When & Where: Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30 - 10:45am  ➔ BPS 1236
Instructor: L. Robert Slevc  ➔ slevc@umd.edu
Office Hours: by appointment  ➔ BPS 1147-E
Webpage: http://elms.umd.edu

Description
Music pervades our lives. We listen to music at home, in the car, at restaurants, parties, and bars. Music plays in retail stores and coffee shops, in the gym, and on TV. We go to concerts, dance to music at clubs, sing karaoke, sing in the shower, and even create new music and perform in public. We spend a lot of money and time on music, too – in a 2015 Nielsen poll, millennials reported spending an average of $163/year on music events, recordings, and streaming services. This behavior is neither unusual nor recent: every known human culture uses music in some form, and archeological evidence suggests we have been involved in music for much of our history (e.g., bone flutes have been discovered dating from about 40,000 years ago and singing probably emerged even earlier).

In this seminar course, we will explore the psychological foundations of musical behavior. Specifically, we will discuss scientific work investigating how people perceive, remember, enjoy, and use music. This will include evidence from the development of musical abilities, from musical deficits, from comparative studies of musically relevant behaviors in other species and from other human behaviors (e.g., music/language relationships).

The ability to read and/or perform music is not required for this course.

Readings

This book provides some general background and the organization for much of the course. You will not need this book until the second week of class so you should have plenty of time to acquire it from your favorite bookseller.

In addition to this book, we will read a variety of articles and/or chapters each week. PDFs of these will be posted on the course website at least one week in advance.

Course Requirements

1. Participate (15%). This is a seminar/discussion class, and so you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings and to contribute to discussion. More is not always better, but engagement is necessary. Participation grades will be based on whether you come prepared to discuss the reading, the relevance of your comments to the discussion, and your ability to integrate readings and comments by other seminar participants.

2. Generate discussion topics (10%). To help you prepare for class, you should post some comments on / responses to the readings before each class. These should be relatively
short (≤ 200 words) and could include thoughts about how the readings relate to each other, questions about the interpretation of data or theoretical claims, or questions about how the data/claims can be reconciled with other findings.

- You should post these on the webpage discussion board by **10pm the day before each class meeting** (i.e., 10pm on Monday & Wednesday). You can do so by clicking under the topic heading and adding your entry as a new thread. You are encouraged to browse (and respond to) other peoples’ comments before class.

3. **Lead discussions (15%).** You will be expected to lead discussion of several topics over the term (exactly how many topics you lead will depend on enrollment). You are not required to “teach” the course, as all members of the class will be expected to participate. Instead, your goal will be to help guide the conversation and stimulate discussion. Ideally, you should begin with a short review of the paper and then introduce questions to encourage/guide discussion.

- Topics/days will be assigned via a bidding process: By enrolling in this course, you have been given 100 Music Cognition Bucks (100 MCB; actual value = $0), which you can use to bid on topics. I will allocate topics to the highest bidders as best/fairly as I can. A few rules:
  i. You can only bid between 0 and 20 MCB per topic,
  ii. You should bid on at least 8 different topics (more is fine)
  iii. Your bids should total 100 (*please check - google forms won’t*)

The link to the google form will be posted on ELMS. Your bids are due at **noon on Thursday, August 31.**

4. **Write a media critique (10%).** As with any topic, popular coverage of music perception & cognition research is sometimes done well and sometimes...not so well. For this assignment, you should find a recent(ish) newspaper- or magazine-length article that covers some aspect of music perception/cognition, read and briefly summarize the original study, and critically evaluate the media coverage. This need not be a topic we cover in class (although it can be), however it does need to reference a specific study so you can evaluate the accuracy of the media coverage. This 2-3 page paper, along with copies of the relevant articles, is due on **Thursday, October 19th.**

5. **Write a final paper.** This can be either: (i) a research paper in which you critically review and synthesize the literature on a specific issue or (ii) a research proposal in which you motivate a specific research question and propose an experiment or set of experiments to address that question. Your topic can be an extension of something we covered in class or can be something that we did not specifically discuss as long as it is related to the overall topic of the course. You are encouraged to explore topics that bridge your own research interests with some aspect(s) of the course and to talk to me about your ideas before the due dates.

- **Proposal presentation (5%).** To encourage some advance planning and to get feedback from your peers (and me), you should prepare and give a short (~15
minute) presentation about your proposed topic during the penultimate week of class. You should include some relevant background that explains your topic and draws from at least 5 primary references.

- **Paper (20%).** This final paper should incorporate feedback from your proposal (along with additional research and references) and be approximately 10 double-spaced pages. The paper is due on **Monday, December 11**th.

6. **Take an exam (25%).** The final exam for this class is scheduled for **Thursday, December 14**th, **8-10 am.** This open-book / open-note exam will consist of a few short essay questions concerning major topics discussed throughout the semester.

**Course Policies**

This course is subject to university-wide policies for undergraduate courses, which are detailed at [http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html](http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html). These include issues of academic integrity, student conduct, sexual misconduct, discrimination, accessibility, attendance, absences, missed assignments, student rights, official UMD communications, midterm grades, complaints about final exams, copyright and intellectual property, final exams, course evaluations, and campus resources. A few details specific to this class:

- **Attendance:** Because this is a discussion-based seminar course, class attendance is important. Excused absences (as described via the link above) will be granted when appropriately documented. If you must miss an exam because of an excused absence, please inform me in writing as soon as possible (ideally before the schedule adjustment deadline) so we can make alternate arrangements. Note that I will also drop your two lowest participation scores, effectively allowing two ‘unexcused’ absences.

- **Grading:** Your final letter grade will correspond to the weighted sum of the grades for the course requirements listed above\(^1\) as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Breakdown</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>.15 × participation + .10 × discussion posts + .15 × discussion leading + .10 × media critique + .25 × final paper + .25 × final exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>.15 × participation + .10 × discussion posts + .15 × discussion leading + .10 × media critique + .25 × final paper + .25 × final exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>.10 × participation + .10 × discussion posts + .10 × discussion leading + .10 × media critique + .20 × final paper + .20 × final exam</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>.10 × participation + .10 × discussion posts + .10 × discussion leading + .10 × media critique + .20 × final paper + .20 × final exam</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>.00 × participation + .00 × discussion posts + .00 × discussion leading + .00 × media critique + .10 × final paper + .10 × final exam</td>
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Late assignments will be penalized by one grade step per day late (e.g., an A- quality assignment turned in within 24 hours after the due date would receive a B+). I will be happy to discuss your grades with you, however any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing within 1 week of receiving the grade.

\(^1\) i.e., .15 × participation + .10 × discussion posts + .15 × discussion leading + .10 × media critique + .25 × final paper + .25 × final exam

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# Topics and readings

A tentative schedule of topics and readings is listed below. Note that this is subject to change – please monitor the course webpage for updates.

*(Remember: discussion posts are due by 10PM on Monday/Wednesday before we meet)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Aug 29</td>
<td>(Tu)</td>
<td>Organizational issues &amp; Introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Aug 31</td>
<td>(Thu)</td>
<td>What is music?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 – Sep 5</td>
<td>(Tu)</td>
<td>Physics and psychophysics of music</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 – 9/7</td>
<td>(Thu)</td>
<td>First musical steps</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. <em>YATM</em> Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 – 9/12</td>
<td>(Tu)</td>
<td>Early musical development</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 – 9/14</td>
<td>(Thu)</td>
<td>Music in childhood</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. <em>YATM</em> Chapter 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 – 9/19</td>
<td>(Tu)</td>
<td>Music &amp; non-musical abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 – 9/21</td>
<td>(Thu)</td>
<td><em>Interlude: Jessica Grahn</em> (<a href="http://www.jessicagrahn.com">http://www.jessicagrahn.com</a>)</td>
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<td>(Dr. Grahn will be giving a talk on Friday 9/22 at 10:15 am in BRB 1103)</td>
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9 – 9/26 (Tu) Music and social processes

10 – 9/28 (Thu) Music in adolescence
1. YATM Chapter 3

11 – 10/3 (Tu) Musical preferences

12 – 10/5 (Thu) The musical adult
1. YATM Chapter 4

13 – 10/10 (Tu) Musical plasticity

14 – 10/12 (Thu) Musical deficits

15 – 10/17 (Tu) Music at work
1. YATM Chapter 5

16 – 10/19 (Thu) Cross-modal music perception (note: media critique due)


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17 – 10/24  (Tu)  Music at play

1. YATM Chapter 6


(Dr. Bidelman will be giving a talk on Friday 10/27 at 10:15 am in BRB 1103)


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19 – 10/31  (Tu)  Music and emotion


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20 – 11/2  (Thu)  Music and memory

1. YATM Chapter 7

21 – 11/7  (Tu)  Music and memory 2


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22 – 11/9  (Thu)  No class – work on your paper proposals

23 – 11/14  (Tu)  Music and well-being

1. YATM Chapter 8

24 – 11/16  (Thu)  *Interlude*: Claude Alain [http://research.baycrest.org/calain](http://research.baycrest.org/calain)

(Dr. Alain will be giving a talk on Friday 11/17 at 10:15 am in BRB 1103)


25 – 11/21  (Tu)  Music and rehabilitation


26 – 11/23  (Thu)  Thanksgiving Break

27 – 11/28  (Tu)  Proposals

28 – 11/30  (Thu)  More proposals

29 – 12/5  (Tu)  Music across cultures


30 – 12/7  (Thu)  Music across species