

# Music Everywhere! Thinking About Ethnomusicology



ASC 1137  
10:25 -11:15am

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Monday in TBA  
1 Credit

Fall 2025  
Spotify Playlist

**Course Description:** How do we understand music as an aspect of culture? How do you understand your own musical listening and participation? This course will introduce students to ethnomusicology, the study of music as a social reality in cultural contexts. Throughout the course, we will learn about the field of ethnomusicology, the study of musical cultures in other countries, and how these explorations tie into other areas of research (folklore, politics, gender, geography, linguistics, power, etc.). Music’s meanings, cultural functions, and the comparative nature of the research will be central to our discussions, which will also contextualize the field of musicology and sound studies. Two small creative assignments will allow students to act as ethnographers, researchers who study people to understand their cultural beliefs and customs. We will explore case studies, existing ethnographic studies and media, to understand the musicality of individuals and cultures globally.

## Course Objectives

- Understand how individuals complete research and analyze data to write about music in cultural and social contexts
- Examine the relationships between live music, sound, and society to communicate how these elements work together to reflect cultural realities
- Explore the interdisciplinary lines of inquiry and applications of ethnomusicological works

**Required Text:** Timothy Rice, *Ethnomusicology: A Very Short Introduction* (London: Oxford University Press, 2013). Additional readings (stated on the course outline) will be provided on Carmen Canvas online.

**Course Assignments:** Aside from regular class participation and weekly discussions, the course will have two larger assignments: a **Mini Ethnography** (midterm) and a **Final Presentation**. The Mini Ethnography requires students to complete an assigned worksheet including five guiding questions (we will discuss and select as a class). They will identify the listening preferences of (unidentified) individuals in their friend group and prepare a brief narrative summing up the data collected, using information presented in class to guide them and following individual consultation with the instructor. Similarly, the Final Presentation will be guided by instructor support, using multimedia to create a brief video presentation (linked to, or separate from the previous Mini Ethnography assignment) with an accompanying 300-word rationale demonstrating the knowledge they have developed throughout the course and explaining their creative choices in their presentation.

## Assignments and Grading

Class Participation		15%		Mini Ethnography		10%				
Weekly Discussions		60%		Final Project/Presentation		15%				
A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	E
93-100	90-92.9	87-89.9	83-86.9	80-82.9	77-79.9	73-76.9	70-72.9	67-69.9	60-66.9	< 60

## Course Outline and Schedule

Wk	Topic	Reading + Assignments
1	Course Introduction & Qualitative Methods	Ch.1 Defining Ethnomusicology <b>Discussion due on Friday</b>
2	Hood's Bi-musicality & Javanese Gamelan	Ch. 2 A Bit of History <b>Discussion due on Friday</b>
3	Writing Fieldnotes and Thick Description	Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures <b>Discussion due on Friday</b>
4	Fieldwork & Nettle in the Middle East	Ch. 3 Conducting Research <b>Discussion due on Friday</b>
5	Steven Feld in Papua New Guinea	Ch. 4 The Nature of Music <b>Discussion due on Friday</b>
6	Venda Traditions and Beninese Brass Bands	Blacking, How Musical Is Man <b>Discussion due on Friday</b>
7	Sensational Knowledge at the Truck Rally	Ch. 5 Music as Culture <b>Discussion due on Friday</b>
8	The Ethnographer + Azorean Festivals	<b>Mini Ethnography due on Friday</b>
9	Community and Nightlife in Berlin	Ch. 6 Individual Musicians <b>Discussion due on Friday</b>
10	On Ecomusicology + Sound Ecology	Ch. 7 Writing Music History <b>Discussion due on Friday</b>
11	High Fidelity Music in Zimbabwe	Turino, Music as Social Life <b>Discussion due on Friday</b>
12	Cape Verdean Hip Hop in Lisbon	Ch. 8 Ethno in the Modern World <b>Discussion due on Friday</b>
13	Caribbean Music in St. Kitts and Nevis	Ch. 9 Ethnomusicologists at Work <b>Discussion due on Friday</b>
14	<b>Final Presentations</b> (5 minutes each)	<b>Final Materials due on Friday</b>
15	<b>Final Presentations</b> (5 minutes each)	

### Technological Knowledge

All students are expected to be familiar with the following to complete the required course tasks, projects, and classwork: Microsoft Office/365, Carmen Canvas, Spotify, Google Slides, Google Sites, and Canva. For image/video creation, Canva and Adobe Express are very user-friendly (and free). Other forms of technology may be introduced in the course but will be demonstrated for student convenience. While some aspects of editing (required for assignments) will be introduced in the course, others are expected of students independently and will vary based on comfort level. If you need technical support at any time during the semester, you can reach out to 614-688-HELP, though I will do my best to help via email or Canvas message. Students are also welcomed to schedule a meeting (using the provided link) outside of office hours.

### **Attendance and Late Work Policy**

Attendance is required for the course. All students are given one excused absence for the semester. If you are ill or have another issue that makes it difficult to attend class, suitable notice is needed, and additional absences will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Life happens: if you are experiencing an issue or unexpected change, please communicate it prior (if possible) to the time an assignment should be submitted, and accommodations/ changes can potentially be made based on the seriousness of the situation or other limitations. I deduct 10% of the total assignment grade for each day an assignment is late without notice *and will not accept LATE WORK that is more than TWO DAYS LATE.*

### **Academic Misconduct**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For more information, see the Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>).

### **Use of Generative AI Resources**

Given that the tasks and learning goals of this class include the development of critical thinking and musical analysis and criticism skills, the use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools such as Copilot or ChatGPT and writers' aids like Grammarly is not permitted in this course. Any use of GenAI tools for work in this class may therefore be considered a violation of Ohio State's Academic Integrity policy and Code of Student Conduct because the work is not your own. The use of unauthorized GenAI tools will result in referral to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If I suspect that you have used GenAI on an assignment for this course, I will ask you to communicate with me to explain your process for completing the assignment in question and, dependent on the situation, attempt to provide an alternative assignment. If you feel you need to use GenAI for translation, please contact me first. If you have any other questions regarding this course policy, please contact me.

### **Diversity**

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity of people and ideas. We believe in creating equitable research opportunities for all students and to providing programs and curricula that allow our students to understand critical societal challenges from diverse perspectives and aspire to use research to promote sustainable solutions for all. We are committed to maintaining an inclusive community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among all members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach their own potential. The Ohio State University does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. *(To learn more about diversity, equity, and inclusion and for opportunities to get involved, please visit: <https://odi.osu.edu/> or <https://cbisc.osu.edu/>)*

## Religious Accommodations

Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement and the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy. If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the [Office of Institutional Equity](#). (Policy: [Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances](#))

## Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting [ccs.osu.edu](https://ccs.osu.edu) or calling [614-292-5766](tel:614-292-5766).

CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at [614-292-5766](tel:614-292-5766) and 24 hour emergency help is also available 24/7 by dialing **988** to reach the **Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**.

### **Disability Services**

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. If you are ill and need to miss class, including if you are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of a viral infection or fever, please let me know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; or [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu).

### **Title IX**

*Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX coordinator at [titleix@osu.edu](mailto:titleix@osu.edu).*