

Timbre: Critical Discussions
MUH 4722/6725, Sections LDUG/LDGR
T + 4:05-7:05 pm
MUB 146

Instructor Information

Dr. Laura Dallman (she/her)

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Office Hours: M Period 6 (12:50-1:40 pm) and By Appointment

Zoom has a waiting room. Please be patient; Dr. Dallman may be with another student!

Course Description

This course critically examines timbre by engaging with the following questions: What is timbre, and how is it related to sound? What scholarship has addressed timbre and in what ways? How can we discuss and write about timbre effectively? By exploring timbre in classical and popular music genres, as well as in specific works, and by considering timbre through lenses such as music education and race, we seek to better understand what some scholars argue is a rather nebulous phenomenon.

Credits: 3

Required Materials

You will be reading articles and several chapters from several books during the semester. All books can be accessed without charge, either through Canvas or the UF libraries online services.

1. Emily I. Dolan and Alexander Rehding, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Timbre* (2020)
2. Nina Sun Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound* (Duke University Press, 2019)
3. Isabella van Elferen, *Timbre: Paradox, Materialism, Vibrational Aesthetics* (Bloomsbury Academic (2020)
4. Robert Fink, ed., *The Relentless Pursuit of Tone* (Oxford University Press, 2018)
5. Zachary Wallmark, *Nothing but Noise: Timbre and Musical Meaning at the Edge* (Oxford University Press, 2022)

Additional materials may be placed on reserve in the Fine Arts Library or made available through ARES.

Canvas (e-learning, <https://lss.at.ufl.edu>) is an important online component of the course. Current information about and assignments for the course, including copies of the syllabus, course schedule, and rubrics, will be posted on Canvas. Grades will be posted on Canvas so that you can keep track of your progress.

Please pay regular attention to your ufl email account! Emails are sent regularly through Canvas and to individual students as necessary.

Course Objectives

Students should gain:

- an understanding and appreciation for the complexities of timbre.
- discussion skills, particularly regarding critical issues surrounding timbre.
- research, writing, and editing skills in relation to the course paper requirement.

Additionally, graduate students should be able to:

- regularly drive and even lead class discussion, showing critical engagement with the readings that surpasses a basic understanding of presented information and claims.
- exhibit research skills that reflect an understanding of how to utilize and access multiple music research databases and types of materials.
- write at a level that exceeds undergraduate expectations of writing, particularly regarding the development of ideas and both the engagement with and critique of existing scholarship.
- draw on their performance experience and professional career goals in the field of music as resources for class discussion.

Assignments/Evaluation

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due at 11:59 PM on the date specified and must be submitted through Canvas. See the headings Assignments and Quizzes and Exams in the syllabus for more information on each type of evaluation. Information on semester grades is available under Grading.

Diversity and Inclusion Statement

In my classes, I encourage students of all ethnicities, religions, genders, sexual orientations, classes, ages, and abilities to express their opinions, viewpoints, and experiences. Every person has something valuable to offer to their peers and the instructor in this course! If at any time you have a question or concern about diversity or inclusion, please email or set up a meeting to talk with Dr. Dallman.

Disability Accommodations

Students with disabilities that are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to Dr. Dallman when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Assignments

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due at 4:05 PM on the date specified. For more details on assignments see Canvas. Information on assignment percentages is available under Grading (see pp. 4-5).

For each **Response**, students are generally asked to read one or two assigned articles, identify and discuss key ideas or quotes from the article(s), respond to an assigned follow-up question, and create

discussion questions for class. Completing these assignments ensures adequate preparation for our class meetings. The entire response should be approximately two pages in length, double spaced.

When you **Lead Discussion** on the article you submit for the Amalgamation assignment, you will be responsible for generating material to promote class discussion. If your peers are quiet, it is your job to get them talking! Depending on the number of students in the class, each student will have an allotted time in which they lead discussion.

The course recital will include musical and verbal presentations of a work that you've considered (or re-considered) particularly in regards to timbre. The point of the recital is not to play perfectly; rather, it's to think of and present a work with a timbral focus. (And in the spirit of equity, Dr. Dallman is forcing herself to participate, too!) Students will choose a work to perform by week 3. Dr. Dallman can help with the choosing process. A draft of recital program notes and a speaking script is due in week 5. A final copy of program notes is due in week 8, and a dry run of the verbal presentation (using a written script) will occur in week 9. The recital itself is in week 11. **Please make sure not to schedule any evening performances on March 28, 2023.**

The **Semester Paper** is the weightiest part of the student's grade, as it is a project that has various stages over the course of the semester. You will be writing a timbral analysis paper of 2000-3000 words. You will choose one musical work and consider timbre, especially in light of the scholarship we have read in class. This will 1) allow you to think more deeply about our texts for the class, 2) reduce an abundance of additional library research, and 3) allow you to work with a piece of music that speaks directly or sincerely to you. A semi-formal topic proposal and outline is due in week 6 or 7, depending on when you lead class discussion. A paper draft is due in week 12 for in-class peer review in week 13. Paper presentations will occur the last Tuesday we meet and the final written paper will be due on a mutually agreeable day during finals week. Peer reviews will be part of the grade for your paper presentation.

Students at the doctoral level (DM, PhD) are required to show additional competencies beyond the level of master's work. As such, they will be completing a limited **Annotated Bibliography**. This is not a full annotated bibliography, in the sense that not all bibliographic citations must be annotated. The ability to choose which citations to write should alleviate problems you may encounter with accessing sources while also allowing you to show that you have found records for several sources. Generally speaking, you must provide at least 20 source citations with 15 annotations.

Assignment Submissions and Late Work Policy

To be able to receive full credit, assignments have to be submitted on time. Check your Course Schedule for more information on specific dates and times. Late submission will receive an automatic deduction through Canvas of 1% for each hour it is late, and this late period lasts 72 hours from the due date.

If you are uploading to Canvas, please confirm your assignment uploads! If a submission is missing, you will receive a zero grade, so again, please make sure your assignment uploads correctly.

As graduate music students, there are occasionally weeks where required performances or your responsibilities as a TA become difficult to balance with your responsibilities as a student. If you feel like you cannot complete an assignment on time without jeopardizing your own mental health, speak to Dr. Dallman as soon as possible.

Writing assignments will be evaluated both on content and technical elements. All writing should follow the rules of standard English and will be evaluated with respect to proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, word usage, clarity, coherence, and organization. If writing is not your forte, please consider using the services provided by the UF Writing Studio (<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>). The staff at the Writing Studio will assist with questions related to your writing, but will not proofread or edit your work for you. The Writing Studio also has valuable resources in the form of citation guides and helpful videos on subjects including time management, note taking, citation/plagiarism, and study tips.

Academic Conduct

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’” The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Using someone else’s ideas in a written paper without providing proper recognition of the source (plagiarizing) are serious matters; length of the paper does not matter. Anyone caught plagiarizing is subject to an automatic E and further disciplinary action. All violations of academic honesty will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for disciplinary action without exception. Instances of plagiarism will be treated on an individual basis, but can result in a failing grade for the course.

Class Attendance and Make-Up Policy

Consistent and punctual class attendance is expected and participation in class discussion is required. Since we only meet once a week, it is imperative that you be in class.

Although attendance is not a part of students’ course grade, **students must document an excused absence to receive an excused discussion grade**. Unexcused absences will result in a zero for class discussion on the day of the absence.

Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>). Students are responsible for submitting assignments regardless of their attendance. Unless students have extenuating circumstances, any make-up work must be completed no later than a week after the assignment was originally given; otherwise, students will forfeit the grade.

Generally speaking, any absence due to participation in a School of Music performance will be excused. Our class meets during the evening hours, and there are some ensemble dress rehearsals/performances that may conflict. Speak to Dr. Dallman as soon as possible about these dates in order to avoid conflicts with class presentations and expectations. Also, please avoid scheduling any solo or chamber recitals on Tuesday evenings.

The best practice when you are absent is to email Dr. Dallman through Canvas to explain your absence. It is better to be in contact with your professor about your absence than to be silent about it. If you are silent about an absence, it is automatically recorded as unexcused.

Grading

Grades for this course are allocated as follows:

Class Discussions	15%
Responses	24% (6 @ 4% each)
Lead Discussion	5%
Recital	
Work Choice	2%
Program Notes/Script Draft	3%
Program Notes (Final)	3%
Script Presentation	3%
Recital Participation	5%
Semester Paper	
Topic/Outline	5%
Paper Draft	8%
Self-Report	2%
Assigned Review	3%
Paper Presentation	10%
Final Paper	12%

For PhD/DM students, the Annotated Bibliography will be recorded in Canvas as a complete/incomplete grade. Failure to submit any portion of the bibliography will result in an overall course grade deduction, but that deduction will not populate in Canvas. If this occurs, students will be contacted directly by email, in order to have a written record of the grade deduction.

No Submission of Annotated Bibliography 1 = 5% overall course grade deduction

No Submissions of Annotated Bibliography 1, and 2 = 7.5% overall course grade deduction

No Submissions of Annotated Bibliography 1, 2, and 3 = 10% overall course grade deduction

Final grades will be calculated according to the percentage system below. The Gradebook in Canvas will be updated regularly to show your current grade. If you are doing poorly near the withdrawal deadline, please discuss your progress with Dr. Dallman.

Grading Scale for UF Music History Classes:

94-100	A	74-76	C
91-93	A-	71-73	C-
87-90	B+	67-70	D+
84-86	B	64-66	D
81-83	B-	61-63	D-
77-80	C+	0-60	E

More information on grades and grading policies is available here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Please note: specific grade questions and concerns will only be discussed with the student. Due to the 1974 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Dr. Dallman cannot and will not discuss your progress or grades with your parents. For more information on FERPA, please visit <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/ferpa.html>. Any correspondence received from your parents or guardians will be responded to with a link to the FERPA information site and nothing more.

Class Discussion Rubric

For each class meeting, students will receive a Class Discussion grade. The highest score a student can receive on a given day is a 3.

	1 – High Quality	0.5 - Average	0 – Needs Improvement
Informed	Shows evidence of having done the assigned work. Contributions are grounded in assigned readings and listenings.	Shows some evidence of having done the assigned work. Contributions are not consistently grounded in assigned readings and listenings.	No evidence of having done the assigned work. No contributions or contributions are not grounded in the assigned readings and listenings.
Thoughtful	Shows evidence of having understood and considered issues raised. Contributions synthesize connections and formulate critical questions.	Shows some evidence of having understood and considered issues raised. Connections may not be synthesized or questions might not be raised.	Little to no evidence of having understood and considered issues raised. Synthesis and questioning are largely absent.

Considerate	Takes the perspective of others into account. Contributions situate the participant's perspective in relation to others and demonstrate the ability to consider multiple points of view simultaneously.	Takes some perspectives of others into account. Contributions occur but are not consistent in regards to perspective, positioning, or the ability to consider multiple points of view.	Does not take the perspective of others into account.
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Other Policies

Zoom Meetings: In the event that we need to have Zoom class sessions, they will be audio-visually recorded and available on a Canvas page. Attendance is required, just as it would be during a regular class period. An announcement of a Zoom meeting will occur no later than 8 am the morning of a class meeting. During a Zoom meeting, students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Zoom Etiquette: The following information is excerpted and adapted from the Netiquette Guide for Online Courses: It is important to recognize that the online classroom is in fact a classroom, and certain behaviors are expected when you communicate with both your peers and your instructors.

When attending a Zoom class or meeting, you should:

- not share your Zoom classroom link or password with others.
- dress appropriately. Even though you may be alone at home, your professor and classmates can see you! While attending class in your pajamas is tempting, you may want to re-consider wearing them. Also remember that clothing for Zoom class meetings is required; wearing clothing is not optional.
- be aware of your surroundings. Your professor and classmates can see what is behind you. Make sure the background is not distracting or something you would not want your classmates to see. (When in doubt use a virtual background.)
- test any virtual background out first to make sure your device can support it. Your background can express your personality, but be sure to avoid using backgrounds that may contain offensive images and language.
- mute your microphone. Don't leave your microphone open because of noise interference.
- raise your hand if you want to speak (click the "raise hand" button at the center bottom of your screen) and wait to be called upon.

Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on

how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

In-Class Recording: Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Technology Policy: Internet access is required this semester, as is access to Canvas and Zoom. Students with financial hardships that make regular computer access difficult should speak with Dr. Dallman immediately. To respect the instructor and other students, mute your microphone when entering a Zoom class meeting. Please refrain from visiting social media or other websites and checking email during class meetings. When you are engaged with other sites, you are not engaged with the class!

For E-learning technical support contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu. The Help Desk website is <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu>.

Communication and Correspondence: Dr. Dallman will communicate primarily through Canvas. Any changes to the course schedule or due dates, along with new resources and other course information, will be provided in an announcement on Canvas. For Discussion Board policies, see the Canvas Page labeled “Discussion Boards.” Emails can be sent through Canvas or directly to Dr. Dallman or your TA. When writing emails, think about how you are presenting yourself through

your email. Aim for clarity and use a professional tone. You are emailing your instructors, not your pals that you are meeting later for coffee or ... other beverages.

Comprehension and Responsibility: Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures in this syllabus. If you do not understand something, please ask Dr. Dallman for clarification!

Additional policy resource pages are available as Pages in our Canvas course website.

Additional Resources

Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-294-2273 so that a team member can reach out to the student.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/> or 352-392-1575
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS): Student Health Care Center, 352-392-1161
- University Police Department: <http://www.police.ufl.edu>, 352-392-1111 or 911 for emergencies

Academic Resources

- E-learning Technical Support: <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>, 352-392-4357, or email Learning-support@ufl.edu
- Library Support: To receive assistance with the finding resources or using the library, use this link - <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>.
- Student Complaints (Campus): <https://registrar.ufl.edu/complaint.html>

Course Schedule

Course material will be determined in part on student interests and preferences. Other additions, deletions, and substitutions to the schedule will be made at Dr. Dallman's discretion and will be announced ahead of time both in class and by Canvas announcements.

Please make sure you know what happens in every class regardless of your attendance. You are responsible for knowing about any changes to the schedule whether or not you are in class. Assignment dates are final and will not change unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Each Tuesday, please be ready to discuss what you have read and listened to during the previous week. **All written assignments, to be submitted on Canvas, are in bold.** All readings are to be completed prior to our class meeting.

Assignments are to be submitted on the dates and by the times indicated on the Course Schedule. These deadlines are also published to Canvas. **When uploading to Canvas, please make sure your assignment uploads!** If you cannot make a submission through Canvas due to a technical difficulty, email your assignment directly to Dr. Dallman.

Week 1: Preliminary Thinking @ Sound and Timbre

In Class: Write “Initial Thoughts on Timbre”

Create timbral word cloud

Watch *Making Sound*, Dr. Helen Czerski, BBC (2017)

Read excerpts (provided in class)

Complete “Sound Study” (prepare for Fales reading)

Week 2: The Complexities of Timbre I

DUE TUESDAY @ 4:05 PM: Response 1

Read: Cornelia Fales, “The Paradox of Timbre,” *Ethnomusicology* 46, no. 1 (Winter 2022), pp. 56-63 (short excerpt only).

Zachary Wallmark, *Nothing but Noise: Timbre and Musical Meaning at the Edge*, Oxford University Press (2022), Introduction, pp. 1-27.

Week 3: The Complexities of Timbre II

DUE TUESDAY @ 4:05 PM: Response 2 and Recital Work Choice

Read: Wallmark, *Nothing but Noise*, Chapter 1

ALSO choose Wallmark Chapter 3, 4, **or** 5 – Do not read more than one chapter!

Week 4: The Complexities of Timbre III

DUE TUESDAY @ 4:05 PM: Response 3

Read: Isabella van Elferen, *Timbre: Paradox, Materialism, Vibrational Aesthetics*, Bloomsbury Academic (2020), Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-49.

Week 5: Timbre Preference & Gender

DUE TUESDAY @ 4:05 PM: Recital Program Notes/Script Draft

DUE for PhD/DMA Students FRIDAY @ 11:59 PM: Annotated Bibliography 1

In Class: Instrument Timbre Preference Test

Read: *The Oxford Handbook of Timbre*, eds. Emily I Dolan and Alexander Rehding (2018), Introduction, pp. 3-22.

**This is available online through UF libraries.*

Edwin E. Gordon, “A Study of the Characteristics of the Instrument Timbre Preference Test,” *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 110 (Fall 1991): 33-51.

Steven N. Kelly, “An Investigation of the Influence of Timbre on Gender and Instrumental Association,” *Contributions to Music Education* 24, no. 1 (1997): 43-56.

Kristyn L. Kuhlman, "The Influence of Timbre and Other Factors on the Instrument Choices of Beginning Band Students," *Contributions to Music Education* 32, no. 1 (2005): 33-44.

Week 6: Student Choices, *The Oxford Handbook of Timbre*

DUE TUESDAY @ 4:05 PM: Paper Topic/Outline or Lead Discussion

Readings TBA

Week 7: TBD

DUE TUESDAY @ 4:05 PM: Paper Topic/Outline or Lead Discussion

Read: Daniel Villegas Vélez, "The Matter of Timbre: Listening, Genealogy, Sound," in *The Oxford Handbook of Timbre*, pp. 23-51.

**This is available online through UF libraries.*

Additional Readings TBA

Week 8: Race and Timbre

DUE TUESDAY @ 4:05 PM: Response 4 and Program Notes (Final)

DUE for PhD/DMA Students FRIDAY @ 11:59 PM: Annotated Bibliography 2

Read: Nina Sun Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound*, Duke University Press (2019), Introduction, pp. 1-37.

**This is book available online through UF libraries.*

Eidsheim's "Marian Anderson and 'Sonic Blackness' in American Opera," *American Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (September 2011): 641-71.

Week 9: Popular Music I

DUE TUESDAY @ 4:05 PM: Recital Script Presentation

Readings TBA

Week 10: Berlioz's *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes*

DUE TUESDAY @ 4:05 PM: Response 5

Read: Wallmark, "A Corpus Analysis of Timbre Semantics in Orchestration Treatises," *Psychology of Music* 47, no. 4 (2019): 585-605.

Berlioz's *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes*

**This treatise is available online through UF libraries.*

Week 11: Course Recital!

Week 12: Popular Music II

DUE TUESDAY @ 4:05 PM: Paper Draft

In Class: Self-Report

Read: *The Relentless Pursuit of Tone* (Oxford University Press, 2018) - Chapters TBA

**This book is available online through UF libraries.*

Week 13: Peer Review

In Class: Assigned Paper Draft Peer Review

We will also watch *Heima* in preparation for next week's readings.

Week 14: Popular Music III

DUE TUESDAY @ 4:05 PM: Response 6

DUE for PhD/DMA Students FRIDAY @ 11:59 PM: Annotated Bibliography 3

Read: Isabella van Elferen, "Gothic and Contemporary Music: Dark Sound, Dark Mood, Dark Aesthetics," in *The Edinburgh Companion to Gothic and the Arts* (Edinburgh University Press 2019), pp. 229-42.

Additional Readings TBA

Week 15: Final Presentations

DUE TUESDAY @ 4:05 PM: Visual Component of Presentation

Final Paper Due Date TBD Pending Class Discussion