

MUSIC IN FILM

UGED2133 Course Outline (preliminary)

Time, location, contacts

Lecture: Mondays, 16:30-18:15,
Esther Lee Bldg LT4; tutorials: TBA
(via Zoom and Blackboard)

Instructor: Dr. Brian Thompson,
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thompson@cuhk.edu.hk; [https://
cuhk.academia.edu/BrianThompson](https://cuhk.academia.edu/BrianThompson)

TA: TBA

Learning outcomes

After completing this course,
students should have:

- Expanded their knowledge of film and music, and acquired a broad appreciation of the methods of film composers
- Developed an understanding of how music and other sounds interact with visual images to communicate ideas
- Enhanced their critical skills and develop the habit of questioning the meaning of what they see and hear

Learning style

This **3-unit** course is taught through a series of lectures, so regular attendance is expected. **Tutorials** are offered each week, providing an opportunity for smaller group discussion. They will be scheduled during the first week of classes. Learning also takes place through discussion (both in class and online), and through a term project.



Course description

This course examines the role of music in film. It enables students with no training in music or media studies to better appreciate the art of film music. Through lectures and assignments that comprise viewing, listening, and reading, students explore the work of many composers and directors and gain skills to critically evaluate what they see and hear.

科目簡介

本課程探討音樂在電影中的角色，幫助缺乏音樂訓練及傳媒基礎的學生欣賞電影音樂的藝術。透過課堂及觀賞、聆聽、閱讀習作，學生能接觸到許多作曲家與導演的作品，並能學習去評價及批判在電影中的「所見所聞」。

Course structure and topics to be covered

The course is organized in three parts. The first part (weeks 1-3) explores the course content, and the terminology and theory of film music. The second part (weeks 4-7) focuses on important film composers of our time. The third section (weeks 8-9) explores special topics, including the music of Netflix productions and music in advertising. For each topic, there are accessible readings that are drawn from a variety of sources.

All required material will be available on Blackboard. Students are advised to download a copy of the week's presentation (pdf) before class. Selected clips (mp4 files) will be available after each lesson.

Assessment scheme

- Participation (20%)
- Short-answer paper (10%)
- In-class quizzes (40%)
- Project (30%)

The grade for **participation** is earned through both in-class discussion (asking and responding to questions) and to contributions to the discussion forums (on Blackboard). A forum will be created each week, related to the course content. Further details provided below.

Students will complete the **short-answer paper** on Blackboard during after Week 3. The paper will assess understanding of material introduced in Weeks 1-3. It will comprise a number of questions directly related to the terminology as illustrated in examples. Further details will be provided in class.

In-class quizzes will be held to assess understanding of the material introduced in Parts 2 and 3 of the course.

The **project** is discussed below.

VeriGuide

On the issue of research skills and citation methods, please consult the CUHK website Honesty in Academic Work: A Guide for Students and Teachers: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

Course materials and Blackboard

Blackboard is also used for course-related announcements, and online discussion. Students are expected to check it regularly and to check the email account linked to Blackboard.



Attendance, computers, etc

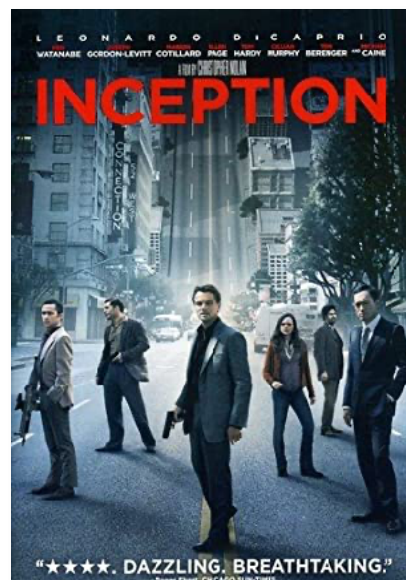
Attendance each week is necessary and hopefully pleasant, as we spend our time viewing and thinking about film and music.

Assessing participation – online discussion

Students are of course encouraged to ask questions and to comment in class. Both online and in-person activity contributes to the participation grade, and there will be opportunities for students to do brief, informal presentations throughout the term.

Online discussion takes place through the Blackboard discussion forum, and provides an opportunity to express critical points of view on the course content.

Therefore, contributions should offer an opinion on the issue being discussed. There are no right or wrong answers. Students are strongly encouraged to respond to views raised by others, to create a discussion. Each forum will open for contributions after class on Monday afternoons and close to contributions at 4 p.m. the following Monday.



An interim or projected grade for participation will be given after the sixth week of the term. The final grade will be given after the close of the final forum on at the end of the term.

Weekly syllabus			
	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Objectives/content</i>
1	10 January	Introduction	Overview of the course, objectives, introduction to the study of film music. Recommended readings cover elements of film and music.
2	17 January	The language of film music	This week students are introduced to all of the main terminology used in the course. + semiotics
3	24 January	Film genre and music	Drawing on examples from ... and many other filmmakers and composers, this topic explores the
Lunar New Year Break (31 January – 5 February)			
Composers and directors			
4	7 February	Zimmer and Nolan	Director Christopher Nolan big-budget, technically innovative films include music from his favourite composer, Hans Zimmer. Examples will be drawn from <i>Inception</i> (2010), <i>Interstellar</i> (2014), and <i>Dunkirk</i> (2017).
5	14 February	Alexandre Desplat	A two-time Academy Award winner, Alexandre Desplat has become a leading film composer in both the US and Europe. Examples will drawn from <i>Lust, Caution</i> (2007); <i>The Curious Case of Benjamin Button</i> (2008); <i>The Ghost Writer</i> (2010); <i>The Grand Budapest Hotel</i> (2014); <i>The Shape of Water</i> (2017); and other films scored by Desplat.
6	21 February	Carter Burwell and the Coen Brothers	Music for almost all of the strange and sometimes violent stories from writing-directing Coen brothers has been written by Carter Burwell. This lecture will introduce <i>Miller's Crossing</i> (1990), <i>Fargo</i> (1996), and <i>A Serious Man</i> (2009).
7	28 February	Sakamoto Ryuichi	An overview of the veteran Japanese actor-composer and original member of the Yellow Magic Orchestra: examples drawn from <i>Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence</i> (1983), <i>The Last Emperor</i> (1987), <i>The Revenant</i> (2015), and the 2018 documentary <i>Coda</i> .
Special topics in music and sound			
8	7 March	Pop music and the soundtrack	For several decades popular music has provided readymade soundtracks – from such classics of the 1960s as <i>The Graduate</i> and <i>Easy Rider</i> to the more obscure uses of pop music in the films of Quentin Tarantino (<i>Pulp Fiction</i> , <i>Kill Bill</i> , and <i>Once Upon a Time in Hollywood</i>).
9	14 March	Classical music in film	Western classical music has been used to accompany moving images since film was invented. The lectures looks at its use in the films of Kubrick and others.
10	21 March	Music and the small screen	Here we look at and listen to tv theme music and the soundtracks featured in international Netflix productions.
11	28 March	Marketing with music	Our focus in this lecture is the use of music in advertising.
Reading Week (1 – 9 April)			
12	11 April	Review and presentations	
Easter break (15 – 18 April)			
Make-up classes – if necessary (April 4-5)			

*Changes may be made to this listing.

Reading list

Lectures are built around viewing material and readings. Many students find the readings helpful in going more deeply into the topics that most interest them, so for each topic there are a number of readings. Readings are not required but by perusing them students will learn more.

General topics and theoretical writings

- Buhler, James. 2001. "Analytical and Interpretive Approaches to Film Music (II)." Chapter 2 (pp. 39-61) in *Film Music: Critical Approaches*, edited by K.J. Donnelly. New York: Continuum.
- Buhler, James. 2010. "Music in Performance and Montage Scenes." Chapter 7 (pp. 181-194) in *Hearing the Movies: Music and Sound in Film History*, by James Buhler, David Neumeyer, and Rob Deemer. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hickman, Roger. 2017. *Reel Music: Exploring 100 Years of Film Music*. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Kassabian, Anahid. 2001. "How Film Music Works." In *Hearing Film: Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film Music*. New York: Routledge.
- Neumeyer, David. 2015. *Meaning and Interpretation of Music in Cinema*. (See Chapter 2, "Tools for Analysis and Interpretation.") Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Neumeyer, David and James Buhler. 2001. "Analytical and Interpretive Approaches to Film Music (I)." Chapter 1 (pp. 16-38) in *Film Music: Critical Approaches*, edited by K.J. Donnelly. New York: Continuum.

Special topics

- Barron, Louis and Bebe Barron. 1956/2011. "Forbidden Planet." Chapter 30 (pp. 274-276) in *Celluloid Symphonies: Texts and Contexts in Film Music History*, edited by Julie Hubbert. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Brophy, Philip. 2004. "Carter Burwell in Conversation: Music for the Films of Joel and Ethan Coen." Chapter 9 (pp. 128-36) in *The Coen Brothers' "Fargo"*, edited by William G. Luhr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bushard, Anthony. 2009/2010. "Waging the Peace: Bernard Herrmann and 'The Day the Earth Stood Still'." *College Music Symposium*, Vol. 49/50: 314-26.
- Code, David J. 2008 "Rehearing *The Shining*: Musical Undercurrents in the Overlook Hotel." Chapter 8 (pp. 133-151) in *Music in the Horror Film: Listening to Fear*, edited by Neil Lerner. New York: Routledge.
- Coleman, Lindsay. 2017a. "Carter Burwell Interview." Chapter 6 (pp. 87-96) in *Contemporary Film Music*. Coleman, Lindsay and J. Tillman, eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Coleman, Lindsay. 2017b. "Rachel Portman Interview." Chapter 8 (pp. 119-24) in *Contemporary Film Music*. Coleman, Lindsay and J. Tillman, eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Coleman, Lindsay. 2017c. "Mychael Danna Interview." Chapter 12 (pp. 187-93) in *Contemporary Film Music*. Coleman, Lindsay and J. Tillman, eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Coleman, Lindsay. 2017d. "Eero Tarasti and the Narratological: Construction of Rachel Portman's *Emma*." Chapter 9 (pp. 125-38) in *Contemporary Film Music*. Coleman, Lindsay and J. Tillman, eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan.



Combrow, Robert C. 1987. "Morricone Encomium." In *Once Upon a Time: The Films of Sergio Leone*. Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, pp. 199-211.

Cooke, Mervyn. 2008. *A History of Film Music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 27-30, 60-66.

Coulthard, Lisa. 2012. "The Attractions of Repetition: Tarantino's Sonic Style." Chapter 12 (pp. 165-174) in *Music, Sound and Filmmakers: Sonic Style in Cinema*, edited by James Wierzbicki. New York: Routledge.

Dargis, Manohla. 2007. "A Cad and a Femme Fatale Simmer." *The New York Times*, 28 September.

Florino, Rick. 2010. "Danny Elfman Talks Tim Burton Scores, Bernard Herrmann's Influence and More." *Artist Direct* <http://www.artistdirect.com/entertainment-news/article/danny-elfman-talks-tim-burton-scores-bernard-herrmann-s-influence-and-more/8196173> (accessed 10 January 2013)

Galasso, Michael. 2000. "A Composer's Note." CD liner notes. *In the Mood for Love*. Original Soundtrack from the Motion Picture. Virgin.

Greiving, Tim. 2010. "Rachel Portman: Never Let Me(lodies) Go." *Film Score Monthly*, Vol. 15, No. 9 (September 2010): 23.

Hannan, Michael, and Melissa Carey. 2004. "Ambient Soundscapes in *Blade Runner*." In *Off the Planet: Music, Sound and Science Fiction Cinema*. Edited by Phillip Hayward. London: John Libbey, pp.149-164.

Herrmann, Bernard. 1973/2010. "A Lecture on Film Music." In *The Hollywood Film Music Reader*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 209-222.

Hubbert, Julie. 2014. "The Compilation Soundtrack from the 1960s to the Present." pp. 291-318 In *The Oxford Handbook of Film Music Studies*. Edited by David Neumeyer. New York: Oxford University Press.

Jameson, Fredric. 1981. "The Shining." *Social Text*, No. 4 (Autumn): 114-25.

Lee, Joanna C. 2000. "Music for *In the Mood for Love*." CD liner notes. *In the Mood for Love*. Original Soundtrack from the Motion Picture. Virgin.

Li, Cheuk-To. 2002. "In the Mood For Love." *Criterion Collection*. <http://www.criterion.com/current/posts/197-in-the-mood-for-love> (accessed 10 January 2013).

Lionnet, Leonard. 2004. "Mysteries of the Overlook: Unravelling Stanley Kubrick's Soundtrack for *The Shining*." *Film Score*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (January): 44-47.

Lim, Dennis. 2007. "Love as an Illusion: Beautiful to See, Impossible to Hold." *The New York Times*. 26 August.

McQuiston, Kate. 2012. "The Stanley Kubrick Experience: Music, Nuclear Bombs, Disorientation, and You." Chapter 10 (pp. 138-150) in *Music, Sound and Filmmakers: Sonic Style in Cinema*. Edited by James Wierzbicki. New York: Routledge.



Micallef, Ken. 2005. "Ryuichi Sakamoto." *Remix* Vol. 7, No. 4, (April): 130.

Regen, Jon. 2011. "Ryuichi Sakamoto: On Composing, Creativity, and Conscience." *Keyboards* (April): 36-7.

Rothstein, Edward. 2007. "Hitchcock, Thrilling the Ears as Well as the Eyes." *The New York Times*, 8 January.

Scheurer, Timothy E. 1998. "The Score for 2001: A Space Odyssey." *The Journal of Popular Film & Television* Vol. 25, No.4 (Winter): 172-182.

Siegel, Robert. 2014. "Scoring The Screen: Rachel Portman On Hitting The Right Emotional Note." *NPR* 25 (December). <http://www.npr.org/2014/12/25/373128461/scoring-the-screen-rachel-portman-on-hitting-the-right-emotional-note>



Stiller, Andrew. 1997. "The Music in Blade Runner." In *Retrofitting Blade Runner*. Edited by Judith B. Korman. pp. 196-200. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.

Waggoner, Andrew. 2017. "Burwell and Space: Inner, Outer, Environmental and Acoustical." Chapter 7 (pp. 97-118) in *Contemporary Film Music*. Coleman, Lindsay and J. Tillman, eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Walden, Jennifer. 2016. "The Revenant." *Mix* Vol. 40, no. 1, (January): 32,34,63.

Wierzbicki, James. 2002. "Weird Vibrations: How the Theremin Gave Musical Voice to Hollywood's Extraterrestrial 'Others'." *Journal of Popular Film & Television* (Fall): 125-135.



Grade	Descriptor
A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes. Submitted work exceeds normal expectations and reflects a standard above what is typical for current level of study.
B	Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Submitted work reflects a standard typical for current level of study.
C	Satisfactory performance on some learning outcomes but weaknesses in others. Submitted work reflects a standard below what is typical for current level of study.
D	Critical flaws, conceptual misunderstanding and/or lack of effort in assessment tasks. Submitted work reflects a standard far below what is typical for current level of study.
F	Failure to meet all or most learning outcomes, or non-submission of assessment tasks, or evidence of plagiarism in submitted work.

Participation rubric

Assessment of participation is based in part on the number and character of students' contributions to the Blackboard discussion forum. When posting, you should keep in mind that you are writing for your classmates. Be concise and precise. Postings of about 50-70 words are best. To earn an average grade (B), students are expected to write a minimum of six contributions to the forum.

	Excellent	Good	Needs attention...
Quantity of postings	Exceeds the minimum requirement	Meets the minimum requirement	Does not meet the minimum requirement
Timeliness of postings	Spread throughout the semester	Could be spread more evenly through the semester	Mostly arrived in a lump
Critical content	Consistently offers critical comments	Comments are usually critical and occasionally factual	Primarily factual comments

Project

This assignment offers students an opportunity to explore aspects of the course content through a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor. The assignment is submitted as multimedia presentation (either PowerPoint or Keynote files), containing text, images, sound files, and video. The text should be mostly written in full sentences rather than point form.

The assignment accounts for 30% of the overall course grade and will be assessed based on:

- Clarity of the ideas (30%)
- Critical observations (30%)
- Overall presentation (layout and appearance of the slides) (20%)
- Following instructions and meeting deadlines (20%) – **2%** will be deducted per day for late assignments

Further details below

Timeline

- 12 February (10am): inform the instructor of your choice via Blackboard assignment. You should provide the name of the film and source of the content (library, personal copy, iTunes, Netflix, etc)
- 25 April (5pm): submit your project via Dropbox or a similar service. This should include the full PPT or Keynote file. After uploading it, verify that the file size is right (so that everything uploaded). Give the file your name (family name first). Once it is uploaded, you will notify me of the location by Blackboard Assignment — and I will return comments to you via Blackboard.

Scene Analysis

Topics: Any film may be analyzed as long as it is not listed in the syllabus or in the exclusion list (see Blackboard). Any scene may be analyzed, but it should be between three and five minutes in length (exceptions are possible) and contain at least one of the techniques discussed in class (probably several).

Students are strongly advised to visit the UL video collection to select a DVD for this project – it is preferable to choose an unfamiliar film, watch it from beginning to end and then decide on a suitable scene to analyse. The film may be in any language, but if not in English, subtitles should be provided in the clip (if there is dialogue).

The presentation file should contain:

- Title slide: The course name and code, the student's name and SID number, assignment title (An Analysis of [Title of the film (date of release)/scene])
- Introductory slide(s): briefly introducing the film (title of the film, director, composer)
- Scene slide(s): introduction of the scene – and the selected scene (embedded in the presentation)
- Analysis slide(s): with points to listen for and audio or images (optional but useful)
- Summary slide(s): summarizing the techniques used and providing critical comments on the effectiveness of the music/sound in achieving the filmmaker's intentions
- Credits slide: listing the source of video (such as personal DVD, University Library call number or other source)

•Optional: bibliography (on one or more slides)

Project Assessment	A	B	C
1. Clarity of the ideas (30%):	26-30 pts	21-25 pts	0-20 pts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory slide(s): should provide a clear and concise overview, including a clear statement of purpose or findings • Each element that follows should have a clear purpose and contribute to the overall point of the presentation • Still images from the film may be used to illustrate points clear 			
2. Critical observations (30%):	26-30 pts	21-25 pts	0-20 pts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scene selected should contain a number of elements – it should have interesting content • In some cases, several scenes may be analysed if it helps to illustrate a particular feature of the film • All aspects of the soundtrack should normally be considered (music, sound effects, and dialogue) • References to critical literature may be included 			
3. Overall presentation (20%):	17-20 pts	14-16 pts	0-13 pts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The look (design) of the presentation should be appropriate for the subject and consistent throughout • There should be a good balance between in the use of images/media, text, colours • The use of still images from the film can be very effective (and good quality graphics should be used) • Usually, there will be no more than 2 font types used and not too font sizes – none should be too small • Video should play without problem 			
4. Following instructions and meeting deadlines (20%):	17-20 pts	14-16 pts	0-13 pts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of either Keynote or PowerPoint; • Writing in full sentences throughout (not point form) • Disc has been burned (and includes all related files) and is labeled as instructed • Meeting deadlines 			

Further instructions for the analysis option will be provided via Blackboard

