The Musical Scale is not one, not ‘natural,’ nor even founded necessarily on the law of the constitution of musical sound...but very diverse, very artificial, and very capricious.

Alexander Ellis

On the Musical Scales of Various Nations (1885)

Credits/Requirements

– This is a three-credit course.
– This course fulfills the Mason Core requirement for Arts.

Required Materials

– Articles and other course materials to appear on course Blackboard site: https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu
– Access to iTunes/Spotify/Pandora playlist with selected listening assignments for the semester
– Notebook and pen/pencil for taking notes. Use of electronic devices is not permitted in class after day one.

Course Description/Objectives

This course will explore discourses of exoticism as they emerge in and surround music. After a brief introduction to the study of music at the university, we will read excerpts from Orientalism (1978), Edward Said’s landmark study on this topic, along with several additional writings that will help us to contextualize his ideas. We will then read about and listen to musical performances in several major world regions, along with outsider representations of these regions, in order to see how Said’s insights on the relationship between the arts and politics play out (or do not play out) in these areas. We will end the term with readings about forms of exoticism within the U.S. context. This course approaches the term exoticism broadly, and takes into consideration some of the closely related representational traditions that Said’s work made visible. These include Orientalism and primitivism, among others.

This course will help students to:
– develop skills in critical reading and listening through daily assignments
– learn key methods for analysis of artistic works
– obtain an overview of current debates in the fields of musicology and ethnomusicology through exposure to current ideas, discussions, and methods from these fields
– gain a discipline-specific introduction to current research in the arts and humanities
– strengthen their own research skills through the development of several short research papers and presentations

This course requires no previous musical background. The first several weeks will focus on key concepts, including fundamental musical principles (elements of melody, harmony, texture, form, organology, and the organization of time). This introduction will provide students with vocabulary and analytical tools that they will use throughout the semester.

Learning Outcomes

Mason Core: Arts

Students who successfully complete a course in the Arts category will be able to meet the first learning outcome and a minimum of two of the remaining four learning outcomes:
1. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic process, and a work’s underlying concept, and where appropriate, contexts associated with the work.
2. Identify and analyze the formal elements of a particular art form using vocabulary and critique appropriate to that form.
3. Analyze cultural productions using standards appropriate to the form, as well as the work’s cultural significance and context.
4. Analyze and interpret the content of material or performance culture through its social, historical, and personal contexts.
5. Engage in generative artistic processes, including conception, creation, and ongoing critical analysis.

Honors College

HNRS 122 is an Honors College course. In this course students will:

1. Understand scholarly inquiry as an iterative, communal and collaborative activity;
2. Understand the value of evidence-based reasoning;
3. Understand the importance of valuing and evaluating multiple perspectives in context.

Structure

This course will be split between lecture and seminar-style discussion, which means that for a good portion of the semester, I will facilitate conversation and step in at critical points to explain key concepts, but that everyone will hold an equal share of the responsibility for carrying discussion forward. Class participation is a major component of the grade for this course, and these discussions take as their point of departure the listed readings, listening assignments, and reading responses for the day. You are required to complete all of these assignments before the corresponding class.

Throughout the semester, I will encourage everyone to speak up in class. Remember that it is more important that we hear from everyone in the room than that every single comment should be brilliant or “correct.” There are no bad questions in an honest attempt to understand relevant material.

Readings are arranged to create a semester-long dialogue on music and exoticism. This discussion will become more nuanced and multifaceted as we go on, and throughout the course, we will turn back to previous readings in order to keep in play the similar, contrasting, and sometimes conflicting ideas presented by the scholars we read from class to class.

Daily Assignments

Reading: All of the assigned course readings will be found in folders on the Course Content page in .pdf form or as links.

Listening: All assigned listening will be made available to students through an iTunes, Spotify, or Pandora playlist.

Reading Responses: In preparation for each class, students will be asked to submit brief reading responses on the course’s Blackboard site. This practice has several objectives:

- It will help students hone in on the main points of each reading
- It will help students prepare their thoughts for the in-class discussion
- It will help me identify any particular sections, arguments, or passages that might be giving the class trouble

We will begin using the following set of questions. We may change them at some point during the semester, but all of our readings will have some kind of reading response assignment attached to them.
1. What is the author’s main argument?
2. Name one new thing you learned about the broader topic the work addresses, or describe one substantive way in which this readings relates to, builds on, or contrasts with our previous readings.
3. Name one question (clarifying or follow-up) you have about the reading.

Parameters for Reading Responses:
- Please use formal academic prose
- Your response to each question need not be longer than a sentence, but you are welcome to write a bit more if you find you need to.
- Please provide a page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence or phrase for any of the author’s specific claims that you cite in your response.

Due Dates for Reading Responses:
- All reading responses are due by the beginning of our class period on the due date.
- After the beginning of class, the submission box on Blackboard will be disabled and no more reading responses will be accepted.
- Each student may miss up to two reading response assignments without penalty.
- After the second missed assignment, each non-submission will be counted for 0 credit toward the total reading response grade.

To access Reading Responses on Blackboard:
- On an approved browser, go to the webpage: http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu
- Log in using your Mason ID and password
- Click on the “Courses” tab on the top right hand side of the page
- Click on HNRS 122-010 from the list of courses on the left
- Click on the “Reading Responses” link in the column on the left
- Locate and complete the reading response for the day
- N.B. Please click on the “Write Submission” button and write or cut/paste your answers in the text entry box that drops down from there. If you submit your answer in the “comment” box, I might not see it.

Exams

Two exams will be given throughout the semester, covering material from the reading, listening, lectures, and discussion. Although exams focus primarily on the material from the immediately preceding portion of the course, sections of the second exam may be cumulative. If you know you must miss an exam, please contact me within the first two weeks of class. Medical exceptions may be made with advanced notice and documentation from a doctor. If you miss an exam and are permitted to make it up, it is your responsibility to make sure you schedule a make-up time. All excused missed exams must be made up within two weeks of the original exam date.

Attendance/Participation

One portion of this grade is attendance. A student can have up to two absences over the course of the semester and still receive full credit for his or her attendance. After that point, four points (out of a total of 100) will be subtracted from the final attendance grade for each absence. Consistent participation in class discussions can improve an attendance/participation grade. Consistent disruptions can result in points subtracted from the final attendance/participation grade. If lateness becomes a problem, I will start counting late arrivals as half-absences.

Found Exoticism Presentation

Each student will be asked to give a 5-minute presentation on an example of music, art, advertisement, or cultural expression encountered somewhere in daily life, which engages with themes of exoticism, Orientalism, or primitivism. For this presentation, you will be asked to make a succinct, original argument about your
example, provide evidence to support your argument, and relate your example to course material. Each presentation should:

- begin with a thesis statement about how your example engages with the theme of exoticism
- draw on and provide specific quotations from at least one of our course readings (in both verbal and written form—PowerPoint/Prezi or a printed handout) in order to provide specific links between your example and course material
- provide evidence drawn from the content of the work itself, its conditions of production or circulation, or its reception among a specific group of listeners to support the thesis statement
- end with three questions that this example poses for our ongoing discussion of music and exoticism

General Parameters for In-Class Presentations:

- These presentations should be well organized, polished, and show significant preparation.
- Use whatever technology you need to make your point clear and your presentation efficient. With the requirement that you use specific, written quotations from course readings, you should have some kind of visual aid for the class.

Final Project: Analysis Paper/Presentation

This assignment will be due at the end of the semester, effectively taking the place of a final exam. It will ask students to succinctly and creatively synthesize the concepts and analytical skills they have learned throughout the semester. You will have the option to write a brief, traditional analysis paper, or to engage in a less traditional individual or group presentation.

Option A: Analysis Paper: The first option for the final assignment will be to analyze an artistic performance, artistic installation, or museum exhibit that you believe engages with themes from this class, and write a brief paper explaining how it does so.

- Papers should use methods from class to present an original analysis of the performance or exhibit in question
- Papers should combine this original analysis with background research on the work in question and discussion of the course reading(s) that you find most relevant
- Papers should be brief (around 1,500 words)
- I am interested for all students in the class to share their work with one another, so depending on how the class goes, Option A will entail either a poster or a brief research presentation during the last weeks of class or the final exam time

Option B: Group or Individual Presentation: In the second option for the final assignment, students may elect to work independently or break into groups of no more than five people and prepare ca. 15-minute in-class presentations on a theme related to the course. The format for these presentations is not prescribed, and creativity is encouraged in your exploration of these themes. Presentations can be analyses of works or styles not covered in the class, theatrical explorations of course themes, interactive demonstrations, short films, or they may themselves be artistic performances. The main requirements will be that each presentation:

- Engage directly with at least two or three course readings
- Deal with exoticism or a related theme in contemporary life
- Have an accompanying written summary/explanation that details the overarching message of the presentation, how it lays out that message, how it relates to course material, and how each group member contributed to the final product
- These presentations will take place in the last weeks of class or during the final exam time
- We will go over guidelines for the final paper/presentation in greater depth after we’ve been through fundamentals

As we get further into the semester, please come and talk to me about your ideas for your final projects. I am open to alternative assignments if you have one in mind, as long as they successfully engage with the parameters above.
Grading

The final grade in this course will depend on several components—attendance and class participation (preparation for and participation in classroom discussions), the found exoticism presentation, reading responses, the two exams, and the final paper or presentation. Each of these components will be weighted in the following way:

- Attendance/Participation: 25%
- Found Exoticism Presentation: 5%
- Reading Responses: 10%
- Exam 1: 20%
- Exam 2: 20%
- Final Paper/Presentation: 20%

Numerical grades translate to letter grades according to the following system:

- 97-100 = A+
- 93-96 = A
- 90-92 = A-
- 87-89 = B+
- 83-86 = B
- 80-82 = B-
- 77-79 = C+
- 73-76 = C
- 70-72 = C-
- 65-69 = D
- 0-64 = F

Class and University Policies:

Cellular Phones, iPhones, Computers, etc: All electronic communication devices must be turned off at the beginning of class and remain off for the duration. For the first day of class, you may use a computer to take notes. After that, use of computers or other electronic devices is not permitted.

Email:

1. All official electronic communications with professors must be undertaken through a GMU email account. All class announcements will come through this server and students are responsible to stay current with their GMU accounts.

2. Please include your course and section number in the subject heading of all emails you send to me.

3. Please use this helpful guide for emailing professors: http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor

Honor Code:

Mason is an honor code university. Students are accountable for the academic integrity of all work they submit for this class in accordance with the honor code. Here is the central statement of the university honor code:

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.¹


Exoticism and Music

Plagiarism: The following explanation of plagiarism is taken from the website, “Understanding Plagiarism,” from George Mason University’s Office for Academic Integrity:

The dictionary definition of plagiarism is an act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author’s work as one’s own, as by not crediting the original author (plagiarism.org).

In short, plagiarism is claiming other people’s ideas and words as yours. When you neglect to cite your sources, knowingly or unknowingly, you are committing plagiarism. Committing an act of plagiarism is a violation of the George Mason University Honor codes, and has serious consequences.

You can find answers to common questions on plagiarism here: oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/plagiarism/understanding-plagiarism/

For your reference, I have included here the university’s plagiarism statement

**Plagiarism Statement**

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinion, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through the use of accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple listing of books and articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting.

Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions to this include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writer's own insights or findings from their own field research, and what has been termed common knowledge. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious, and what is common knowledge for one audience may be so for another. In such situations, it is helpful to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being reader friendly. In other words, writers provide a citation for any piece of information that they think their readers might want to investigate further. Not only is this attitude considerate of readers and establishes credibility, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will never be guilty of plagiarism.

Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions.

If you ever have any questions on resource citation, plagiarism, the honor code, or academic integrity, I am happy to talk about these issues.

For guidelines on proper citation, see *The Chicago Manual of Style* or the *Modern Languages Association*’s guide to formatting and style.

**Office of Disability Services:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. [http://ods.gmu.edu](http://ods.gmu.edu)

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Other Useful Campus Resources:

- **Diversity Resources**: CVPA Diversity Committee site; http://cvpa.gmu.edu/facstaff/comm-diversity.html
- **Writing Center**: (703) 993-1200; Robinson Hall A114; http://writingcenter.gmu.edu
- **University Libraries** “Ask a Librarian”: http://library.gmu.edu/ask
- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**: (703) 993-2380; SUB I, room 3129; http://caps.gmu.edu
- **Student Support and Advocacy Center (WAVES/Wellness, Alcohol, and Violence Education and Services)** Immediate assistance for sexual violence and/or alcohol emergency: 703-993-3686; SUB I, Suite 3200; http://waves.gmu.edu/
- **University Catalog**: The University Catalog, http://catalog.gmu.edu, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

**HNRS 122-010: Schedule of Classes and Assignments (subject to revision)**

Week 1
8/27 Intro/Syllabus

Week 2
9/3 NO CLASS: Have a happy Labor Day
9/4 Last day to add classes
9/5 Taylor *Beyond Exoticism*, Introduction
9/9 Last day to drop classes

Week 3
9/10 Lecture on Music Fundamentals (no reading assignment or study questions)
9/12 Storey, “Structuralism and Post-Structuralism” (excerpts)

Week 4
9/17 Said, *Orientalism* (excerpts)
9/19 Locke, *Musical Exoticism* (excerpts)

Week 5
9/24 Hunter, “The Alla Turca Style”
9/26 EXAM 1

Week 6
10/1” Stokes, “East, West, and Arabesk,”
10/3 Introduction: Western musical representations of East Asia: Locke (excerpts)

Week 7
10/8 NO CLASS: Fall Break
10/9 Monday classes meet: McClary, “Mounting Butterflies”
10/10 Lee, *The Japan of Pure Invention* (excerpts)

Week 8
10/15 Hisama, “Postcolonialism on the Make”
10/17 Contemporary Asian popular music (reading TBA)
Week 9
10/22 Head, “Musicology on Safari”
10/24 Bellman, “Musical Voyages”

Week 10
10/29 **EXAM 2**
10/31 Pisani, *Imagining Native America in Music* (excerpts)

Week 11
11/5 Gorbman, “Scoring the Indian”
11/7 Samuels, “Singing Indian Country”

Week 12
11/12 Browner, “Heartbeat of the People”
11/14 Assignment TBA

Week 13
11/19 Clark, “Doing the Samba on Sunset Boulevard”
11/21 **NO CLASS: Have a happy Thanksgiving!**

Week 14
11/26 Dunn, “Tropicália, Counterculture, and the Diasporic Imagination in Brazil”

Week 15
12/3 Feld, “Notes on World Beat”
12/5 Final Papers and Presentations

**Final Papers and Presentations, cont’d during exam time: Wednesday, December 12, 1:30 to 4:15 pm**
Ethnomusicology Minor Curriculum

Core Courses (12 credits)

- MUSI 103: Musics of the World or MUSI 431: Music History in Society III (3 credits)

- MUSI 303: Topics in Ethnomusicology (3 credits)

- 2 Credits of MUSI 394: Ethnomusicology Internship (1-4 credits per internship)
  (subject to approval from minor coordinator)

- ANTH 114: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (3 credits)

- Applied Music or Ensembles (1 credit)
  (selection must be approved by minor coordinator)

Electives (6 credits)

- Electives are subject to approval from the minor coordinator and should reflect an engagement with the student’s musical and cultural interests. Electives can include summer travel courses.