



MUS 525
Music of the 20th Century
Course Syllabus: Spring 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor:	Dr. Jessica Stearns
Classroom Location:	Music Building Rm. 105, MF 9:00 am-9:50 am
Office Location:	Music Building Rm. 220
Office Hours:	MW 1:00 pm-3:00 pm; F 11:00 am-12:00pm
University E-mail:	Jessica.Stearns@etamu.edu
Preferred Form of Communication:	Email
Communication Response Time:	24 hours

Course Information

Course Description

Representative music literature from Debussy to the present.

Student Learning Outcomes

Graduating students will be able to demonstrate synthesis of varied performance practices of Western Music and the music of other cultures from the ancient civilizations to the present period.

In this course, students will:

- Become familiar with practices and issues related to music during the twentieth and twenty-first century through exploration of topics such as institutions, music societies, technologies, and politics.
- Become acquainted with scholarly approaches and demonstrate an ability to conduct academic research by completing a final research paper.

Required Textbook

Auner, Joseph. *Music in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2013.

Course Requirements

Instructional Methods

Students will follow outlined activities for each week that include readings, in-person discussions, and assignments.

Assessments

Participation: This course is based on in-person discussion and not lectures. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings and pieces.

Reading Responses: Students will post brief reactions to assigned readings in D2L before class.

Style Analysis: Students will write an essay analyzing elements of Modernism in a musical work from the turn of the century.

Performance Reflection: Students will write an essay discussing their experience performing indeterminate music and connecting them to class readings.

Annotated Bibliography: Students will create a bibliography for their proposed final paper topic and provide annotations.

Abstract: After initial research, students will submit an abstract summarizing their final paper.

Presentation: Students will give a presentation outlining the major findings of their final paper.

Final Paper: The final paper will cover a research topic of the students' choosing within twentieth-century music and will be at least 2,400 words. Students who submit a paper below the required word count will automatically receive a zero on the assignment.

Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following point distribution:

Participation	130
Reading Responses	200
Style Analysis	60
Performance Reflection	60
Annotated Bibliography	100
Abstract	100
Presentation	125
Final Paper	225
Total	1000

A=900-1000 B=800-899 C=700-799 D=600-699 F=Below 600

Course and University Procedures / Policies

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance

Attendance Policy

Because this is a graduate-level course, students are expected to attend every class and arrive on time. Absences will result in a zero for participation on those days.

Late Assignments or Work

Assignments submitted within one week of the deadline will incur a 50% penalty. No assignments will be accepted beyond one week after the deadline.

Classroom Etiquette

You are by no means required to like all of the music assigned in this course or to agree with the views expressed by the composers and scholars we will be studying. You are, however, expected to be thoughtful and courteous in expressing your opinions and in responding to those of your classmates.

Electronic Devices

Students may use laptops or tablets to take notes and access readings during class. The use of cell phones is prohibited. Please silence and put away (completely out of sight) your cell phone.

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures: [Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

AI Use in Course (University Statement)

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

AI Use in Course (Instructor Statement)

As an instructor, I recognize the potential of AI as a useful tool to aid learning, create content, and refine writing skills. However, I will not utilize AI to generate course materials or provide feedback to students. In this class, students are permitted to incorporate AI into assignments only when explicitly instructed to do so. Any other use of AI on assignments or exams will be deemed as academic dishonesty.

School of Music Mission Statement

The School of Music at East Texas A&M University promotes excellence in music through the rigorous study of music history, literature, theory, composition, pedagogy, and the preparation of music performance in applied study and ensembles to meet the highest standards of aesthetic expression

University Mission Statement

East Texas A&M University provides a personal educational experience for a diverse community of life-long learners. Our purpose is to discover and disseminate knowledge for leadership and service in an interconnected and dynamic world. Our challenge is to nurture partnerships for the intellectual, cultural, social, and economic vitality of Texas and beyond

Students with Disabilities (ADA Statement)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, contact the Office of Student Disability Services at 903-886-5150, 903-886—5835; email studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu; online at [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#); or in-person in Room 162 of the Velma K. Waters Library.

East Texas A&M University Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

Health and Wellness

As an Institutional Member of the National Association of Schools of Music, East Texas State A&M University supports the Association's commitment to student health and wellness. The following web address provides links to information for resources related to physical and mental well-being, as well as assists in offering preventative measures that students can take to avoid serious and/or chronic conditions: [Musician Health and Safety - East Texas A&M University](#)

East Texas A&M University Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#). <http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>
<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Tenets of Common Behavior

All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See current Student Guidebook)

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Campus Concealed Carry - Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedure/s/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf> and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser

Support: https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_suppport.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universitysalmenu

Access and Navigation

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

Communication and Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Course Calendar

Week	Content
Week 1: 1/26-1/30	Mon: No Class Fri: Course Introduction R: Auner, Ch. 1
Week 2: 2/2-2/6	Wed: Modernism and Postmodernism R: Albright, "Introduction" in <i>Music and Modernism</i> ; Pasler, "Postmodernism" in <i>Grove Music Online</i> Fri: Expanding Musical Worlds at the Turn of the Twentieth Century R: Auner, Ch. 2
Week 3: 2/9-2/13	Mon: Making New Musical Languages R: Auner, Ch. 3 Fri: TMEA; No Class <i>Style Analysis due</i>
Week 4: 2/16-2/20	Mon: Folk Sources, the Primitive, and the Search for Authenticity R: Auner, Ch. 4 Fri: New Music Taking Flight after World War I R: Auner, Ch. 5
Week 5: 2/23-2/27	Mon: Paris, Neo-Classicism, and the Art of the Everyday R: Auner, Ch. 6 Fri: The Search for Order and Balance R: Auner, Ch. 7
Week 6: 3/2-3/6	Mon: Inventing Traditions R: Auner, Ch. 8 Fri: William Grant Still's Later Career R: DjeDje, "Context and Creativity: William Grant Still in Los Angeles" <i>Annotated Bibliography due</i>
Week 7: 3/16-3/20	Mon: Rebuilding amid the Ruins R: Auner, Ch. 9 Fri: Darmstadt and Cold War Politics R: Beal, "Negotiating Cultural Allies: American Music in Darmstadt, 1946-1956"
Week 8: 3/23-3/27	Mon: Trajectories of Order and Chance R: Auner, Ch. 10

Week	Content
	Fri: Christian Wolff's Indeterminate Music R: Nelson, "Social Dynamics at the Heart of Composition: Implications of Christian Wolff's Indeterminate Music"; Instructions for <i>For 5 or 10 Players</i>
Week 9: 3/30-4/3	Mon: Performing Indeterminate Music R: None <i>Bring instruments to class</i> Fri: Improvisation in Pauline Oliveros's Works R: Andersen, "Spaces for People: Technology, Improvisation and Social Interaction in the Music of Pauline Oliveros" Abstract due
Week 10: 4/6-4/10	Mon: Presenting Research and Writing About Music R: Presentation Guidelines; Final Paper Guidelines Fri: Electronic Music from the Cold War to the Computer Age R: Auner, Ch. 11 Performance Reflection due
Week 11: 4/13-4/17	Mon: Texture, Groups, Loops, and Layers R: Auner, Ch. 12 Fri: Histories Recollected and Remade R: Auner, Ch. 13 Individual Meetings
Week 12: 4/20-4/24	Mon: Minimalism and its Repercussions R: Auner, Ch. 14 Fri: Border Crossings R: Auner, Ch. 15; Alonso-Minutti, "Gatas y Vatas: Female Empowerment and Community-Oriented Experimentalism" in <i>Experimentalisms in Practice</i>
Week 13: 4/27-5/1	Mon: Presentations Fri: Presentations
Finals Week: 5/4-5/8	Wed: Presentations, 8:00am-10:00am Final Paper due (5/8)