time periods and locations. For instance, during our week on musicals we will consider how the early history of the genre was situated in Hollywood, but quickly sparked an international genre including creative re-workings of the genre such as *Les parapluies de Cherbourg* (*The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*) and the truly global production, *Dance in the Dark*. Our semester will end with an exploration of films that were inspired largely by music (rather than music composed to fit film). This unit will include a week on music

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documentaries and the construction of realism, as well as avant-garde explorations of the intersections of film and music.

As is the case for all of the arts, Berlin is an ideal location in which to study music and film. Thus, we will explore this cultural landscape with specific encounters that will complement our conversations and readings. For example, we will visit a theater that hosts a weekly showing of a “silent movie” alongside a live organist.

Student profile

Second-semester sophomore or above.

Prerequisites

None

Course Requirements

Midterm exam: 25%

Term-Paper: 25%

Final exam: 25%

Class participation (includes 1 Independent Project report): 25%

Literature

Photocopied course reader.

Readings in the course reader will be drawn from scholarly and journalistic sources, such as Mera and Burnand’s *European Film Music* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishers, 2006), Braudy and Cohen’s *Film Theory and Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), and Hubbert’s *Celloid Symphonies* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2011).

In addition to readings, this course will include the focused viewing and listening of film. Due to the comprehensive nature of this course, we will not be viewing full films in or outside of class. Rather, we will focus on isolated film clips in order to understand the function of music and sound in film in a detailed and thorough manner.

Course schedule

Sessions	Topics, Readings, etc.
Session 1	<p><i>Unit: An Introduction to Film Music</i></p> <p>Topic: The Long History of Film Music: Wagner and the Stylistic Origins of Music for Moving Pictures</p>

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	<p>Music Selections: <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> (Wagner, 1865), <i>Die Walküre</i> (Wagner, 1870)</p> <p>Film Selections: <i>Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse</i> (<i>The Testament of Dr. Mabuse</i> – Germany, 1933), <i>Captain Blood</i> (USA, 1935), <i>Apocalypse Now</i> (USA, 1979)</p> <p>Readings: “Wagner’s Prelude” from Hickman’s <i>Reel Music: Exploring 100 Years of Film Music</i> (2005)</p> <p>Chapter 2 from Kalinak’s <i>Film Music: A Very Short Introduction</i> (2010), pages 9-22.</p>
<p>Session 2</p>	<p><i>Unit: An Introduction to Film Music</i></p> <p>Topic: Not So “Silent” Films: Live Music Accompaniment and Early Experiments with Sound Recording Technology in French, German, and American films</p> <p>Film Selections: <i>L’anatomie du conscrit</i> (<i>Anatomy of a Draftee</i> – France, 1905) and other selected Gaumont synchronized-sound Phonoscenes, <i>Metropolis</i> (Germany, 1927), <i>Don Juan</i> (USA, 1926), <i>The Jazz Singer</i> (USA, 1927), <i>Ich küsse Ihre Hand, Madame</i> (<i>I Kiss Your Hand, Madame</i> – Germany, 1929), <i>The Broadway Melody</i> (USA, 1929), <i>Singing in the Rain</i> (USA, 1952)</p> <p>Reading: Volker’s “Per aspera ad astra and back again: Film Music in Germany from 1927 to 1945” in <i>European Film Music</i> (2006), pages 13-27.</p> <p>McQuiston, “Classical Lost and Found: Remaking ‘Metropolis’”: <i>NPR.com</i></p> <p>“Playing the Pictures: Music and the Silent Film (1895-1925)” and “All Singing, Dancing, and Talking: Music in the Early Sound Film (1926-1934)” in <i>Celluloid Symphonies</i> (2011), pages 1-34, 109-132.</p>
<p>Session 3</p>	<p><i>Unit: Situating Film Music</i></p> <p>Topic: Musical Style, Nationalism, Propaganda, and the Imagined Past in Epic/War films</p> <p>Film Selections: <i>Броненосец «Потемкин»</i> (<i>Battleship Potemkin</i> – USSR, 1925), <i>Verdun, visions d’histoire</i> (<i>Verdun, Visions of History</i> – France, 1928), <i>All Quiet on the Western</i></p>

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	<p><i>Front</i> (USA, 1930), <i>Александр Невский</i> (<i>Alexander Nevsky</i> – USSR, 1938), <i>Gone with the Wind</i> (USA, 1939), <i>Ben Hur</i> (USA, 1959)</p> <p>Reading: Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Alexandrov, “Statement on Sound” (translated from the Russian, pub. 1928) in <i>Film Theory and Criticism</i> (1999), pages 360-362.</p> <p>Gallez, “The Prokofiev-Einstein Collaboration: <i>Nevsky</i> and <i>Ivan</i> Revisted” in <i>Cinema Journal</i> v. 17, no. 2 (1978), pages 13-35.</p> <p>“Carpet, Wallpaper, and Earmuffs: The Hollywood Score (1935-1959)” from <i>Celluloid Symphonies</i> (2011), pages 169-208</p>
<p>Session 4</p>	<p><i>Unit: Situating Film Music</i></p> <p>Topic: Music in “Golden Ages” of Transatlantic Film – European Directors and Composers in Hollywood (Hitchcock, etc.), Italian Neo-realism, and French New Wave</p> <p>Film Selections: <i>Rebecca</i> (USA, 1940), <i>Casablanca</i> (USA, 1942), <i>Ladri di biciclette</i> (<i>Bicycle Thieves</i> – Italy, 1948), <i>Jules et Jim</i> (<i>Jules and Jim</i> - France, 1962), <i>Le mépris</i> (<i>Contempt</i> – France, 1963)</p> <p>Reading: “Rebecca: music to raise the dead” from Sullivan <i>Hitchcock’s Music</i> (2006), pages 58-80.</p> <p>Dyer, “Music, people, and reality: the case of Italian neo-realism” in <i>European Film Music</i> (2006), pages 28-40.</p> <p>Selections from <i>Listening to the French New Wave: The Film Music and Composers of Postwar French Cinema</i> (2014).</p>
<p>Session 5</p>	<p><i>Unit: The Functions of Music in Film Genres</i></p> <p>Topic: Musicals – Spectacle, Performance, and Fantasy/Realism</p> <p>Film Selections: <i>Meet Me in St. Louis</i> (USA, 1944), <i>Les parapluies de Cherbourg</i> (<i>The Umbrellas of Cherbourg</i> – France/West Germany - 1964), <i>Cabaret</i> (USA, 1972), <i>Dancer in the Dark</i> (International production based in 12 countries such as Denmark, Iceland, Norway, etc., 2000), <i>Hedwig and the Angry Inch</i> (USA, 2001)</p>

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	<p>Reading: Cohan, “Introduction: Musicals of the Studio Era” in <i>Hollywood Musicals: The Film Reader</i> (2002), pages 1-15.</p> <p>McMillan, “Complicitous Critique: <i>Dancer in the Dark</i> as Postmodern Musical” in <i>Discourses in Music</i>, v. 5., no. 2 (2004)</p>
Session 6	Midterm Exam
Session 7	<p><i>Unit: The Functions of Music in Film Genres</i></p> <p>Topic: Scary Sonorities – Monster and Horror Movies</p> <p>Film Selections: <i>King Kong</i> (USA, 1933), <i>Gojira</i> (adapted in USA as <i>Godzilla</i>, Japan – 1954), <i>Psycho</i> (USA, 1960), <i>Nosferatu: Phantom der Nacht</i> (<i>Nosferatu the Vampyr</i> – West Germany, 1979), <i>El laberinto del fauno</i> (<i>Pan’s Labyrinth</i> – Spain/Mexico, 2006), <i>Låt den rätte komma in</i> (<i>Let the Right One In</i> – Sweden, 2008)</p> <p>Reading: Preface, Link’s “The Monster and the Music Box: Children and the Soundtrack of Terror,” and Fenimore’s “Voices that Lie Within: The Heard and Unheard in <i>Psycho</i>” from <i>Music in the Horror Film: Listening to Fear</i>, ed. Learner (2010), pages viii-xi, 38-54, 80-97.</p> <p>Johan Söderqvist (composer for <i>Låt den rätte komma in</i>) interview with <i>Maintitles: Film Music Community!</i></p> <p>Donnelly “Angel of the air: Popol Vuh’s music and Werner Herzog’s films” in <i>European Film Music</i> (2006), pages 116-130.</p>
Session 8	<p><i>Unit: The Functions of Music in Film Genres</i></p> <p>Topic: Themes and Chase Scenes – Adventure and Action Film Music</p> <p>Film Selections: <i>The Adventures of Robin Hood</i> (USA, 1938), <i>Per un pugno di dollari</i> (“A Fistful of Dollars” – Italy/West Germany/Spain, 1964), <i>The Matrix</i> (USA/Australia, 1999), <i>Lola Rennt</i> (<i>Run Lola Run</i> – Germany, 1998), <i>Wo hu cang long</i> (<i>Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon</i> – China/USA/Taiwan, 2000), <i>Banlieue 13</i> (<i>District B13</i> – France, 2004)</p> <p>Reading: “Music in Character and Action Scenes” in <i>Hearing the Movies</i> (2009), pages 195-210.</p>

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	<p>Spring, "Chance Encounters of the Musical Kind: Electronica and Audiovisual Synchronization in Three Films Directed by Tom Tykwer" in <i>Music and the Moving Image</i>, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Fall, 2010), pages 1-14.</p>
Session 9	<p><i>Unit: The Functions of Music in Film Genres</i></p> <p>Topic: From Political Satire to Romantic Comedy – Film Music and Humor</p> <p>Film Selections: <i>The Great Dictator</i> (USA, 1940), <i>The Ladykillers</i> (UK, 1955), <i>Sleepless in Seattle</i> (USA, 1993), <i>Trzy kolory: Bialy</i> (<i>Three Colors: White</i> – Poland/France/Switzerland, 1994), <i>Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain</i> (<i>Amélie</i> – France, 2001), <i>Good Bye Lenin!</i> (Germany, 2003)</p> <p>Reading: Daubney, "Music as a satirical device in the Ealing Comedies" from <i>European Film Music</i> (2006), pages 60-72.</p> <p>Leach, "How to Score Comedy" on tutsplus</p>
Session 10	<p><i>Unit: Music Driving Content</i></p> <p>Topic: Documentaries and Music – The Construction of Narrative and Musical Realism</p> <p>Film Selections: <i>Charlie is My Darling</i> (UK, 1966), <i>Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul</i> (Germany/Turkey, 2005), <i>Heima</i> (Iceland, 2007), <i>Searching for Sugar Man</i> (Sweden/UK, 2012), <i>Twenty Feet From Stardom</i> (USA, 2013)</p> <p>Reading: Corner, "Sounds real: music and documentary" in <i>Popular Music</i>, v. 21/3 (2002), pages 357-366.</p> <p>Cohen, "Other than Verité: Sound and Moving Image in the Rock Documentaries of Peter Whitehead," in <i>Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media</i> v. 52, no. 1 (Spring, 2011), pages 299-314.</p>
Session 11	<p><i>Unit: Music Driving Content</i></p> <p>Topic: Unoriginal or Fresh? – Reusing Classical and Popular Music in Film Scores</p> <p>Film Selections: <i>Såsom i en spegel</i> (<i>Through a Glass Darkly</i> – Sweden, 1961), <i>Easy Rider</i> (USA, 1969), <i>Déetective</i> (France, 1985), <i>Manon des sources</i> (<i>Manon of the Spring</i> – France,</p>

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	<p>1986), <i>Trainspotting</i> (UK, 1996), <i>Cidade de Deus (City of God – Brazil)</i>, 2002)</p> <p>Reading: Cormack, “The Pleasures of Ambiguity: Using Classical Music in Film” and Rodman, “The Popular Song as Leitmotif in 1990s Film” in <i>Changing Tunes: The Use of Pre-Existing Music in Film</i> (2006), pages 19-30, 119-136.</p>
Session 12	<p><i>Unit: Music Driving Content</i></p> <p>Topic: Avant-Garde Explorations of Film and Music</p> <p>Film Selections: <i>Scorpio Rising</i> (USA, 1964), <i>Koyaanisqatsi</i> (USA, 1982), <i>Peaches Does Herself</i> (Germany, 2012), Selections from the <i>Sigur Ros Valtari Film Experiment</i> (Iceland, 2013)</p> <p>Reading: “Introduction. Phonoplay: Recasting Film Music” and Morris, “Sight, Sound, and the Temporality of Myth Making in <i>Koyaanisqatsi</i>” from <i>Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema</i>, eds. Goldmark, Kramer, and Leppert (2007), pages 1-12, 120-135.</p>
Session 13	Final Exam