



Music and Altered States: Grooving, Trance, and Flow

Spring 25

MUH 7938 / HUM 6930- Special / 3 Credits

Friday: 9:35am-12:35pm, MUB 0232

Instructor

Dr. Payam Yousefi

Office Hours: Mon. 2pm-4pm & Thur. 1-4pm

[Office Hour Sign Up Sheet](#)

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Course Description

MUH 7938 / HUM 6930: Musicology Seminar

Music and Altered States: Grooving, Trance, and Flow

Grading Scheme: Letter grade

Friday Period 3-5, 9:35am-12:35pm,

Location: MUB 0232

This course explores various musics that induce altered psychological states in those who perform and/or audition them. From various notions of transcendence to concepts of flow and embodied experience, as a class we explore such phenomena by surveying diverse traditions from around the World. The course covers shamanistic traditions in Central Asia, US Gospel, South Asian/Persian Gulf *zar* healing circles, Tunisian *stanbeli* rituals, *santeria*, Pakistani and Indian *qawwali*, and Sufi chant & dance traditions from the Middle East and Europe, among others. Each tradition is examined within its own specific cultural context, aiming to demystify and de-exoticize these musics through readings in ethnomusicological and anthropological literature. Simultaneously we read studies on these traditions and their related concepts of alterity from the fields of psychology, cognitive science, and lifestyle medicine.

Course Objectives:

- To broaden our understanding of how altered states have been discussed in music studies.
- To learn how to think through these topics while grounded in ethnographic and empirical work.
- To familiarize with various traditions within their cultural contexts.
- To consider how this lens intersects with each student's own research.

Assessment:

- Participation (10%): Students are expected to take an active role in discussions, coming to class prepared to meaningfully contribute with their original thoughts. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with listening, media, and articles for each week's module. Weekly attendance is required.
- Weekly Responses (30%): Students are required to write a two-paragraph response to discussion prompts that are posted each week that engage with the listening and reading materials.
- Mid-term Paper (20%): 6-8 page paper discussing some of the materials presented up to that point. Students are asked to lay out, in brief format, an account of their own attitudes and ideas up to this point

in the course. Students are encouraged to use their own case studies as well to speak and think through the terms and concepts. (Week 9)

- **Final Project (40%):** A formal research paper on any musical tradition relating to concepts of alterity. The music does not need to be something we covered in class. All final projects must be approved by instructor in advance. (Guidelines will be posted in canvas).
 - Prospectus and sample bibliography (Due Week 6 – 3/14). (10%)
 - In class presentation (Due Week 14 -- 4/18) (10%)
 - Final Version (20%)

Grading Rubric:

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	F

Course Materials:

- This course does not require a textbook. Readings and listening for each unit will be posted to canvas at least one week in advance.

*****Syllabus is Subject to Change, Consult Canvas for Updates*****

Additions will be made to the readings and listening examples for select weeks.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (01/17): Course Intro and Syllabus Review

In this session we will go over some introductory readings and go over the course syllabus.

- Herbert, Ruth. “Reconsidering Music and Trance: Cross-Cultural Differences and Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives.” *Ethnomusicology Forum* 20, no. 2 (2011): 201–27.
- Jankowsky, Richard C. “Music, Spirit Possession and the In-between: Ethnomusicological Inquiry and the Challenge of Trance.” *Ethnomusicology Forum* 16, no. 2 (2007): 185–208.
- Rouget, Gilbert. *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations between Music and Possession*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985. (Read Chapter 1 pg. 3-58)

Week 2 (1/24): Foundational Readings

- Rouget, Gilbert. *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations between Music and Possession*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985. (Read Chapter 2 pg. 16-119)
- Becker, Judith. “Music and Trance.” *Leonardo Music Journal* 4 (1994): 41–51.
- Winkelman, Michael. “Trance States: A Theoretical Model and Cross-Cultural Analysis.” *Ethos (Berkeley, Calif.)* 14, no. 2 (1986): 174–203.

Week 3 (1/31): Sufism and Listening (Sama)

- Becker, Judith. *Deep Listeners: Music, Emotion, and Trancing*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004. (Read: 1-67)
- Avery, Kenneth S. (2004). *A Psychology of Early Sufi Sama: Listening and Altered States*. London: Routledge.
- Hammarlund, Anders, Tord Olsson, and Elisabeth Özdalga. 2001. *Sufism, Music and Society in Turkey and the Middle East : Papers Read at a Conference Held at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, November 27-29, 1997*. Istanbul : Richmond, England: Svenska Forskningsinstitutet ; Curzon [distributor].

Week 4 (9/10): Sufism and Listening (Dhikr)

- Becker, Judith. *Deep Listeners: Music, Emotion, and Trancing*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004. (Read: 69-150)

- Lewisohn, Leonard. "The Sacred Music of Islam: Samā' in the Persian Sufi Tradition." *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 6, no. 1 (1997): 1–33.
- During, Jean, Max Peter Baumann, Marianne Bröcker, and Linda Fujie. 1997. "Hearing and Understanding in the Islamic Gnosis." *World of Music* 39 (2): 127–37.

Week 5 (9/17): Psychology of Music and Repetition

- Margulis, Elizabeth Hellmuth. 2018. *The Psychology of Music: A Very Short Introduction*. New York]: Oxford University Press.
- Margulis, Elizabeth Hellmuth. 2014. "Attention, Temporality, and Music that Repeats Itself," *On Repeat : How Music Plays the Mind*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Thaut, Michael, Susan Hallam, Ian Cross, and Michael H Thaut. *The Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology*. Oxford ; Oxford University Press, 2009.

Week 6 (9/24): Healing Continued

- **Prospectus Draft Due**: In class prospectus presentation for 7-10 minutes.
- During, Jean. (2011). Therapeutic Dimensions of Music in Islamic Culture. In *The Oxford Handbook of Medical Ethnomusicology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Koen, B. D. (2009). *Beyond the roof of the world: music, prayer, and healing in the Pamir Mountains*. Oxford University Press.
- Koen. (2011). "Music-Prayer-Meditation Dynamics in Healing." *The Oxford Handbook of Medical Ethnomusicology*, edited by B.D. Koen. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 7 (10/01): Chanting Traditions

- Qureshi, Regula Burckhardt. *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound, Context, and Meaning in Qawwali*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- During, J. (1997). African Winds and Muslim Djinns: Trance, Healing, and Devotion in Baluchistan. *Yearbook of Traditional Music* 29: 39

Week 8 (10/08): Gospel and Groove

- Shelley, Braxton D. 2021. *Healing for the Soul: Richard Smallwood, the Vamp, and the Gospel Imagination*. 1st ed. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press. (ch 2) (ch 3 skim)

- SHELLEY, BRAXTON. “‘Play the Rain Down’: Prince, Paul Morton, and the Idea of Black Ecstasy.” *Twentieth-Century Music* 19, no. 1 (2022): 93–116.
- Shelley, Braxton. “‘To Speak As an Oracle of Christ’: Bishop G. E. Patterson and the Afterlives of Ecstasy.” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 16, no. 2 (2022): 131–52.
- Danielsen, Anne. *Presence and Pleasure: The Funk Grooves of James Brown and Parliament*. Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2006. (selected pages)
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- Mark Abel, *Groove: An Aesthetic of Measured Time*

Week 9 (10/15):

- **Midterm Paper Due:** 10 minute in class presentation
- Katherina Hagedorn. *Divine Utterances: The Performance of Afro Cuban Santeria*
- Schweitzer, Kenneth George. *The Artistry of Afro-Cuban Batá Drumming : Aesthetics, Transmission, Bonding, and Creativity*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2013.
- Otero, Solimar. “Spirit Possession, Havana, and the Night: Listening and Ritual in Cuban Fiction.” *Western Folklore* 66, no. 1/2 (2007): 45–73.
- Iyer, Vijay. “Embodied Mind, Situated Cognition, and Ex
- pressive Microtiming in African-American Music.” *Music Perception* 19, no. 3 (2002): 387–414.
- Watch [Santeros](#)
- Watch [Echu Mingua](#): This is a short documentary about the Cuban Santeria-practicing conguero Angá Diaz and his one and only album, *Echu Mingua*, a spiritual mass dedicated to his Yoruban saint.

Listening: <https://open.spotify.com/album/1pNbVUqXfJBmS85tEcCcsK?si=Tphp7tfFSJq2dqSObt8CRg>

- <https://folkways.si.edu/sacred-rhythms-of-cuban-santeria/caribbean-latin-world/music/album/smithsonian>
- Read Liner Notes
- [Duologue](#), with Cuban pianist Alfredo Rodriguez
- [Rumba de la Isla](#), (incorporates flamenco, afro-cuban sounds, and jazz)
- Yemaya, goddess of the ocean and protector of women (this would be used in ceremony):
<https://open.spotify.com/track/59o0qsZhsC1JrdrcRQASJW?si=44b4df7d742c4d30>
- Modern Twist on [Yemaya](#), (Female Vocalist)

Week 10 (03/21): Spring Break

Week 11 (10/29):

- Jankowsky, Richard C. 2010. *Stambeli: Music, Trance, and Alterity in Tunisia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Supplemental readings of canvas

Week 12 (11/05):

- Open Reading and Discussion of Terms

Week 13 (11/12):

- Huron, David Brian. *The Science of Sadness: A New Understanding of Emotion*. 1st ed. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2024.
- Wolf. “Embodiment and Ambivalence: Emotion in South Asian Muharram Drumming.”
- Wolf. “Emotional Dimensions of Ritual Music among the Kotas, a South Indian Tribe”
Ethnomusicology
- Wolf “Return to Tears” In, *The Living and the Dead: Social dimensions of death in South Asian religions*, 95–112, ed. Elizabeth Wilson. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Week 14 (04/18): Class Conference Panel

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Attendance Policy, Class Expectations, and Make-Up Policy

Attendance for this class is mandatory!

Students are allowed 1 unexcused absence.

Each absence beyond 1 will lower final grade by 2 points

Acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to engage in class include:

Illness of the student or student's child; Title ix-related situations; Serious accidents or emergencies affecting the student, their roommates, or their family; Special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences); Military obligation; Severe weather conditions that prevent class participation; Religious holidays; Participation in official university activities (e.g., music performances, athletic or academic competition) **requires an email from your coach/supervisor**; Court-imposed legal obligations. **All requests for an excused absence must be accompanied by necessary documentation.**

If an issue arises outside the reasons listed above, please communicate with me ASAP

Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>Links to an external site.) and require appropriate documentation.

University Policy on Accommodating Students with 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](#). 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.

Netiquette/Communication Courtesy:

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions, and chats.

University of Florida Policies

Academic Integrity

The University of Florida is designated a “Research 1” University, which means that UF takes *every* form of scholarship very seriously and that it holds all of its students to a high standard of academic integrity. Below is a link to UF’s official honor code – [please take a minute to read it](#).

Students are required to submit original work on all assignments – turning in anything less than original work on tests, quizzes, essays, and discussions will be considered plagiarism, i.e. passing off another person’s work as your own without properly crediting that person’s intellectual property. Instances of plagiarism will result in a 0 for that assignment and will be reported to the dean of students for further action.

You are responsible for making yourself aware of and for understanding the policies and procedures that pertain to academic integrity.

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 by abiding by the Honor Code. 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 Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Click here to read the [Conduct Code](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

Getting Help:

Additional resources are [available here](#). For Counseling and Wellness resources, Disability resources, Resources for handling student concerns and complaints.

Additional UF Resources

UF Libraries

- [Find your Librarian!](#) There is a librarian specialist for *every major* at UF

- [Ask a Librarian:](#)
- [Library Hours by Branch](#)
- [Library phone numbers by branch](#)
- [Assignment Calculator](#)
- [Project Starter Resources](#)

Health & Wellness

- ***U Matter, We Care:*** <https://umatter.ufl.edu/>
If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392- 1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student
- ***University Counseling & Wellness Center:***
3190 Radio Road (392-1575)
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. (Links to an external site.)
- ***University Police Department:*** <https://police.ufl.edu/>
392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies
- ***Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS):***
@Student Health Care Center, 392-1161
- ***Student Health Care Center***
352-392-1161 and <http://shcc.ufl.edu> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. (Links to an external site.)

Academic Resources

- **[Teaching Center Tutoring](#)** (General study skills and free tutoring)
Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420.
- **[The Writing Studio](#)** (Free tutoring in writing)
Locations in Library West & Turlington by appointment: 352-864-1138.
- **[Career Resource Center](#)**
Reitz Union (392-1601)