

MUS 1130 Music from the Margins
Professor: Kornel MAGYAR
E-Mail:
-available for consultation after classes-

McDaniel College
Budapest
Spring 2020

Course Description

After a general introduction to the **rules of a music performance** and how they are acknowledged by **musicians and their audience**, we focus on the **regions** of the world that **politically or geographically have not** necessarily been the center of scholarly attention, **yet culturally and musically have had a great impact** on the entire human civilization.

We learn how it is possible for an ethnic group to identify itself with a strong music culture when it is facing difficulties defining its status in history or the larger society.

We also learn how these subcultures become successful, giving the marginalized population greater expression and agency, and impacting the world of music. Examples include African-American blues, R&B, soul, jazz, hip-hop, contemporary neosoul, Roma (“Gypsy”) folk of different regions in Europe (Hungary, Balkans, Spain, France), Roma café music, Roma jazz, manouche, Brazilian bossa nova, Jewish klezmer and impact on European classical music by Jewish musicians and more.

Several questions may arise from you along the way – to which I will be looking very much forward as part of random open discussions.

Course objectives

- listen to loads of different music created by people that are politically or socially considered peripheral but culturally they gained significant influence.
- watch videos of musicians who constantly think and create “out of the box”, though in some cases they have never received any academic tuition.
- experience the difference it makes to have a musician play his/her instrument, not on TV or Youtube, but in close physical proximity.
- take part in live music act (possibly outside the college facility) to form a closer relationship and experience a personal touch with local ethnic music representatives.

Learning outcomes

This course is explicitly not for learning music on a professional level, but rather to understand the power of a music performance that is impacting masses of people, forming the self awareness of entire ethnic communities. You will recognize connections between marginal music cultures and your own music culture on a deeper level. You will proceed towards developing a better recognition and acknowledgment of historically and politically underprivileged communities.

Required Texts and Materials

I am not willing to increase your academic burden with further readings of a course that is basically requiring using your hearing rather than your other senses.

Instead, there will be a number of listening assignments where you are expected to analyse playlists or full recorded footage selected by me. The analysis will be rendered in a short form where you are invited to answer 4-5 survey questions and submit the form until the next class.

You need to make personal notations according to class presentation to fully absorb the course material.

Assignments and Grading

The final grade is an average of the grades given for: Pop quizzes, Mid-Term Test, Final Test, Presentation, Analytic Surveys and Participation+Attendance. I reserve the right to weigh your presence and general class activity on a subjective basis to finalize your course grade in a fair manner.

Mid-Term and Final Test

Tests usually contain one essay question and a number of shorter questions (some of them definitions), and they are designed to be solved within 60-70 minutes, so 90 minutes will give you enough time to write a good test. Tests are usually taken on the first class of the week during both Mid-Term and Final Week. The second class is reserved for individual consultations when I meet with each of you for a 10-15 minutes personal conversation about your performance.

Presentation

You are invited to hold a short presentation in front of your fellow students about a topic that is closely related to the major topic of this course. The subject you talk about will be chosen together with me so hopefully you can prepare yourself for a musical genre that best fits your interests. A 15–20-minute live presentation is required for a detailed and valuable rendering of the topic.

Analytic Surveys

There will be a number of listening assignments throughout the class, where you are expected to analyse playlists or full recorded albums or movies selected by me. The analysis will be conducted in a short form where you are invited to answer 4-5 questions and submit the completed form until the next class. You can listen to the footage at home with an internet resource provided. The surveys are not graded individually, but your effort of submitting the surveys on time will earn a letter grade for the end of the semester which counts in your final grade. Missing to submit the assigned survey cuts a full letter grade off your Survey grade (for example: one missed survey results a B in your Survey grade).

Short assignments / quizzes

You can expect shorter assignments during the semester including video-analysis and solving tasks in groups, just as quizzes covering topics of the previous classes.

Attendance and Participation

In accordance with McDaniel Budapest's attendance policy. Please see referring sections in the Academic Guidance Bulletin of McDaniel College for the rules of attendance (*Class Attendance and Absences*).

You are free to make notations on your laptops or tablet. Browsing the internet or chatting on your handheld device (mobile, tablet, laptop), ignoring questions addressed directly to you is a sign of non-interest and will force consequences suggested by McDaniel policy. Signing up to this class assumes a basic dedication to its topic and you are kindly asked to stay committed to the initial decision throughout the entire semester period. You might feel that the class is different from what you have expected – in this case do not hesitate to share your ideas of what you would like to learn more about – of course within the barriers of our main topic.