

Music Theory Seminar: Musical Expectancy

MUT 6936

University of Florida

School of Music

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MUB 144

W 9-11

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Office Hours: TBA and by appointment

Course Description: How does music elicit strong emotional reactions? Why do we enjoy repeated exposure to the same, familiar piece? What psychological and physiological faculties are involved in our apprehension, appreciation, and engagement with music? What are the implications of research in psychology and physiology for composers, performers, scholars, and educators?

David Huron addresses these questions and more in his groundbreaking text *Sweet Anticipation* (2007). Using his book and related articles, we will explore theories of psychological expectation and what they can contribute to our understanding of how music triggers emotional responses. Pieces from a wide variety of styles will be examined in light of Huron's notions, and students will engage in a research project informed by his ideas and analytical techniques.

Course Requirements and Procedures:

Students will complete all assigned readings, and research projects on time. Active participation in weekly discussions is expected, and participants will pursue independent research in addition to the assigned readings. A journal of reactions to each assigned reading will be collected at three points during the semester. On occasion, participants may be assigned articles to read and summarize for the rest of the class, and to lead discussions surrounding various topics. Assignments, readings, due dates, and grades will be posted on Canvas, UF's elearning platform: <http://elearning.ufl.edu/> [Links to an external site.](#).

Attendance: Attendance in the class meetings is required. Unexcused absences will result in the lowering of course grade by one increment for each additional absence. Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog: [https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/Links to an external site.](https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site)

Required Text:

Huron, David. Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation. Cambridge: MIT Press (2007).

Weekly Discussion Questions and Class Participation: All students are expected to come to class having read the materials for the week, highlighting at least three passages from the readings that catch their interest in some way. These can be passages that you strongly agree or disagree with, passages about which you feel you can provide some additional insight or which you don't understand, ideas that you would like to explore further, a statistic or fact that you find illuminating or counterintuitive, or anything that changes the way you think about some component of the experience of music. The instructor will call on participants during our weekly discussion sections to initiate a portion of the discussion using these highlighted passages. Each week, the instructor will evaluate your preparedness and contributions to the examination of the material and assign a participation grade.

Reactions journal: All participants will keep a journal of reactions to the assigned readings, writing at least one paragraph in response to the material. This is primarily to be used as an aid for remembering the contents of each source, and is an opportunity for personal reflections about the material at hand. These journals will be collected three times during the semester for a grade, and the grade will simply be a percentage of the articles assigned that are addressed in writing.

Research Paper and Presentation: All participants will write a research paper, approximately 15-20 pages in length, inspired by the topics and research methods encountered in the weekly readings. A research proposal is due on 2/15, with a bibliography due on 2/29. Students will give a 20-minute presentation on their research during the last two class meetings, and the final draft of the paper is due on 4/19. The instructor will be available to consult about research topics and methods.

Academic Honor Policy:

It is expected that you will exhibit ethical behavior concerning your work in this class. Students are expected to do their own work, use their own words in papers, and to reference outside sources appropriately. Failure to uphold the standards of academic honesty will result in the appropriate disciplinary action.

As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement:

"I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University."

We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Furthermore, on work submitted for credit by UF students, the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

Students Requesting Accommodations due to Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center Links to an external site.](#) It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course 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. Click [here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner.](#) 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 ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. [Links to an external site.](#) [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here Links to an external site.](#)

Schedule of Topics and Activities: (tentative and subject to change) Chapters refer to Huron, *Sweet Anticipation*.

Class Readings

1/11 Preface

Chapter 1: Introduction

Huron, D. (2018), Aesthetics. *The Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology*, edited by Susan Hallam, et al., Oxford University Press, Incorporated, pp.233-46.

Thompson, W.F. (2007), Review: David Huron, *Sweet Anticipation*. *Empirical Musicology Review*, 2 (2): 67-70.

1/18 Chapter 2: Surprise

Guhn, M., et al (2007). Physiological and Musico-Acoustic Correlates of the Chill Response. *Music Perception* 24 (5): 473-484.

Sloboda, J.A. (1991). Music Structure and Emotional Response: Some Empirical Findings. *Psychology of Music* 19: 110-20.

1/25 Chapter 3: Measuring Musical Expectation

Chapter 4: Auditory Learning

Margulis, E. (2012). Musical Repetition Detection Across Multiple Exposures. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 29(4), 377-385.

2/1 Chapter 5: Statistical Properties of Music

Chapter 6: Heuristic Listening

Savage, P. E., et al (2015) Statistical universals of human music. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112 (29): 8987-8992.

Pearce MT. Statistical learning and probabilistic prediction in music cognition: mechanisms of stylistic enculturation. *Ann N Y Acad Sci*. 2018 May 11;1423(1): 378–95.

Broze, Y., & Shanahan, D. (2013). Diachronic Changes in Jazz Harmony: A Cognitive Perspective. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 31(1), 32-45.

Albrecht, J., & Huron, D. (2014). A Statistical Approach to Tracing the Historical Development of Major and Minor Pitch Distributions, 1400-1750. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 31(3), 223-243.

Reactions Journal #1 due

2/8 Chapter 7: Mental Representation of Emotion (I)

Huron, D. (2015) Cues and Signals: An Ethological Approach to Music-Related Emotion. *Signata [Online]*, 6: 331-351.

Patel, Aniruddh D. (2010) "Music, Biological Evolution, and the Brain." In *Emerging Disciplines: Shaping New Fields of Scholarly Inquiry in and beyond the Humanities*, edited by Melissa Bailar, 41-64. OpenStax CNX.

Research proposal due

2/15 Ch 8 – Prediction Effect

Ch 9 – Tonality

Temperley, D. (2014). Information Flow and Repetition in Music. *Journal of Music Theory*, 58(2): 155-178.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2014/04/07/300178813/play-it-again-and-again-sam>Links to an external site.

Sears, D., Caplin, W., & McAdams, S. (2014). Perceiving the Classical Cadence. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 31(5): 397-417.

2/22 Ch 10 – Expectation in Time

Ch 11 – Genres, Schemas, and Firewalls

Optional reading: Hansen NC, Vuust P, Pearce M (2016) "If You Have to Ask, You'll Never Know": Effects of Specialised Stylistic Expertise on Predictive Processing of Music. *PLOS ONE* 11(10): e0163584.

Research paper bibliography due

3/1 Ch 12 – Mental Representation of Expectation (II)

Ch 13 – Creating Predictability

Brower, C. (1993). Memory and the perception of rhythm. *Music Theory Spectrum* 15 (1): 19-35

De Clercq, T., Temperley, D. (2011). A corpus analysis of rock harmony. *Popular Music*, 30(1): 47-70.

Reactions Journal #2 due

3/8 Ch 14 – Creating Surprise

Witek MAG. Filling In: Syncopation, Pleasure and Distributed Embodiment in Groove. *Music Analysis*. 2017;36(1):138-160.

David Huron, Musical Aesthetics: Uncertainty and Surprise Enhance Our Enjoyment of Music, *Current Biology*, Volume 29, Issue 23, 2019, pp. R1238-R1240.

Optional reading: Menninghaus, W., Wagner, V., Hanich, J., Wassiliwizky, E., Jacobsen, T., & Koelsch, S. (2017). The Distancing-Embracing model of the enjoyment of negative emotions in art reception. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 40, E347.

3/22 Ch 15 – Creating Tension

Lehne, M., Rohrmeier, M., Gollmann, D., & Koelsch, S. (2013). The Influence of Different Structural Features on Felt Musical Tension in Two Piano Pieces by Mozart and Mendelssohn. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 31(2): 171-185.

3/29 Ch 16 – Expecting the Unexpected

Aversa, E. (2009). Review of David Huron, *Sweet Anticipation: Implications for Composers*. *Music Theory Online*, Volume 15, Number 3 and 4, June 2009.

Ball, P. (2011). Schoenberg, serialism and cognition: Whose fault if No one listens? *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, Vol. 36 No. 1, March: 24–41

Lerdahl, Fred. (2009). Cognitive Constraints on Compositional Systems. *Contemporary Music Review*: 97-121

Research paper draft due

4/5 Ch 17 – A Sense of Future

Huron, D. (2013). A Psychological Approach to Musical Form: The Habituation–Fluency Theory of Repetition. *Current Musicology*, (96): 7-35.

Reactions Journal #3 due

4/12 Research Presentations

4/19 Research Presentations

Final research paper due

Grading: Based on the following scale and formula -

93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B

80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-67	D
60-62	D-
0-59	E

Participation	20%
3 Reactions Journals	30%
Research Paper	30%
Presentations	20%

Grading will be consistent with the university's grading policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/Links to an external site.>