

MUSI 405
Survey of Music in America
J-Term, 2020

Instructor: Rob Haskins, D.M.A., Ph.D. <rob.haskins@unh.edu>
Office Hours: Email with questions or to schedule a video meeting
Meeting Info: Online
Textbook: None

Course Description

MUSI 405 introduces students to two musical traditions of the United States—jazz and classical or concert music—in order to explore how music signifies as an interpretable art form and functions as a historical artifact, within a social practice, as an expression of individual subjectivity, and as an expression of cultural identity. It also attempts to draw connections between American music and the country’s history and cultural life.

Course Objectives

This 400-level course assumes no prior background in music. The course will include commentary on both instrumental and vocal musical forms and furnish opportunities for you to listen carefully to them. Along the way, I will give a brief history of American jazz and classical music traditions along with representative works from that history. I have high expectations for your performance, but I balance these high expectations with my commitment to teach to the best of my ability. I am always happy to discuss any aspect of this course at *any* time. Do not suffer in silence.

For MUSI 405, students should keep in mind the following objectives:

- (1) increase general understanding of American jazz and classical music in the twentieth century;
- (2) listen to assigned musical works sufficiently to describe selected passages from them;

Course Structure

MUSI 405 is divided into two units of roughly equal length, to cover history and music from around 1900 to around 1945 and from around 1945 to the present. The two large units alternate between jazz and concert (classical) music.

LECTURES

Lectures are delivered as video podcasts of the PowerPoint presentations for the course with a voiceover; they will be devoted to topics listed in the “MUSI 405 At a Glance” section below. I will ask you to pause the podcast to listen to pieces discussed in the podcast. Recordings will be available via YouTube or (more rarely) Spotify and Canvas. Although you will be able to pass without listening to any music, it will make more sense to listen to the pieces after they are described in the lectures. Exams will ask you (among other things) to discuss the sound of various compositions, and good answers to such questions will usually result in a high grade in the course overall.

If links don't work, contact me immediately.

Assessment

GENERAL

Your semester grade will be represented as a percentage, determined from:

Exam 1	70%
Exam 2	30%
TOTAL	100%

I use the following grading scale:

95–100	A	77–79	C+
90–94	A–	73–76	C
87–89	B+	70–72	C–
83–86	B	60–69	D
80–82	B–	0–59	F

So long as you attempt to complete an exam on time, the *lowest* grade you can receive is 50%. (I reserve the right to rescind this principle if students seem not to make any effort in the work they submit.)

EXAMS

The two exams—both taken online—will test you on your understanding of key terms and other concepts and the general chronology of musical developments. An exam may include a short

essay question that requires some critical thinking and synthesis of the course material. Some exam questions will ask you to listen to a composition discussed in the podcasts and answer questions about what you hear.

Course Policies and Miscellaneous Statements

ATTENDANCE

There is no attendance policy, but I urge you to go through the course material regularly so that you aren't put in the unpleasant position of cramming material before an exam. The course material will be available from December 27. Exams will appear on the day they are assigned in the "MUSI 405 At a Glance" section, below.

DUE DATES AND LATE POLICY

Due dates are clearly listed in Canvas.

I will not grade a late assignment unless I grant an extension; extensions are sometimes unavoidable, but I don't automatically grant these requests because I believe it's unfair to the other students who have taken the time and effort to prioritize their work so that they can meet deadlines. In order to qualify for an extension, you must contact me in advance (no later than 5 p.m. the day before a stated deadline). If I grant an extension, you must complete it by the time of the agreed-upon deadline or I won't grade it. If you have difficulty prioritizing work, see me; I can help.

GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE AND PRONOUNS

If at all possible, adopt the habit of using substitutes for male-gendered words—for instance, "humankind" instead of "mankind," "employees" instead of "manpower," "intermediary" instead of "middle man," "chairperson" or "chair" instead of "chairman," and so on.

Also, a pronoun that refers to a singular noun earlier in the sentence must be singular as well; by convention, "he" has classically been used, as in the sentence "The listener chooses the approach he wants to take." Feminist and transgender identities, however, are unduly marginalized by always choosing forms of "he." One solution is to recast the sentence in plural, so that forms of "they" can be used instead ("Listeners choose the approach they want to take."); I myself prefer alternating between male, female, and gender-neutral pronouns, as described in the table below:

	Subject	Object	Poss. Adj.	Poss. Pron.	Reflexive
FEMALE	she	her	her	hers	herself
MALE	he	him	his	his	himself
GENDER-NEUTRAL	ze	zir	zir	zirs	zirsself

Do not use forms of “he/she” as they are unwieldy. Other forms of gender-neutral pronouns are available.

I offer the above as a guideline for usage as well as for critical reflection and discussion, not as a prescriptive demand. However, whatever method you choose, you must ordinarily observe the grammatical rules for subject–verb agreement in English—that is, I do not allow the so-called singular they.

NOTE: if you are transgender and wish to be referred to as “they,” please let me know as soon as possible. If you wish, you will not be required to match singular nouns with singular pronouns in any writing assignments.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Please note the University has no tolerance for students who break the University Academic Honesty Policy. Please see the Students Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities Handbook for a full description.

I take student academic misconduct—in particular, plagiarism—very seriously. Plagiarism means the literal quotation, near-literal quotation, or paraphrase without attribution of original observations or conclusions in published work (either in print or electronic) by someone else.

I will implement the following sanctions when I discover instances of academic dishonesty:

First violation: You will receive a “0” score for any assignment, paper, or exam that contains plagiarized material.

Second violation: You will receive a failing grade for the course.

You have the right to be notified in writing when I discover instances of academic misconduct, and you have the right to respond to this notification. The second instance of academic misconduct must be reported to the department chair and to the associate dean of your college.

CANVAS

UNH uses Canvas as its course-delivery system; please check it often (at least daily) for announcements and updated content. All assignments will appear through Canvas, which includes a convenient calendar showing due dates. It is best to access Canvas through Mozilla Firefox or Safari; Google Chrome has less functionality. I am not generally able to help with technical problems; feel free to write me if you encounter them, but keep in mind that most technical questions are best handled by the computer help desk (862-4242).

HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS FOR MUSIC

The Department of Music adheres to the National Association of Schools of Music Health and Safety Standards. You can find information relating to this subject at

<http://cola.unh.edu/sites/cola.unh.edu/files/departments/Music/pdf/HearingHealth.pdf>.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

The University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you must register with Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you have questions about the process, please contact DSS at (603) 862-2607 or disability.office@unh.edu. If you are registered with DSS, and eligible for accommodations that you would like to use in this course, please forward that information to me in a timely manner so that we can meet privately in my office to review those accommodations.

EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Your academic success in this course is very important to me. If during the semester, you find emotional or mental health issues are affecting that success, please contact the University's Counseling Center (3rd floor Smith Hall: 603-862-2090/TTY:7-1-1), which provides counseling appointments and other mental health services.

MUSI 405 at a Glance
J-Term 2020

Week 1 12/27/19	Meeting 1—Introduction to Course; Historical Context to 1945
Week 2 12/30/19 12/31/19 1/1/20 1/2/20 1/3/20	Meeting 2—Jazz to 1940 Meeting 3—Classical Music from 1880 to 1930 No Class Meeting Meeting 4—Classical Music from 1940 to 1955 Meeting 5—Big Band Jazz
Week 3 1/6/20 1/7/20 1/8/20 1/9/20 1/10/20	Meeting 6—Exam 1 Meeting 7—Historical Context after π 1945 Meeting 8—Classical Music from 1945 to 1960 Meeting 9—Classical Music in the 1960s Meeting 10—Exam 1
Week 4 1/13/20 1/14/20 1/15/20 1/16/20 1/17/20	Meeting 11—Jazz Composers of the 1950s Meeting 12—Modal Jazz Meeting 13—Avant-Garde Jazz Meeting 14—Minimalism Meeting 15—Exam 2