

Psychology of Music

Location:

TBA

Instructor:

Prof. Sean Hutchins

Office Hours: Regular hours TBA, visits possible by appointment:

Sean.Hutchins@gmail.com

Course Objectives:

This course is intended to provide an overview of basic principles in the psychology of music, with a focus on empirical studies describing how musicians and nonmusicians perceive, produce, and understand music. Because we are focusing on an entire domain, we will be covering topics as diverse as physiology, music theory, cognitive science, and neuroscience. Students should come out of this class with an understanding of how music is created and perceived, the relationship between music theory and psychoacoustics, and a better critical understanding of popular notions about music.

Prerequisites:

Students are required to have taken “Introduction to Psychology” and “Research Methods and Analysis” to enrol in this upper-level course. Students are *not* expected to be able to read or perform music; however, some basic notation and theory will be used and explained during the course. This course is intended primarily for Psychology students; however, admission in this class can be granted to students in related areas (such as Music or Communication Sciences) with permission of the instructor.

Readings:

The textbook for this course [Music, Thought, and Feeling](#) (2009), William Forde Thompson. New York: Oxford University. Other required readings from journal articles will be made available on the course website.

Method and evaluation:

There will be two 1.5 hour lectures per week. Grades will be based 25% on the midterm (in class), 35% on the final, 30% from written assignments (5% from each of two short essays, 20% from the research project), and 10% from class participation. The research project will be chosen after the midterm, and may take several forms, including a longer

written essay, a research proposal, or an entry in Wikipedia. Students are required to come to office hours at least once to choose a research project.

Schedule of Lectures and Assignments:

Week 1:

Lecture 1: Introduction

Week 2:

Lecture 2: The scientific method as applied to music

Lecture 3: Psychoacoustics: Sound and the ear (Read Chapter 3)

Week 3:

Lecture 4: Consonance, Dissonance, and Tuning

Lecture 5: Timbre

Week 4:

Lecture 6: Musical Scales and Key (Read Chapter 5)

Lecture 7: Rhythm and Meter

Week 5:

Lecture 8: Grouping principles in music

Lecture 9: Memory for music

Week 6:

Lecture 10: Development, pt. 1: Infancy (Read Chapter 4)

Lecture 11: Development, pt. 2: Childhood

Week 7:

Lecture 12: Absolute pitch (Read Levitin and Rogers, 2005)

Lecture 13: Midterm. (Research project proposals due)

Week 8:

Lecture 14: Emotion in Music, pt. 1: Expressiveness and responses to music (Read Chapter 6)

Lecture 15: Emotion in Music, pt. 2: Theory

Week 9:

Lecture 16: Music Performance (Read Chapter 8)

Lecture 17: Singing (Read Hutchins & Peretz, 2011)

Week 10:

Lecture 18: Special Topic: Attention and the “Mozart Effect”

Lecture 19: Music and the Brain (Read Chapter 7)

Week 11:

Lecture 20: Congenital Amusia (Read Peretz, 2003)

Lecture 21: Composition (Read Chapter 9. Research Projects Due)

Week 12:

Lecture 22: The Relationship between Language and Music

Lecture 23: Evolution of Music (Read Chapter 2)

Week 13:

Lecture 24: Review and Questions