

The Music in China

Course number MUSC 389
Term Spring 2010
Course time TBA
Course location TBA

Instructor Dr. Jeff Roberts

Course Description

This class is intended to provide a general introduction and overview of the music in China. Traveling back in time across the immense span of Chinese history, it is almost impossible to fathom the incredible richness of sound and music style that emanated from the Dynastic courts, Daoist temples, private literati gardens or local villages. How can we today, as Westerners, think of accessing this rich history of music and understand it, both in a musical sense and cultural sense? This is the task set out in front of us in this class, The Music of China. Through general readings and listening to recordings, we will piece together the cultural origins of different music traditions in China and their varied meanings; from the solemn sound of ritual music of the early Shang Dynasty to the blaring sounds of Peking Opera; from the ancient sounds of ethnic minority music of the Tibetan, Uyghur or Yi people to the socio-political aggression of the Chinese Rock and Punk music scene in Beijing. We will also explore these music worlds through some interaction with Chinese musicians of today. This course will also look to include visits by guest Chinese musicians to class, as well as seeing and listening to selected music events in Beijing.

This class also focuses on developing general music appreciation skills oriented to the traditional music of China. Prior studies in music are not required, and any musical concepts or terminology needed to develop music appreciation skills will be taught as part of the class.

Course Outcomes

Lectures, readings, listening assignments, paper assignments, and discussions are designed to help you develop the skills to:

- Understand the development of music in the different periods of Chinese History
- Understand the music culture of modern day China, and how traditional music fits into that culture.
- Understand the vast and diverse cultural foundations on which the music of China stands.
- Differentiate between a Western music aesthetic perspective and a Chinese music aesthetic perspective.

Course Requirements and Form of Assessment

- **Informed participation in all discussions (20%).** Informed participation in class discussions will significantly impact your grade. Having read the assignments and spent time listening to the assigned music will prepare you for these discussions. While some lectures will be given to support reading assignments, the class time is left for discussing the readings and your experience in listening to the music. Short question assignments will be given for the readings that should be handed in at the beginning of class.
- **Reading Questions (20%).** Reading questions will be assigned for each class. These are to help focus the readings and provide topics for class discussion. They are due in the first minute of class. I'll check them off and hand them back to you for the class. There is no other opportunity to hand these in late. Pop quizzes will be given from time to time as well.
- **Journal (15%)** the electronic Journal (using MS Word) for you to keep track of your thoughts and experiences while encountering Chinese music and culture in the class. Each week a weekly submission is expected via email two days before class as a way to stimulate and shape class discussion. They are graded based on your thoughtfulness and personal insight regarding the week's assignment.
- **Midterm (22.5% each)** will cover the material in the first half of the class. It will involve the readings and listening examples.
- **Final Exam (22.5% each)** will cover material from after the mid-term through the end of the course. Although it is not cumulative, you will be responsible for overall concepts that we discuss throughout the course and may have some relationship to material covered earlier in the course. Listening will be part of the final exam as well. Study guides will be provided for the midterm and final exams.

One-third of a grade will be deducted for each day that a writing assignment or exam is late (i.e., an A will be reduced to an A-, an A- to a B+, and so on). Makeup exams will only be given in cases of documentable emergencies. In case of such an emergency, please notify me by email or phone as soon as possible.

Grading Scale: < 59.4 F; 59.5-66.4 D; 66.5-69.4 D+; 69.5-73.4 C-; 73.5-76.4 C; 76.5-79.4 C+; 79.5-83.4 B-; 83.5 – 86.4 B; 86.5 – 89.4 B+; 89.5-93.4 A-; 93.5 and up A.

Attendance Policy

An excused absence requires a written medical excuse. All other absences are considered to be unexcused. Unexcused absences will affect your grade (see below). Arriving late for any three classes will cumulatively count as an unexcused absence.

Penalties for unexcused absences:

- 1 absence – class participation grade drops one full letter grade (example: A- to B-)
- 2 absences – class participation grade drops two full letter grades
- 3 absences – class participation grade drops three full letter grades
- 4 or more absences – class participation grade is a failing grade

Any absence, whether excused or not, will require catch-up reading.

Academic Honesty Statement

Please refer to the following web link for policies on academic honesty:

http://www.luc.edu/cas/pdfs/CAS_Academic_Integrity_Statement_December_07.pdf

Required Texts

Liang Mingyue, *Music of the Billion: An Introduction to Chinese Musical Culture*. New York: Heinrichshofen Edition. 1985.

Stephen Jones, *Folk Music of China*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1995.

Helen Rees, *Echoes of Naxi History*

J. Lawrence Witzleben, *Silk and Bamboo Music in Shanghai: The Jiangnan Sizhu Instrumental Ensemble Tradition*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press. 1995.

Xu Chengbei, *Peking Opera*. Beijing: China Intercontinental Press. 2003.

Yuan Jing, *Traditional Opera in Beijing*. Beijing: China Pictorial Publishing House. 2006.

Coursepacket of several articles and book excerpts.

Listening Materials

A collection of 12 listening CD's, one for each week of the course, will be kept on reserve in the library at the front desk.

Class Schedule

PART I: Traditional Chinese Music – Characteristics and History

Week One: Introduction: Reflecting on 5,000 Years of Music

1. Introductions and overview of course.

Week Two: Chinese Music Characteristics

1. Chinese vs. West: comparison of aesthetics and listening habits.
2. Learning To Appreciate Chinese Music

Reading: Music of the Billion: Chapter 1, Chinese Music Characteristics

Listening: Listening CD1

Due: Week 2 question handout and diary submission

Week Three: Chinese Music Instruments

1. The Ba Yin system of instrument classification
2. Listening to and appreciating Chinese Instruments

Readings: Handouts on Chinese Instruments, listening to Chinese Instruments

Listening: Listening CD 2

Due: Week 3 question handout and diary submission

Week Four: Dynastic China 1: Age of Ritual Music

1. Student presentations on Chinese instruments
2. Social and Ritual function of Music in early China

Readings: Music of the Billion: *Chapter 2, Legendary Period and the Xia Dynasty*
Chapter 3, Shang through Warring States

Listening: Listening CD 3

Due: Week 4 question handout and diary submission, Class Presentations

Week Five: Dynastic China 2: Birth of Refined Music and Internationalism

1. Development of Confucian culture and the emphasis of music for entertainment and self-cultivation over ritual music.
2. The beginning of regional music in China.
3. The sound of foreign music in China via the Silk Road.

Readings: Music of the Billion: Chapter 4, Qin and Han Dynasties (p.p. 76-82)
Chapter 6, Sui through Tang Dynasties (96 – 111)

Listening: Listening CD 4

Due: Week 5 question handout and diary submission

Week Six: Dynastic China 3: Traditional Music as We Know it Today

1. The purge of foreign influence and simplification of the music modes.
2. The rise of Regional Operas from earlier dramatic and narrative music.
3. The Chinese Scholar and revival of the guqin tradition.

Readings: Music of the Billion: *Chapter 7, Qin and Han Dynasties (p.p. 76-82)*
Chapter 8, Three Kingdoms through Jin (pp 86-95)
Listening: Listening CD 5
Handout: Week 6 question handout and diary submission.

PART II: Four Significant Music Traditions

Week Seven: Listening to the Guqin Music Tradition - MIDTERM EXAM FIRST HOUR OF CLASS -

1. Chinese Aesthetics in the Guqin tradition
2. Regional Guqin Schools, Personal Style and flexible notation
3. Listening to the great guqin masters of the 20th century, comparing styles

Readings: Music of the Billion: *Chapter 9, Psycho-Aesthetic Interpretation in Chinese Music. Chapter 11, The Art of Guqin.*
Listening: Listening CD 6
Due: Week 7 question handout and diary submission.

Week Eight: Appreciating Regional Music: South Sizhu, North Chuida

1. Southern Sizhu Music and the art of variation and embellishment
2. Northern Chuida Music and its ceremonial function in the life cycle.

Readings: Folk Music of China: Introduction (7-13), Ceremonial Music (14-30)
Northern Ritual Ensembles: Hebei, Beijing (183-195)
Jiangnan Sizhu Clubs in Shanghai (240-255)
Handout on Listening to and appreciating Sizhu Music.
Listening: Listening CD 7
Due: Week 8 question handout and diary submission.

Week Nine: The World of Chinese Opera

1. Overview of Opera in China
2. Kun Opera, China's Classical Opera
3. How to Listen to and Appreciate Peking Opera

Readings: Music of the Billion. Chapter 14: Chinese Traditional Opera
Peking Opera. Pages 63-73, 91-98, 111-119.
Listening: Listening CD 9, Opera Videos on reserve in TBC library
Due: Week 9 question handout and diary submission.

PART III: Ethnic Minority Music in China

Week Ten: The Naxi of Lijiang, Yunnan

1. Classifying Ethnicity in China
2. Overview of ethnic and music diversity in Yunnan Province
3. Music and ethnic identity: Indigenous music of the Naxi
4. Music and Assimilation: Dongjing music of the Naxi

Readings: Helen Rees, *Echoes of History. Ch. 3: Who are the Naxi? (pp 28-32)*
Ch. 4: Naxi and Dongjing Music (pp54-68)
Listening: Listening CD 10
Due: Week 10 question handout and diary submission.

Week Eleven: Culture and Music of the Uyghur Ethnicity

1. History of the Uyghur people and Muslim Heritage
2. Differences in Culture and Music between Uyghurs and Han Chinese
3. The instruments of the Uyghur people
4. The tradition of the Murkam

Readings: Uyghur Traditional Performing Arts, Colin Mackerras

Listening: Listening CD 11

Handout Due: Reading Week 10 question handout and diary submission.

PART IV: Music in Modern China

Week Twelve: Westernizing, Utilizing and Destroying Chinese Music and the Embrace of Western Music

1. The process of westernizing the Chinese Music Tradition
2. Use of Folk music for political Propaganda
3. Destroying Culture during the Cultural Revolution
4. Embracing the West: The boom of Western Classical Music in China
Chinese Rock vs. Pop Music (protest vs. product)

Readings: Music of the Billion, Chapter 11: Republican China and After
Voices from Chinese Rock, Hao Huang

Listening: Listening CD 12

Handout Due: Reading and Listening Question Handout #10 Due

Week Thirteen: FINAL EXAM