Film Music: History and Function from 1930 to Present

Units: 4
Term—Day—Time: Fall 2021—Tuesdays and Thursdays—4:00–5:50pm (Pacific Time)
Location: TMC G156
Instructor: Tim Greiving
Office: Virtual
Office Hours: Virtually anytime
Contact Info: tim.greiving@usc.edu

Course Description

Music is the soul of film. Film scores can animate, enhance, pump blood into, subvert, and often transcend their movie. This underlooked, underappreciated art form is a hundred years old—still an infant compared to its predecessors like opera, ballet, and theatre music, but plenty old enough to have a rich, fascinating history. In this course we'll take a trip through that history, at times skimming along the surface, sometimes diving deep. With the aid of film clips, lively discussion, and the occasional special guest, you'll gain a solid knowledge of and appreciation for the most heard but least noticed art form of the past century.

(Because we're cramming a century of history into a single semester, we'll primarily focus on *Hollywood* film music, although a few classes will be devoted to international films and composers. We'll also limit our study to *original scores* for *feature films*, without spending much or any time on television, videogames, or songs and music supervision.)

Recommended Reading

• *King Kong* chapter from *Music by Max Steiner*, by Steven. C. Smith (Blackboard / Content)

• "The sound of movie music," *New York Times*, March 28, 1976

• "Underscoring Richard Wagner's influence on film music," *L.A. Times*, June 17, 2010

- [“John Williams’ early life: How a NoHo kid and UCLA Bruin became the movie music man”](#)
L.A. Times, July 18, 2018

- [“Young composers challenge the Hollywood music establishment,”](#) *Washington Post*, Aug. 17, 2017

- [“Female Composers Are Trying to Break Film’s Sound Barrier,”](#) *New York Times*, Jan. 10, 2019

- [“Name Composers Not Above Getting the Boot,”](#) *Variety*, April 29, 2015

Description and Assessment of Assignments

There will be one midterm writing assignment and one final exam, with four shorter writing assignments throughout the semester.

Weekly films
For each class period, I will assign two films to watch related to what we cover that day.

You will likely need to pay to rent or download many of the films I assign—although definitely always check any streaming services you’re subscribed to and see if they carry the movie. Consider this cost the equivalent of purchasing a textbook.

Score Role Paragraphs
Four times during the semester, you’ll pick one of the assigned films we’re discussing that week and write a paragraph (100–150 words) about the role the score plays in a scene (or moment) from that film. This may include musical, emotional, or psychological analysis, but the larger question will be about its *role*.

Midterm essay
Building on the tools gained through the paragraph assignments, you’ll pick one film—to be approved by me—and write a longer, more substantial essay (1000–1500 words) about the role that score plays in the entire film, with a brief introduction about the film and its composer.

Final Exam
A short-answer exam, the culmination of the major subjects and ideas we discuss in class. It will be scheduled for the period of our final class.

Grading Breakdown

Grades will be recorded in the Blackboard gradebook. Participation will be measured by your level of engagement in our class discussions.

Assignment	% of Grade
Paragraphs (4)	30
Midterm essay	25
Participation	10
Final exam	25
Total	**100**

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale.
A 93-100
A- 90-92
B+ 87-89
B 83-86
B- 80-82
C+ 77-79
C 73-76
C- 70-72
D+ 67-69
D 63-66
D- 60-62
F 59 and below

Policies

This course is being offered in an in-person modality. Please be attentive to the class attendance policy found in this syllabus. Online alternatives will not be considered unless I am presented with a directive from the offices of Student Health or Student Affairs. However, if on any day you are ill or otherwise cannot complete Trojan Check to produce a valid Campus Day Pass, stay home. In that case, contact me to make up work or otherwise maintain contact with the class.

Late work
You are allowed up to one late paragraph assignment (to be submitted by the subsequent class period). Beyond that, any late assignments will be graded F.

Attendance

Regular attendance is important and highly advised, and your participation will count positively towards your final grade. If you have an exceptional case that won't allow you to regularly attend, please contact me and special considerations will be made.

Course evaluation

You will have an opportunity to submit comments on the mid-semester evaluation and the standard USC course evaluation survey at the end of the semester. Be honest!

Course Schedule

Week 1 (August 24, 26)
Introduction: Why film music matters, how it all started, and how it's evolved. Film music as an heir to the concert hall, opera, theatre, and the church; the various roles music can play in a film, the mechanics and artistry of film scoring, definition of terms, innovations throughout the years, etc.

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Required films for Week 2:
• *King Kong* (1933)
• *The Sea Hawk* (1940)
• *All About Eve* (1950)
• *Sunset Blvd.* (1950)

Week 2 (August 31, September 2)
The Architects: Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Max Steiner, Franz Waxman, Alfred Newman, Dmitri Tiomkin

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Required films for Week 3:
• *Spellbound* (1945)
• *The Best Years of Our* Lives (1946)
• *The Big Country* (1958)
• *Pinocchio* (1940)

Week 3
--PARAGRAPH 1 due, September 8 at midnight--

(September 7)
The Architects: Hugo Friedhofer, Victor Young, Herbert Stothart, Miklos Rosza, Bronislau Kaper
The Torchbearers: David Raksin, Jerome Moross, André Previn, Ernest Gold, Russell Garcia

(September 9)
Mickey-Mousing: Disney and other cartoon music, and its far-reaching influence (Carl Stalling, Frank Churchill, Paul Smith, Leigh Harline, George Bruns, Pixar)

Classical Composers Try Their Hand: Camille Saint-Saëns, Dmitri Shostakovich, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, John Corigliano, Philip Glass, Michael Nyman, Gustavo Dudamel

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Required films for Week 4:
• *Citizen Kane* (1941)
• *Vertigo* (1958)
• *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951)
• *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962)

Week 4
(September 14)
The Innovators: Bernard Herrmann

(September 16)
The Innovators: Alex North, Elmer Bernstein

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Required films for Week 5:
• *The Pawnbroker* (1964)
• *Three Days of the Condor* (1975)
• *Goldfinger* (1964)
• *The Princess Bride* (1987)

Week 5
--PARAGRAPH 2 due, September 22 at midnight--

(September 21)
Jazz comes to Hollywood: Henry Mancini, Duke Ellington, Quincy Jones, Lalo Schifrin, Dave Grusin

(September 23)
The Rock and Pop Invasion: John Barry, Burt Bacharach, Peter Gabriel, Brian Eno, Toto, Mark Knopfler, Mark Mothersbaugh, Jon Brion

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Required films for Week 6:
• *The Conversation* (1974)
• *Duel* (1971)
• *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966)
• *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962)

Week 6
(September 28)
Broadway Sensibility: David Shire, Marvin Hamlisch, Billy Goldenberg, Alan Menken

(September 30)
Continental Breeze: Ennio Morricone, Maurice Jarre, Michel Legrand, Georges Delerue, Nino Rota

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Required films for Week 7:
• *The Parallax View* (1974)
• *Rocky* (1976)
• *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979)
• *Rudy* (1993)

Week 7
(October 5)
The Auteur Era: Jerry Fielding, Bill Conti, Michael Small, Pino Donaggio, Jack Nitzsche, Angelo Badalamenti

(October 7)
The Second Coming: Jerry Goldsmith

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Required films for Week 8:
• *E.T.* (1982)
• *Jurassic Park* (1993)

Week 8
--MIDTERM due, October 13 at midnight--

(October 12)
The Second Coming: John Williams

Fall Recess, October 14–15

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Required films for Week 9:
• *Easy Rider* (1969)
• *The Tree of Life* (2011)
• *Halloween* (1978)

• *Blade Runner* (1982)

Week 9
(October 19)
Song Scores, Music Supervisors, and The Kubrick Effect: Or, How To Stop Worrying About an Original Film Score and Learn to Love The Temp (*Easy Rider*, Martin Scorsese, Peter Weir, John Hughes, Quentin Tarantino, Terrence Malick, Michael Mann)

(October 21)
The Space Age: Wendy Carlos, Giorgio Moroder, Vangelis, Tangerine Dream, Klaus Doldinger, John Carpenter, Harold Faltermeyer, Goblin

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Required films for Week 10:
• *Avalon* (1990)
• *Meet Joe Black* (1998)
• *The Land Before Time* (1988)
• *The Fugitive* (1992)

Week 10
--PARAGRAPH 3 due, October 27 at midnight--

(October 26)
The Next Generation: Randy Newman, Thomas Newman, David Newman

(October 28)
TNG: James Horner, James Newton Howard, Basil Poledouris, George Fenton

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Required films for Week 11:
• *Back to the Future* (1985)
• *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992)
• *Emma* (1996)
• *Edward Scissorhands* (1990)

Week 11
(November 2)
TNG: Alan Silvestri, Bruce Broughton, Elliot Goldenthal, Trevor Jones, Randy Edelman

(November 4)
TNG: Rachel Portman, Danny Elfman, Howard Shore, Carter Burwell

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Required films for Week 12:
• *Three Colors: Blue* (1993)
• *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000)
• *The Matrix* (1999)
• *3:10 to Yuma* (2007)

Week 12
(November 9)
Further Abroad: Zbigniew Preisner, Wojciech Kilar, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Tan Dun, Gustavo Santoalla, Ravi Shankar, Joe Hisaishi, Fernando Velázquez

(November 11)
The New Millennium: John Ottman, Don Davis, David Arnold, Marco Beltrami, Mychael Danna

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Required films for Week 13:
• *Rain Man* (1988)
• *Interstellar* (2014)
• *Malcolm X* (1992)
• *Get Out* (2017)

Week 13
--PARAGRAPH 4 due, November 17 at midnight--

(November 16)
The Zimmer Era: Hans Zimmer, John Powell, Harry Gregson-Williams, Klaus Badelt, Lorne Balfe, Ramin Djawadi, Steve Jablonsky, Junkie XL, Brian Tyler

(November 18)
Women and Non-White-Dudes (an Embarrassingly Brief History): Terence Blanchard, Angela Morley, Michael Abels, Pinar Toprak, Germaine Franco, Kathryn Bostic, Tamar-kali, Jocelyn Pook, Kris Bowers

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Required films for Week 14:
• *Birth* (2004)
• *Star Trek* (2009)
• *Moonlight* (2016)
• *First Man* (2018)

Week 14
(November 23)

The Cutting Edge, Traditionalists: Alexandre Desplat, Michael Giacchino, Daniel Pemberton

(November 25)
The Cutting Edge, Traditionalists: Nicholas Britell, Daniel Hart, Justin Hurwitz, Ludwig Göransson, Emile Mosseri, Dan Romer

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Required films for Week 15:
• *The Fountain* (2006)
• *There Will Be Blood* (2007)
• *The Social Network* (2010)
• *Jackie* (2016)

Week 15
(November 30)
The Cutting Edge, Inventors: Clint Mansell, Cliff Martinez, Jóhann Jóhannsson, Jonny Greenwood

(December 2)
The Cutting Edge, Inventors: Mica Levi, Trent Reznor, Bryce Dessner, Max Richter, Dustin O'Halloran and Hauschka, Hildur Guðnadóttir, Steven Price, Nick Cave and Warren Ellis

--FINAL EXAM, December 9 at 4:30pm--

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required
You will need a laptop, internet access, and access to Blackboard.

USC technology rental program
We realize that attending classes online and completing coursework remotely requires access to technology that not all students possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university's equipment rental program. To apply, please submit an application. The Student Basic Needs team will contact all applicants in early August and distribute equipment to eligible applicants prior to the start of the fall semester.

USC Technology Support Links
Zoom information for students
Blackboard help for students
Software available to USC Campus

Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment

USC has a policy that prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment. Please do not share or otherwise distribute class materials, music scores or recordings produced by me or any students in the conduct of this course without expressed permission.

SCampus Section 11.12(B)

Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (SeeSection C.1 Class Notes Policy).

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/research-and-scholarship-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health *- (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline *- 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*
suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) *- (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call*
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity, Equal Opportunity and Title IX *- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*
eeotix.usc.edu
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment *- (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services *- (213) 740-0776*

osas.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention *- (213) 821-4710*

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC *- (213) 740-2101*

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC*: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

LiveSafe Mobile Safety App

TrojansAlert Emergency Notification System

USC Department of Public Safety *- UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call*

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Thornton Emergency Services

Thornton Emergency Response Team: If evacuation or other actions are needed, members of the Thornton Emergency Response Team will provide verbal instructions.

Thornton Business Continuity Team: Multi-channel messages will be sent to your phone, text, and email providing next steps in the case of an emergency or significant unexpected disruption to facilities or operations.