

MUS 2310A: Music in the Movies

Professor: Dr. Geneviève Bazinet

- Welcome!
- We will start at 2:30pm
- You should hear music!
- Please keep the chat box for questions during the question period
- Technical issue?
 1. Press the speaker icon at the top of the window. The icon will be green once activated. Also, check the volume of your headphones and computer.
 2. If this doesn't work, in the upper left-hand corner select "Meeting" and "Audio Setup Wizard".
 3. If the sound is still not working, try exiting and re-entering the Adobe Connect session
 4. Finally, if all else fails, contact our technical support team at 613-562-5900

MUS 2310A: Music in the Movies

- Orientation in Brightspace (virtual campus)
- The Power of Music in the Movies
 - A “Masking test”
 - The role of music in film
- Film Terms part 1: The Sound Track and Film Narrative

MUS 2310A: Music in the Movies

- **Required Textbook**
- **Reading and Viewing: Assigned in the course outline**
 - Viewing:
 - Specific films have been chosen from each era or genre of film. These are listed in the (tentative) course outline.
 - Key clips from these films are available on our streaming site. You will get more out of our discussions if you view the clips **before** coming to class.
 - Reading:
 - Required readings are noted in the course outline. Additional material will be presented in class.
 - Links to film synopses will be posted on Brightspace. Please read these before the relevant class.

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A note about films for this course:

Films or scenes heard/viewed in class or for assignments may include images, dramatic situations, and/or language offensive to some. These elements will be treated as cultural artifacts emanating from a specific time, place, and culture. If you are concerned about the content of a film on the course outline or assigned for viewing, please contact me!

NO X-rated films are to be written about on exams, tests, assignments, or discussed in class.

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- **Disclaimer**

- This class **will** change the way you hear films and experience movies.
- You may end up humming or singing the music after class!

- **Spoiler Alert**

- We will discuss and view plot details about films that you may not have seen yet. To avoid spoilers, please take a look at the film list in the course outline and view those films ahead of time.

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Evaluation:

- **Practice quiz** (optional): Week of May 3rd (no mark - participation only)
- **Test 1:** Week of May 17th (15%)
- **Test 2:** Week of May 31st (15%)
- **Assignment:** June 12th, 11:59pm (40%) See the breakdown in Brightspace.
- **Final exam:** TBA (30%)
- **Note:** The final exam is scheduled by the Faculty of Arts and cannot be rescheduled. If you cannot write the exam at the scheduled time, you will need to request a deferral of your final mark.

Communications with me: Saturday 11am-12pm (Zoom), by email, or by appointment (Zoom or Microsoft Teams)

Email: gbazinet@uottawa.ca

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Assistance:

- If you have a disability, you must register with the Student Academic Success Service (SASS) in order to receive accommodations. It is your responsibility to request accommodations for exams through SASS within the set deadlines. <http://sass.uottawa.ca/en/access>

MUS 2310A: Music in the Movies

- Course outline (tentative)
 - Part 1
 - Classes 1-3: Music/film theory and terms
 - Part 2
 - Classes 3-5: Music and film history
 - Silent films, transition to sound films
 - Classical and Post-Classical eras... films scores by Max Steiner and Bernard Herrmann.
 - Part 3
 - Classes 7-13: Special themes
 - John Williams (2 classes)
 - Movies since 2000 (dramas, action, sci-fi films and musicals)
 - Hans Zimmer
 - Howard Shore and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy

The Power of Music in the Movies

A “masking test”

The murder scene from *Psycho*, without music.
DVD00004 –special features
On our streaming site

The murder scene from *Psycho*, with music.
DVD00004 –special features
On our streaming site

MUS 2310A: Music in the Movies

The role of music in the movies

- Background noise –accompaniment for the images
- Music as mimic
- Music as an integral part of the scene
 - Adds “value”, depth...
 - Communicates additional dimension to the audience (emotional state of the character that is not evident in his/her on-screen actions)
 - Foreshadows or links certain elements to others (known or unknown)
- Levels of sound in a scene
 - Spoken sound
 - On-set sound
 - Sound for the audience
 - A scene from *Catch Me If You Can* (director Steven Spielberg, music John Williams, 2002)

The first phone call between Carl and Frank from *Catch Me If You Can* DVD: *FE AC 2002 C383*. Time: 1:03:38-1:06:30
On our streaming site

Film Terms: The Sound Track and Film Narrative

Basic terms and concepts

Image Track, Sound Track, Narrative

- Music in film is...any music used in a film
 - Score composed for the film
 - Pre-existing music used in a film
 - Music heard by the characters, audience, or both
 - We will address all of these musical elements, but will focus on **music composed for a film**
- Sound within a film includes the **dialogue, speech, sound effects, general effects**, and, of course, **music**
- **Image Track**: what appears on the screen
- **Sound track**: what one hears through the speakers

Image Track, Sound Track, Narrative

Narrative films: films that tell a story through actions and interactions of characters.

- **Realism, clarity and fidelity**
 - Reality of the film is often different from actual reality. Film makers often prioritize clarity of narrative over fidelity, both in the telling of the story and in the musical components.
- **Clarity:** Aesthetic priority favoring the film's construction of a world that makes sense to us rather one that is faithful as possible to the real world. It is usually opposed to Fidelity.
- **Fidelity:** The principle of recording how something actually sounds. Although rhetoric of sound design often invokes the principle of fidelity as a means of achieving realism, fidelity is rarely the dominant principle.

The Sound Track

- Three components of the sound track
 - **Dialogue/speech**: One of the three components of the sound track; human speech in language (non-speech sounds such as grunts are usually considered to be more like noise).
 - **Sound effects**: (sfx, effects, fx, or noise) All sounds other than music or speech.
 - **Music**: In silent-film performance, the principal sound element; in sound film, one of the three components of the sound track.
- Traditionally, dialogue has been given priority over effect and music. Dialogue typically occupies the foreground, while music and effects occupy the background.
- **Foreground/background**: A distinction of visual staging carried over to film and affecting the sound track as well: in the classical model, dialogue occupies the sonic foreground and music and effects the background.

The Sound Track

Dialogue/speech: elements of spoken sound

- Dialogue and speech provide crucial information about the plot.
- Dialogue is typically heard from on-screen subjects (wide shot, or shot/reverse shot methods)
- Except on rare occasions, dialogue is featured in the foreground
 - Exceptions: when characters are physically far away (lower volume) or form part of a crowd (generic sound – element of sound effect in this case).
- **Voice-over:** A person not seen (and who may not belong to the physical world shown in the film) talks directly to the viewer.
 - This often provides additional information that we would not get from the straight-forward narrative.

Emma. Main title sequence with voice over
narration.
On our streaming site

Black Panther: Prologue with voice over
narration.
On our streaming site

The Sound Track

Sound effects: elements of sound other than speech or music

- Sound effects add additional sonic layers to the narrative, adding depth to the scene by supplementing sound for images on-screen, or to suggest elements we cannot see.
- **Foley effects:** sound effects of important characters or elements in a scene (sound of clothing, sword, cars...)
- **Ambient sound:** (environmental sound; environmental noise)
Background sounds appropriate to the physical space being depicted, such as crickets, water, or birds. It extends the physical space, sometimes beyond what we can see in the frame.
 - Not common in Classic Hollywood films (ca.1940s, 1950s...)
 - Very prominent in more recent films
- **Stinger (or accent):** A sudden and sharp accent; most often applied to music (a loud chord or cymbal crash) but equally appropriate to speech (a shout or loud cry) or effects (gun shot or door slamming).

The Sound Track

Music: In silent-film performance, the principal sound element; in sound film, one of the three components of the sound track.

- Music's role in the narrative:
 - Provides narrative cues (usually confirming what we see)
 - **Musical topic**
 - Conventional musical figures
 - Evoke, represent, or signify a particular mood, place, emotion, or some other character trait in the narrative.
 - The signification of a musical topic is general (not unique to the film)
 - Examples: fast music for a chase sequence, ominous music for a villain, etc.
 - National anthems to suggest specific places (specific geographic regions)

The Sound Track

- **Leitmotif:** Term derived from nineteenth-century opera and applied to film music.
 - A musical idea (usually short) is developed (varied, re-orchestrated) within a film
 - An idea that acquires some of the properties of a word or symbol
 - The signification of a leitmotif is specific to a particular film (or set of films) and is opposed in that sense to the musical topic, whose signification is more general.
 - Trait of early silent films, but also a trait of the new epic genres, revived by John Williams in *Star Wars*, and used extensively by Howard Shore in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* trilogies.
 - Leitmotifs can “fill in the gaps” for an audience, recalling a character or event that is not on screen or occurred in a previous scene. It can also explain an important narrative point.
 - “Imperial March” in *Star Wars* Episode II.

The Sound Track

Music also establishes mood in immediate and unique ways, often more effectively than dialogue/effects and even images.

- The various elements of music (rhythm, timbre, orchestration, tempo, tonality) can suggest different moods, often more effectively than a particular melody.
- It adds emotional intensity and specificity
- It influences and organizes time
 - Music is often used to link to scenes together, to smooth the transition from one scene to the other, or to give the impression of the passage of time

The Sound Track

Placement of Music

Music in the “foreground” or “background”, and heard and unheard music

- Distinction between music **heard by the characters** (**diegetic**, or **source music**, which is part of the world of the film) and **heard only by the audience** (**nondiegetic**, or **underscoring** – which works in the narrative register of the film, like a voice-over)

Music provides insight and new information through narrative cues, but also defines emotions and situations that are visually unclear. It influences our perception of the image and story. It can function as accompaniment or be the aural focus of the scene.

Music and Image

- Masking exercise: watching a scene without the sound, or listening to the score without the images
 - *Psycho* murder scene, with and without music.
- Commutation test: substituting a new soundtrack for a scene. We then ask the following questions: how is the original music related to the scene action? What does it tell us? Is it synchronized and empathetic, or does it “play against” the action?
- Audiovisual contract: a term from film music studies. It is the underlying assumption that any music in film will have an effect on what we see.
- Central questions for our course: To what degree does music “fit” the narrative? How is music used in a scene, in a film?

Sleepless in Seattle (1993, director Nora Ephron, music Marc Shaiman). The Second Botched Meeting, without sound
On our streaming site

No sound. What do you think is going on? What do you think the main character is feeling?

Sleepless in Seattle (1993, director Nora Ephron, music Marc Shaiman). The Second Botched Meeting, with sound
On our streaming site

With sound. What do you think is going on? What do you think the main character is feeling?

Sound Track Components and Narrative: Example 1

- *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993, director Nora Ephron, music Marc Shaiman. DVD time - 1:10:30)
- Sound track components
- Diegetic/nondiegetic sound
- Elements of the music – what do we hear, how does it relate to the images or reveal unspoken aspects of the scene?

Next Class: Music and Film terms, continued

Application of musical terms and
concepts to *Citizen Kane*