

LMC 3262 N Performance Studies: Music as Performance

Prof. Philip Auslander

Office: 365 Skiles Phone: 404.894.6208 (Voice Mail)

E-Mail: auslander@gatech.edu

Office Hours: T Th 11-12, and by appointment

Prerequisite: ENGL 1102

Core Area: This course fulfills the Core Area C: Humanities/Fine Arts requirement.

Course Description

Traditionally, the study of music has focused on sound and texts (e.g., scores and recordings) relegating performance, particularly in its visual aspects, to a secondary position at best. This is changing: more and more, musicologists and others are coming to see performance as a central aspect of music making that is worth studying in its own right.

This course explores methods for analyzing musical performance and some of the issues it raises. The material of the course focuses on the development of a framework for such analysis. Classical music, jazz, rock, country, bluegrass and other genres will all be represented in our readings and classroom examples. You are free to choose the kinds of music and the particular performances you wish to analyze for the assignments and are welcome to submit material to be discussed in class.

Although the framework for thinking about musical performance that we will elaborate derives in significant part from the work of sociologist Erving Goffman, our approach will be multi-disciplinary, drawing also from psychology, musicology, and cultural studies. Some of the key issues to be discussed include: the visual aspects of musical performance, including musicians' gestures, movements, and facial expressions; the framing of musical performance, including such external frames as musical genre and place of performance and such internal frames as stage talk; musicians' performance personae and how they are constructed.

You do not have to have any technical knowledge of music or any musical ability to take this course, though such expertise is always welcome. (A few of the readings contain musical notation but don't worry if you can't read it.) Enthusiasm for some kind of music and an interest in spending a semester thinking about musicians and what they do as performers are desirable prerequisites.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will enrich their understanding of all the different communicative modalities involved in the performance of music.
- Students will learn to read, analyze, and interpret cultural texts particularly in the form of musical works, performances, and media texts as well as to place them in aesthetic and cultural context.
- Students will become familiar with a variety of social, cultural, and aesthetic approaches and be able to apply those approaches analytically.

General Requirements

- Course Reading and Attendance
- Active participation in discussion and class activities, including group work
- Completion of Assignments enumerated below

You are not permitted to use materials developed for other courses to fulfill these requirements.

Please note the grade penalties for not submitting required assignments by their deadlines described below under General Policies.

This course will be conducted primarily on the basis of lecture and discussion. Group work is another key feature and you are expected to do all you can to make your group function smoothly, including making it possible to meet outside of class time.

Attendance Policy

Students may miss a total of three (3) classes over the course of the semester without penalty. The attendance policy does not make any distinction about the reasons for your absences. Only absences officially exempted by the Institute (e.g., due to participation in official GATech athletics, to religious observance, to personal or family crisis and excused by documentation from the Dean of Students) will not be counted among your allotted absences.

Each additional absence after the allotted number deducts one-third of a letter grade from a student's final grade. Missing six (6) classes results in automatic failure of the class. If you fail to attend on a day when you are scheduled to make a presentation you will fail the course.

Think ahead. If you know in advance that you must miss a certain class meeting be sure not to miss more than two others.

I will take attendance no earlier than twenty minutes into each class session. If you are not present when I take attendance, you will be considered absent from that class session.

If you need to leave a class session early, please inform me before the start of the session and sit near the front of the room so that your departure can be minimally disruptive.

If you sleep (or appear to sleep) during a class session, or engage in activities not conducive to participation (e.g., applying make-up, checking your messages) you will be considered absent from that class session.

Please note that Georgia Tech policy requires you to wait twenty minutes for the instructor to arrive before concluding that the class is not meeting (this policy is included here primarily for your information).

Readings

All readings are available to you as .pdfs from the course's T-Square website.

Personal Electronics Policy

If you wish to use a laptop or tablet to display course readings, you are welcome to do so. Please put your phone away. If you do use a laptop or tablet, it is imperative that you nevertheless participate actively in class discussion and do not disappear behind the screen.

Grading

Please note: work that simply meets the requirements of the assignment will receive a grade of "C." Grades of "A" and "B" designate levels of distinction in quality and content of the work.

Exam I: 20%

Exam II: 20%

Performance Analysis (including proposal): 25%

Group Project: 35% (including proposal and presentation; all members of each group will receive the same grade in this category)

Final Grade Scale: To get a final grade of A, you must have earned at least a numerical grade of at least 90 (out of 100). For a B, you must have a numerical grade of at least 80; 70 for a C; 60 for a D. Please use these benchmarks to interpret your numerical grades.

The numerical grade generated by this calculation is subject to modification in light of attendance, class participation, and other indications of engagement with

and commitment to the course (or lack thereof).

Required Work

More information and details on all assignments will be posted on T-Square and discussed in class. All deadlines are provided on the course schedule at the end of this syllabus. Policies regarding the submission of work appear below under General Policies.

EXAMS

Exam I will cover the material of course Units I and II. It will probably consist of short answer questions. Exam II will cover the material of Unit III. It also will probably involve some short answer questions, but may include will an essay question on the subject of performance analysis, possibly involving the analysis of a music performance on video in class as part of the exam. In both cases, you are responsible not only for the material in the course readings but everything said in lectures and discussions and all examples used in class.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

The purpose of this assignment is to assess your ability to apply the analytical concepts we discuss in the course to a specific performance. You should choose a performance available to you in an audiovisual form. (If you wish, you may write about a live performance or a performance recorded only in audio, but these are likely to be more difficult to work with). You should analyze the performance using all of the tools available to you from the course. Naturally, some analytical concepts will be more useful than others, depending on the case, but at the very least you should analyze the nature of persona (individual or collective) in your example and how that persona is performed. You should also discuss the relationship of the persona in question to the relevant genre frame. Beyond that, you should employ any and all relevant concepts to emerge from the course readings and discussions, including those that appear on the syllabus after the paper is due. I can direct you to those most relevant to your topic when I review your proposal.

The default version of this assignment is a paper 1500 words in length. If you wish to execute the assignment creatively in another form, I am open to the possibility. It is important that a project in an alternate form meet the same standards for analysis, argumentation, documentation, and reference to course concepts and materials as a written project. You should state how you will accomplish this in your proposal.

If you wish, you can consider the performance analysis to be a kind of take-home final, as it is due on the day of the course's final exam. In any case, you have the

entire semester to work on it and consult with me about it, if you wish. The final product should reflect the fact that you had months to work on it and will be evaluated accordingly.

GROUP PROJECT

We will divide the class into project groups as early in the semester as possible. The group tasks include:

- Developing a project proposal;
- Making a presentation of the project to the class during the last week of the semester (all group members must speak during the presentation);
- Completing and submitting the project by its deadline.

The topic of your group project should be relevant to the course and employ analytical techniques and concepts explored in the class (e.g., genre, persona, etc.). If there is a course topic you would like to revisit in greater detail, it could become the subject of your project, but you can certainly discuss material not included in the course as long as your approach fits within the purview of the course. Generally, the projects should include the kinds of discussions mentioned in relation to your paper. Whereas the paper must focus on a single performance, however, the group project should take on a larger topic (e.g., a genre, a trend, the history of a particular performer, etc.). For example, looking at how a particular performer's or group's persona changes over time or how the normative persona for a given genre is different at different times would both be viable topics.

The form and organization of the project will be entirely up to your group. You may do a traditional project in paper form. On the other hand, if you'd prefer to do an audio project, a performance, a video project, a digital design project of some kind (e.g., a game or a website), or a multimedia project, that would be fine, too. I welcome your creativity. The most important thing is that all members of the group agree on the parameters of the project, that each one can make a substantial contribution, that each one's contribution is defined clearly, and that you propose a project that you can complete in the time allotted. Regardless of the form the project takes, it should reflect careful thinking about a well-defined topic, incorporate any necessary research (including citations of sources), and involve detailed analytical discussion of specific performances.

The final project will be due by 11:55 PM on 3 May. If possible, it should be uploaded to T-Square. If it is in a form that does not lend itself to uploading, we can negotiate a different form of submission.

Please note: the proposal, presentation, and final project collectively make up the

Group Project. I will give you one grade for the entire package and all group members will receive the same grade.

The Communication Center

The Communication Center is located in Clough Commons, Suite 447. It is an excellent resource for any student (undergraduate or graduate) who wants help with a communication-related project. You can visit the center for help at any stage of the process for any project in any discipline. The knowledgeable and friendly tutors are available to help you develop and revise your projects. They are not available to “fix” your projects. Please do not ask the tutors to proofread or edit your projects. For information on making an appointment please visit this website: <<http://communicationcenter.gatech.edu/content/make-appointment>>. If you need assistance with the appointment system, you can call 404-385-3612 or stop by the center. All services are free and confidential.

Students With Disabilities

Any student who feels that he/she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment to see the instructor during office hours. Students with disabilities should also contact Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS) to discuss reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor call (404) 894-2564 (voice) / (404) 894-1664 (voice/TDD) or visit Suite 210 in the Smithgall Student Services Building. For more information visit the following website:
<http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/>.

Academic Honesty

All work you turn in for this class must be your own work, with all outside reference sources properly cited and acknowledged.

The "Student Conduct Code of the Rules and Regulations" (Georgia Institute of Technology General Catalog, Section XIX) states, “Academic misconduct is an act that does or could improperly distort student grades or other student academic records” and offers the following descriptive list:

- Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included in an academic course;
- Substitution for, or unauthorized collaboration with, a student in the commission of academic requirements;
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or persons, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism);

- False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the claimant;
- Alteration or insertion of any academic grade or rating so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any institute document relating to the academic status of the student.

The Code continues, “While these acts constitute assured instances of academic misconduct, other acts of academic misconduct may be defined by the professor.” Consult the Honor Code online at <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/> or in the General Catalog to remember your primary commitment to academic honesty. Students who engage in academic dishonesty may receive a 0.0 on the assignment or fail the course. In addition, the instance will be reported to the Dean of Students who may take further action.

General Policies

Unless stated otherwise, your work is to be submitted via T-Square. Your work is due by the stated deadline. You may contact me to request an extension on a deadline, though I do not promise to grant it. If you would like to request an extension, please do so significantly ahead of the deadline. I will not consider last-minute requests or retroactive extensions.

You are required to retain a copy of every assignment for the entire semester in case any problems should arise with T-Square. Please be vigilant about making certain that materials you posted actually appear. It is your responsibility to ensure that your material is present on T-Square at its deadline.

T-Square will accept your work for ten hours following the posted deadline. However, you will lose 10% of the assignment’s point value for each hour or fractional hour past the deadline you submit it. For example, if an assignment is worth 20 points and you pass it in within an hour after the deadline, I will deduct two points from your grade. If you pass it in an hour after that, I will deduct four points, etc. This policy applies to both group and individual assignments.

I strongly recommend that you post your work significantly ahead of all deadlines. Remember: T-Square’s clock is the only one that matters. T-Square is the final arbiter of when your work was submitted.

Please also make sure that the material you submit is what you want me to grade. Whatever is on the site at the deadline is what I will grade. I will not accept other versions past the deadline under any circumstance.

If you experience a legitimate problem with T-Square, please contact me by email immediately. Do not submit work by email unless I specifically ask you to do so.

I reserve the right to give extra assignments and quizzes, announced or unannounced.

Course Schedule

Like any syllabus, this is a starting point and is subject to revision. I will announce any further assignments or other changes in class, by email, and on T-Square. You should be prepared to discuss the materials designated for each date on that date and have the relevant texts with you in class. All readings are required and available as .pdfs on T-Square. They are designated here by their authors and titles.

Unit I. The Visual Dimensions of Musical Performance

This first unit of the course introduces the disciplinary context for this approach to talking about musicians as performers as well as work in experimental psychology that focuses on the importance of visual information (not just sound) to musical cognition. This leads to discussions of the role of gesture in musical performance and how this may be codified and analyzed.

1/12 Introduction to the Course.

5/14 The Disciplinary Debate: Read Auslander, "Music as Performance"

1/19 Read Schutz, "Seeing Music? What Musicians Need to Know about Vision" pp. 83-91, and please at least skim the rest of the essay.

1/21 Read Thompson, Graham, and Russo, "Seeing Music Performance"

1/26 Read Fast, "The Wanton Song" (pp. 144-57)

1/28 Continue Discussion

Unit II. Frames, Framing, and Communication

This unit moves to talking about the contexts of musical performance (i.e., how it is framed) and forms of communication and meta-communication that take place within musical performance frames.

2/3 Read Goffman, "The Theatrical Frame" (pp. 124-44)

2/5 Genre: Read Fabbri, "A Theory of Musical Genres" (pp. 1-8)

2/10 Continue Discussion

2/11 **Group Project Proposal Due on T-Square by 11:55 PM**

2/12 Performance Space: Read Small, "A Place for Hearing"

2/17 Behavioral Conventions: Read Small, "Sharing with Strangers"

2/19 Stage Talk: Read Bealle, "Self-Involvement in Musical Performance"

2/24 Continue Discussion

- 2/25 **Performance Analysis Proposals Due on T-Square by 11:55 PM**
2/26 Modes of Communication: Read Jakobson, from "Linguistics and Poetics"
- 3/1 Continue Discussion/Review for Exam I
3/3 **Exam I**

Unit III: Genre and Persona

This final unit develops the idea of genre-specific persona as a model for musicians as performers. Four case studies focus on musicians in different genres, as well as a range of issues concerning the function of musical personae and how they are communicated to audiences.

- 3/8 Read Gelbart (pp. 200-214) and Negus (pp. 618-629)
3/10 Read Auslander, "On the Concept of Persona"
- 3/15 Read Auslander, "Musical Personae"
3/17 Continue Discussion
- 3/21 **Spring Break**
3/23 **Spring Break**
- 3/29 Read Hughes, "Country Music as Impression Management"
3/31 Read Carr, "Visualizing the Sound of Genius: Glenn Gould"
- 4/5 Continue Discussion
4/7 Read Ake, "Body and Soul"
- 4/12 Read Gelbart, "Persona and Voice in the Kinks' Songs of the Late 1960s"
(pp. 214-241)
4/14 Continue Discussion/Review for Exam II
- 4/19 **Exam II**
4/21 **Group Project Presentations.**
- 4/26 **Group Project Presentations. All Group Projects due by 11:55 PM.**
- 5/3 **Performance Analyses Due on T-Square by 11:55 PM**