Monday / Wednesday 4:00 -5:50 PM  Taper Hall THH 202
USC General Education: GE - Arts
Spring 2022

Instructor – Dr. Scott Spencer  scottspe@usc.edu
Teaching Assistant and Guitar Impresario – Joseph Douglass jwdoyla@usc.edu
World Music

MUSC 102 - 4 Units

Monday / Wednesday 4:00 - 5:50 PM  Taper Hall THH 202
USC General Education: GE - Arts
Spring 2022

Catalog Description

Exploration of music and cultures of the world. Engagement with international musicians, global issues, field work and musical diasporas in Los Angeles.

Prerequisites

This course does not require music literacy, performance ability or course prerequisites. However, it will require active listening, in-depth reading, engaged writing, discussion, experience, and acceptance of the unfamiliar during personal fieldwork. We will incorporate the facilities and people of USC, student engagement, visiting musicians from around the world, and the singular city of Los Angeles and its musical microclimates into our study.

Overview

We will investigate music from around the world as a social function rooted in local cultural contexts. Viewed through the academic lens of Ethnomusicology, the course will explore musical culture through a variety of means. Beginning with a classic cross-cultural approach, we will comparatively investigate regional music for a broad base of experience. We will gain a working knowledge of musical practices by area (Africa, Asia, Europe, etc.), instrument, and performance realm. We will detail the physical aspects of music (instrument, performance practice, the physics of music, recording technology, etc.). We will then undertake an in-depth study of the uses and functions of music in a variety of social and cultural settings in order to set them in their cultural contexts (politics, entertainment, education, societal norming, rite of passage, etc.).

Throughout the course we will use situations, examples, and student experiences to explore conceptual realities of music (improvisation, mashups, diasporic networks, musical mistakes, copyright, performance, hybridization). We will rely on recordings, videos, performances and musical guests to inform our understanding of music. We will undertake in-depth reading on topics in music and accounts of cross-cultural musical situations. In addition, we will engage with music making through personal fieldwork – both on campus and throughout Los Angeles. Students should prepare to engage with artforms and cultural contexts outside of their comfort zones.

The course will approach the concept of music as a fluid and dynamic practice rooted in community rather than as a static printed score. We will analyze works and happenings to understand concepts, and will develop a working knowledge of terms, contexts, technologies, and practices. We will explore the creative process through a deep engagement with music making – in the classroom, in the field, and in our lives. Using
modern musical realities, we will take into consideration mediated musical practices and will explore uses of technology as people make music, distribute recordings, collaborate on projects, and express identity. Our goal is to develop a literacy of musical moments in order to better understand humanity, and comfortably engage with the unfamiliar.

As the students and instructor engage with performances and musicians throughout the semester, we will use the class to develop a lasting digital document mapping our encounters with local musical cultures. The resulting interactive digital map will host field notes, images and information gathered during the semester, and will serve as a resource for students looking for music around the USC campus, LA and the larger world.

Global Perspectives – Citizenship in a Global Era

At USC, we are at the crossroads of an increasingly global musical network, and we will take advantage of local diasporic communities to bring academic theory to life. Rooted in the local, our explorations will demonstrate that music as an artform is inherently political and global, and that performances and recordings generated here deeply impact the rest of the world. We will explore global connections and far-flung impact in a wide variety of cultural settings, demonstrating that citizenship in musical communities often transcends mere geopolitical definitions of citizenship. At play will be ideas of musical representation, personal positioning, protest, expression, freedom, and censorship, often through the lens of social justice.

Learning Objectives

Analysis - Students will experience personal engagement with musical genres from around the world, with an in-depth analysis of these forms through critical review of academic writing, discussions of their observations, and writing assignments to demonstrate their ability to bridge readings and experiences. Students will also be required to post multiple submissions to a digital mapping tool in which their field observations are paired with class readings and personal analysis.

Making - Though not expected to take part in music performance on a regular basis, students will be working closely with musicians throughout this class, and will gain extensive knowledge of the cultural contexts and practical challenges of making music.

Connectivity - Students will interact with musical tropes that are artistic manifestations of direct engagement with cultural upheaval in the diaspora, as well as forms of music that function as political protest or religious expression. Musical examples and readings will contextualize the global soundstage that is today's music, and will illustrate the complex webs of communication and influence that constitute today's musical networks.

Context - A broad base of academic readings, written by scholars with extensive fieldwork in their areas, will provide cultural context for each musical genre or geographic region covered in class. Listening assignments will provide an aural body of knowledge from which to interpret new musical experiences.

Engagement - No form of music is made in a vacuum. Students will discuss how and why music is being made with the practitioners themselves, often in their own musical
communities. Students will engage with the diverse musical resources of the city of Los Angeles, and will make available those interactions to the entire class through interactive digital mapping technology. Our view will be simultaneously local and global, with the understanding that musical practices here often have impact around the world.

Readings and Listening Material

The foundation of this class is music. There is an unusually broad and extensive collection of recordings required in the weekly assignments for this class, and these are found in a number of online and other digital video and audio resources which I will be curating throughout the semester. I will use Blackboard and other digital portals to connect you with these resources, and to all class readings. Expect to spend on average three to four hours per week listening and viewing these primary sources. Additionally, the readings serve a number of important roles including contextualizing the music culturally, situating these musical traditions to political, religious and social justice issues, serving as examples of case studies and field work, and critically exploring the functions and power of music around the world.

Evaluation

Field Essays (2) [20% of grade in total] Due September 7; October 12
Field Essays are personal field notes and descriptions of a musical happening, between 1000-1500 words. A Field Essay should include descriptions of the event, reactions to the event, and any follow-ups on the part of the researcher to better understand the event in its cultural context. An event could include a concert on campus or in greater Los Angeles, a personal interview with a musician, a rehearsal, jam session, dance party or any other live happening involving music. It is preferable that the researcher share temporal space with the event (be there), or justify the mediated nature of the event (explain why you are reporting on an online event). An ideal essay would include a writeup of the researcher’s plans and previous knowledge of the music or musicians; a detailed description of the event including time, place, people, crowd, reactions, collective responses, and surprises; further research into what happened and why it happened; and notes about discussions with musicians and/or audience members, or details from further readings. In short: be there, be in the moment, keep your eyes open, ask questions, and write it down like you are explaining it to someone who wasn’t there.

Important note to all fieldworkers: Allow extra time for these projects, as things will change in the field. People will be late or will not show up. Events will be cancelled. Be flexible and forgiving. Musicians are usually helpful and cooperative, especially if you approach with respect and interest. Always ask before documenting – especially with video or audio recording devices.

Details from field essays will be uploaded to an online mapping tool with supporting images or recordings. Through this software, the class will develop an online resource that documents and maps the musical communities of USC and the surrounding city of Los Angeles. Our goal is to provide students in the class (and potentially beyond the bounds of this class) an interactive map with a corpus of local musical knowledge, so that they can better explore and engage with local music and musicians.
**Analytical Essays** (2) [20% of grade in total]  Due: September 21; October 26
This is a standard academic paper. An Analytic Essay will involve the written analysis of scholarly materials and ideas, working with theory within readings from at least three other reading sources (from the class or outside readings). You could apply the ideas from a reading to a particular performance, recording or style of music, and then dig further into other readings to help answer questions or document issues. This project is intended to encourage active engagement with readings and theory, and to promote awareness of cultural aspects of music while also fostering an ability to do smart and focused research. An Analytic Essay should be relatively brief and concise, with an introduction, body, conclusion and bibliography - roughly 1500 words including quotations, citations and any examples. If possible, use this assignment as a theoretic basis for your final project. I would recommend turning in a rough draft of your essay a week prior to the deadline for feedback.

**Midterm / Final Exams** [30% of grade in total]
Midterm Exam: October 3. Will be sent by email. Return in 24 hours.
Final Exam: December 7. Will be sent by email. Return in 24 hours.
A midterm and final exam will challenge students to apply class concepts, readings and listening experience from the course to fresh examples and larger societal issues. In each test, students will be asked to engage with a form of musical performance or musical concept, and will use their skills from class to explain its social and cultural context. Answers will be written, and will cite course readings where applicable.

**Final Project** [30% of grade]
Final project due last week of class.
A final project will be developed in consultation with the instructor. This is often a more formal academic paper, but the format can be flexible. A rough draft is suggested before the final version so that there are no surprises. I am open to a variety of platforms for final projects, provided that the platform reflects a rationalized theoretical grounding and incorporates materials and/or fieldwork appropriate to the proposed study. Citations and an academic writing format are necessary. Engagement with musical forms and academic readings is essential. Analysis - as we have learned over the course of the semester - is an innate part of any research. Creative projects will be considered, provided they engage with concepts in music and are accompanied by theoretic groundwork and written reflections. As a guide to scope, a traditional research paper-style final project would need to be a minimum of 2500 words. Creative projects would need to be accompanied by a written self-critique and process reflection.

Dates and concerts of interest:

Thornton School of Music performances listing: [https://www.thorntonlive.usc.edu](https://www.thorntonlive.usc.edu)

Check out USC’s Kazan Taiko at the USC American Football halftime performance on September 3rd in collaboration with the marching band

USC Vision and Voices series: [http://visionsandvoices.usc.edu](http://visionsandvoices.usc.edu)
Class Trajectory

Readings, Zoom links, listening, videos, etc. are all on the Blackboard site, listed by week in the “Content” section. Additional readings can be found in the “Readings” folder, and on particular topics in the course crowdsourced bibliographies.

Week 1 (August 22, 24)

Overview, methodologies, introduction of instructor and students, develop syllabus, what is music?

Assignment - write a general introduction of yourself and post it to the Blackboard site.

Week 2 (August 29, 31)

Theory: Uses and Functions of Music.
Musical Area: Various
Readings:

Listening: Review your listening device to better understand your listening practices. Look at genre, length, era, most and least played songs, and determine what this says about your sonic life and identity.

Week 3 (Wednesday, September 7) [no class on Monday, September 5 – Labor Day]

First fieldwork essay due Wednesday, September 7

Theory: Musicology and Ethnomusicology
Musical Area: West Africa
Readings:

Listening: Akan drumming; Sowah Mensah; Juju; Fela Kuti; Tinariwen.
**Week 4 (September 12, 14)**

Theory: Performance as Learning; Approaching World Music  
Musical Area: West Africa, with attention to Mali. 
Readings:  
- Locke, David. “Africa/Ewe, Mande, Dagomba, Shona, BaAka.” Ch. 3 in *Worlds of Music*  

Listening: Accra post office field recording; Feld BaAka recordings; Ewe puberty songs; Dagbamba dance.

**Week 5 (September 19, 21) First Analytical Essay due Wednesday, September 21**

Theory: Cultural Context of World Music  
Musical Area: Indonesia  
Readings:  

Listening: Balinese Gamelan; Monkey chant; Indonesian Guitar Masters; Javanese Gamelan

**Week 6 (September 26, 28)**

Theory: Theater, History, Performativity, Dance  
Musical Area: China, Japan [possible guests in class]  
Readings:  

Listening: Kabuki and Noh theater; silk and bamboo traditions; shakuhachi flute; taiko.
**Week 7** (October 3, 5) Midterm exam this week – emailed on the 3rd, return in 24 hours

Theory: Tradition, Modernity, Bhangra  
Musical Area: India. Possible guest in class.

Readings:
- Reck, David B. “India / South India” Ch. 6 in *Worlds of Music*. P. 293-330.

Listening: Ravi Shankar introduction to raga; Karnatic traditions; Bollywood.

**Week 8** (October 10, 12) Second Field Essay due Wednesday, October 12

Theory: Dance, Sound System, Recording, Repurposing Technology  
Musical Area: Jamaica, Possible guest this week

Readings:
- Katz, Mark. Ch. 1 in *Groove Music*.
- Stolzoff, Norman C. “Dancehall Culture in Jamaica: An Introduction.” Ch. 1-3 in *Wake the Town and Tell the People*

Listening: Kraftwerk; Afrika Bambaataa; NWA; Sugar Hill Gang; Wolfman Jack.

**Week 9** (October 17, 19)

Theory: Music and Politics  
Musical Area: Haiti, Caribbean, various

Readings:
- Averill, Gage. “Konpa-direk for Life” Ch. 3 in *A Day for the Hunter, A Day for the Prey*. P. 71-94.


Listening: Konpa-direk; carnival music; steel pan; political music; zouk; soca.

**Week 10** (October 24, 26) Second Analytical Essay due Wednesday, October 26

Theory: Music and Migration  
Musical Area: Urban America, Irish, Dominican Republic
Readings:
- Austerlitz, Paul. “Merengue on the Global Stage.” Ch. 7 in *Merengue: Dominican Music and Dominican Identity*. P. 123-134.
Listening: Merengue in New York; Michael Coleman 78 rpm records; Bomba y Plena.

**Week 11** (October 31, November 2)

Theory: Mashups, Mistakes, Cultural Overlaps
Musical Area: Ireland, Pakistan, Jazz
Readings:
- Spencer, Scott. Forthcoming “Meme and Variations: Memes of Coltrane’s Giant Steps”

Listening: Friends Bagpipe Band - Silakot, Pakistan; Black Watch bagpipe band - Scotland; Ella Fitzgerald; Class-supplied examples of mashups

**Week 12** (November 7, 9) [possible class guest]

Theory: Music and Technology, musical migrations
Musical Area: Native American, classical guitar
Readings:
Listening: The Columbia wax cylinder collection; Plains Indians.

**Week 13** (November 14, 16)

Potentially two guest this week

Theory: Aesthetics, Cultural Values, Stephen Feld
Musical Area: Middle East
Readings:
Listening: Maqam in multiple forms; chanting Quran; devotional music; Israeli music; Syrian Jewish Songs.

**Week 14** (November 21. No class on Wednesday – Thanksgiving break)

Wild card class. Topic To Be Announced. Maybe Music therapy?

**Week 15** (November 28, 30) Final Project Due this week

Theory: World Music as Genre

Musical Area: Various
Readings:
Listening: Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan remixes; Zap Mama; Putumayo records; Smithsonian Folkways.

**Final Exam:** Wednesday, December 7. Exam will be emailed, return in 24 hours.

Selected Bibliography - all articles can be found on the class Blackboard site


Merriam, Alan P. “Ethnomusicology: Discussion and Definition of the Field.” Ethnomusicology 4: 3 (September 1960), 107-114.


Spencer, Scott. Forthcoming “Making Irish Bagpipes in Sialkot, Pakistan.”


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 Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not
retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

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 for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086 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.symphlicity.com/care_report

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

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776 osas.usc.edu

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

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, Equity and Inclusion - (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.

**USC Department of Public Safety** - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

**Office of the Ombuds** - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323) 442-0382 (HSC) ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

**Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice** - (323) 442-3340 or otfp@med.usc.edu chan.usc.edu/otfp

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.