

## Listening to Movies: MUSIC 20918, CMST 28118, SIGN 26021 — SQ 2019

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Meeting Schedule	M/W/F 11:30 -12:30 (see below for details)
Office Hours:	Via Zoom TBA

### Course Description

This course shifts your attention from watching movies to listening to them. Amid a strong emphasis on cinema—ranging from musical accompaniment during the silent era to sound in experimental films; or from classical Hollywood underscoring to Bollywood musical numbers—we will consider the soundtrack of moving pictures within the history of audiovisual media. Built around a core repertory of eight films, the course will introduce topics and issues around film music and film sound: aesthetic and psychological (such as representation, narration, affect); cultural and political (such as race, ethnicity, propaganda); social and economic (such as technology, production, dissemination). After this quarter, you will never quite watch a film or television, but also listen to and at times consciously attend to the soundtrack understanding not only the power of sound and the power of music in shaping our apprehension of the world.

### Remote Learning

Most of us would not have imagined earlier this year that we might find ourselves scattered around the country and the world because of a global pandemic. Nobody signed up for this: not for the fear, not for the social distancing, not for the sudden end of our collective lives together on campus. We didn't prepare for online classes, for teaching remotely, for learning from home, for mastering new technologies, and for varied access to learning materials. So during the last two weeks, instructors have made a heroic effort, with tremendous support from the college and the central administration, to uphold one of the central missions of the university to educate its students and do so with rigor, intensity, and intelligence.

We are lucky that this all didn't happen five or ten years ago. Video conferencing technology has evolved rapidly and course management platforms such as Canvas have become sophisticated and user-friendly. Indeed, for classes teaching audiovisual materials there are now amazing tools some of which we will use in this class. To be sure, adapting a large lecture course like "Listening to Movies" to an online format on such short notice has been a real challenge. That said, we believe that the below format is a sensible substitution under the current circumstances. You will watch great films and work through interesting readings; you will have a chance to produce meaningful written work; and you will be able to learn from one another by contributing to discussions and participating in online meetings. Moreover, we instructors are looking forward to learning from you as well: what you think about the films; what you already know about film music; and what questions you may ask while studying very different cinematic soundtracks.

Our general approach for this course is to foster intellectual nourishment, social connection, and personal accommodation across time zones, technological variability, and personal contexts. We will seek feedback from you and will remain flexible in order to adjust to what works and what doesn't. In doing so, we are going to prioritize supporting each other, seek simple solutions, share resources, and communicate clearly. Since we are, in some sense, building a new ship at sea, we might make changes when needed. We invite you to share your experiences and contact us with any concerns and questions anytime.

### Asynchronous Work

Given the challenges of remote learning—ranging from unstable internet connections to difficult living situations—a considerable portion of the course will be *asynchronous*: watching films and clips; reading book chapters, essays and articles; writing assignments; contributing to the online discussion board; creating and responding to blog entries; and taking a final exam. Much of this will be guided by detailed instructions for assignments; prompts for discussion; suggestions for blog entries; and guidelines for how to prepare for the exam.

### Synchronous Zoom Meetings

Given the large enrollment for the course (capped at 80 students), *synchronous* meetings will take place in groups of four to five students. To this end, each section of the course will be divided into four groups (A, B, C, D) that will remain the same for the entire quarter. Group meetings offer an opportunity for intense and fruitful exchanges, allowing you to contribute to conversations and ask questions in ways not possible in the large lecture format or even in a large section. Paired groups will also meet twice a quarter with the main instructor on Monday (see below schedule). And you will meet individually with your section leader to talk about your interests and your blog.

### Sections

The class has four sections and each section is divided into four Groups (A, B, C, D)

Hoeckner	Section <b>Romance</b>	Groups A, B, C, D
Rogers	Section <b>Comedy</b>	Groups A, B, C, D
Wilson	Section <b>Drama</b>	Groups A, B, C, D
Skjerseth	Section <b>Fantasy</b>	Groups A, B, C, D

Genre names for sections are just for fun; we cover the same material in all sections.

### Schedule of Zoom Meetings

Please note that we will provide links to Zoom Meetings on the Canvas Site. Please be punctual.

#### Monday — Two-Group Meetings with Main Instructor (Hoeckner)

11:30 Group A and Group B

11:55 Group C and Group D

**Comedy WK 2+6 Drama WK 3+7 Romance WK 2 only Fantasy WK 5+9**

Please note the new rotation of two-group meetings to accommodate Memorial Day:  
Section Romance will only have one extra Monday with the main instructor

#### Wednesday — Single Group Meeting with Section Leader

11:30 Groups A

11:55 Groups B

#### Friday — Single Group Meeting with Section Leader

11:30 Groups C

11:55 Groups D

## Repertory of Films

Due to the remote learning format of the course, there will be no live screenings of the eight films that form the core repertory of this course. This is a loss, since film—and film sound—is experienced differently in the movie theater. This is why some film scholars are absolutely adamant about students attending screenings without any use of smartphones or even taking notes. At the same time, watching a film on smaller digital devices can be helpful to analysis (rewinding a sequence for a second look, freezing a frame to study its visual composition, and of course listening to a scene to focus, in turn, on dialogue, sound effects, and music). When watching the films for each week, you might invite those who you are living with to join, perhaps watching on a larger monitor or TV screen. This makes it a communal experience, which is also important for the history of genre, as audiences often laugh or cry together or at different moments, and talk about the film afterwards. If this is the first time you have seen one of these films, you will surely remember them as being part of this strange and unsettling time in the Spring of 2020, in college yet away from campus. See Canvas for different ways of how to watch the films.

## Main Text and Materials

As a main text for the course, we will use Kathryn Kalinak’s *Film Music: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford University Press, 2010). Unlimited electronic access to the book is available through Regenstein Library (Click [here](#)). Additional readings and media will be made available on Canvas. Kalinak gives an accessible overview of film as an aesthetic object, some film theory, and a short tour of film history. Though largely serving as background reading, the book will sometimes feed into class discussion and written work.

## Assignments and Discussions

Weekly assignments and discussion prompts posted on Canvas on Fridays will serve as a basis for asynchronous engagement with the course materials (films and readings). Assignments are designed to be practical and fun, and doing them will create a solid baseline for your grade. Discussions on Canvas will serve as a forum of asynchronous interaction between members of your section. Assignments and the Discussion prompts are typically based on the film of the week, a reading, a special issue, or some combination of these.

## Blog

Blogs are new forms of writing in the age of the internet, so as part of a Signature Course in the Humanities, you might want to try your hand at this genre to hone your skills as a writer, to explore an idea you have had about film music, and to engage readers. Each section will have its own Blog. Every student will write one Blog entry and one response to another blog entry. The Blog entry will be written on a Google Doc and workshopped in each group, which will offer feedback before publication in the Section Blog. The instructors will select a handful of the most interesting and well-written blogs from each section for publication on Course Blog. The Canvas Site will have more details about how to write the blog entry.

## Participation and Attendance

Your participation grade will consist of three elements: (1) contributions to asynchronous online discussions; (2) attendance at synchronous group meetings; (3) and meeting one-on-one with your section leader. If you cannot take part in a group meeting for technical or other reasons, please let us know by writing an explanatory note to your section leader who will try to accommodate you to another session for that week.

You are asked to meet at least one or two times with your section leader to introduce yourself, discuss your blog project, and ask questions. Course Assistants (Rogers, Skjerseth, Wilson) will be available for meetings during Monday class time and during office hours. Since the main instructor (Hoeckner) has scheduled group meetings on Mondays, he will offer extended office hours for his section at other times.

## Final Exam

The 90-minute final exam will be done remotely and it will consist of three short essays: one essay will be a response to a question about a critical issue that is central to the understanding of film sound; and two essays will be short analyses and interpretations of short clips, making use of terms and concepts provided in a word bank. You prepare for the exam by reviewing readings, assignments, and a glossary of terms and concepts. We are currently looking into an early date for the exam, to include everyone with seniors. If you are starting an internship on June 1, please contact your section leader as well as the main instructor.

## Grading Percentage

Participation	20%
Discussions	20%
Assignments	30%
Blog	15%
Final Exam	15%

Please note the **College’s Grading Policy** for the Spring Quarter:

In keeping with the College’s traditional policy, students may request a pass / fail grade in all courses taken as Free Electives with the consent of the instructor. For courses taken to fulfill the requirements of a **Major or Minor**, the College has requested that Departments, Schools, and Programs implement a pass/ fail option, in force only for the spring of 2020. Students who wish to receive quality grades in their Majors and Minors may continue to do so. Students should inquire with their Departmental or Program offices about the details of these arrangements, and confirm all requests to take the pass/ fail option by Friday of Week 9.

## Internet and Laptop Access

If you have difficulty accessing the internet or an unreliable connection during synchronous class time, please contact both your section leader and the main instructor. If you have an unreliable computer or tablet you may go to the following link: <https://collegesurveys.uchicago.edu/ccss-laptop-request> This link leads to a survey that you can fill out if you need to request a laptop. Only students can access it.

## Academic Integrity

All members of the University of Chicago belong to a tradition dedicated to the pursuit and cultivation of learning. A few simple principles – academic honesty, mutual respect and civility, personal responsibility – lie at the heart of our intellectual community. Please ask me if you have questions about how to properly credit and cite sources in your paper, about integrity during an exam, or related topics. Please review the University’s policies on academic integrity: <http://college.uchicago.edu/advising/academic-integrity-student-conduct>

## Accommodations

The University strives to be supportive of the academic, personal, and work-related needs of each individual and is committed to facilitating the full participation of students with a disability in the life of the University. Please do not hesitate to speak with me privately about any disabilities that may require accommodations. As a first step, please consult with the Office of Student Disability Services, which is available to help implement Spring Quarter accommodations for students remotely. (<http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/>)

## Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct

In keeping with its long-standing traditions and policies, the University of Chicago considers students, employees, applicants for admission or employment, and those seeking access to University programs on the basis of individual merit. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, age, status as an individual with a disability, protected

veteran status, genetic information, or other protected classes under the law (including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972). We are looking forward to working with you to foster a respectful, supportive classroom environment that is conducive to group discussion. If you have any concerns, please discuss them with me immediately so we can begin to resolve them. For additional information please see: [https://www.uchicago.edu/about/non\\_discrimination\\_statement/](https://www.uchicago.edu/about/non_discrimination_statement/)

### **Remote Learning Rules and Etiquette**

Taking into account the unusual and challenging circumstances facing all of us right now, and the need to adapt quickly to a new model of instruction, we are committed to making the virtual classroom experience as welcoming, engaging, and effective as can be. To that end, we have developed a few rules of online etiquette that will aim for an inclusive and productive environment for all.

**Microphone:** Your default setting should be muted, so that microphones do not broadcast extraneous or unintended sounds. This can be adjusted in Zoom’s Settings/Audio, selecting “Mute microphone when joining a meeting” and “Press and hold SPACE key to temporarily unmute yourself,” for quick access to your mic.

**Video:** Please make yourself visible to others by turning video on. If you have a concern about this, or your wireless connection makes it difficult to use video, please let me know. [optional addition: Please enable Zoom's "virtual background" feature for all of our class meetings. This will help us to minimize distractions and maintain our collective focus on each other's questions and insights. Please use a neutral and non-distracting background.]

**Speaking:** Since we are not able to be in the same room simultaneously, I would ask that you please raise your hand (a feature of Zoom) when you want to respond to something or ask a question, as well as raise your hand in person. You should also type your name in your Zoom settings so that everyone can identify you.

**Chat:** We will sometimes share links or info via Chat, and encourage you to do the same. Please do not break out into private chats amongst yourselves during class, however.

**Recording:** If parts of the class need to be recorded for students who are not able to attend synchronously, they may be recorded and shared with all members of the class for a limited time. We will make this clear if so, and Zoom will notify everyone when a recording is in progress. Students should not save or repost any portions of archived classes.

**Breakout rooms:** We may sometimes ask you to form small discussion groups, and will notify you when this happens.

**Notes and Multitasking:** You should feel free to take notes in different applications. You may also bring a notebook to each class for observations, terms, ideas, insights and other notes. However, your full attention should be with the class, and multitasking in other programs/apps like Facebook, emailing, or browsing the internet are not allowed, just as they wouldn’t be in a physical classroom.

Thank you for your understanding, and please let us know if you have any questions, concerns, or requests.

### **Spring Quarter 2020 Recording Policy**

By attending course sessions, students acknowledge that

They will not:

- (i) record, share, or disseminate University of Chicago course sessions, videos, transcripts, audio, or chats
- (ii) retain such materials after the end of the course; or
- (iii) use such materials for any purpose other than in connection with participation in the course.

They will not share links to University of Chicago course sessions with any persons not authorized to be in the course session. Sharing course materials with persons authorized to be in the relevant course is permitted. Syllabi, handouts, slides, and other documents may be shared at the discretion of the instructor.

Course recordings, content, and materials may be covered by copyrights held by the University, the instructor, or third parties. Any unauthorized use of such recordings or course materials may violate such copyrights.

Any violation of this policy will be referred to the Area Dean of Students.

## Syllabus Overview

## Film of the Week

Please note that readings and assignments will be posted for each week no later than Saturday morning prior.

### Week 1 — Introduction

Basic Terms and Concepts  
A Primer on Production

Watch each film by Monday Night  
for the respective Week

### Week 2 — Sounds of the Silents

Film Music Libraries  
Action and Affect

*City Lights*  
(Charlie Chaplin, USA 1931)  
(87 minutes)

### Week 3 — Classical Paradigms

Sonic Hierarchies  
Musical Narration

*Mildred Pierce*  
(Michael Curtiz, USA 1945)  
(111 minutes)

### Week 4 — Musical Numbers

Song and Dance  
On-screen Performance

*Singin' in the Rain*  
(Gene Kelly, Stanley Donen, USA 1952)  
(103 minutes)

### Week 5 — Composing On Screen

Musicians as Characters  
European Art House

*Trois couleurs: Bleu*  
(Krzysztof Kieślowski, France 1993)  
(94 minutes)

### Week 6 — Beyond Hollywood

Bollywood Varieties  
International Style

*Andhadhun*  
(Sriram Raghavan, India 2018)  
(138 minutes)

### Week 7 — Animation

Cartoons Then and Now  
Forms of Animation

*Your Name*  
(Makoto Shinkai, Japan 2017)  
(107 minutes)

### Week 8 — Experimental Traditions

Modes of Abstraction  
Shorts of all Sorts

*Koyaanisqatsi* (segments tbd; and others)  
(Godfrey Reggio, USA 1982)  
(85 minutes)

### Week 9 — déjà vue/déjà entendu

Documentary Fictions  
Final Exam (TBA)

*Amy*  
(Asif Kapadia, United Kingdom 2015)  
(128 minutes)

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### Select Bibliography (Bookmark for the future, when you are back on Campus)

Adorno and Eisler, *Composing for the Films*  
Altman, *The American Film Musical*  
Altman, *Silent Film Sound*  
Bordwell, *Film Art: An Introduction*  
Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*  
Chion, *Film: A Sound Art*  
Cooke, *The Hollywood Film Music Reader*  
Donnelly, *Occult Aesthetics: Synchronization in Sound Film*  
Goldmark, *Tunes for "Toons"*  
Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies*  
Heldt, *Music and Levels of Narration in Film*  
Hubbert, *Celluloid Symphonies: Texts and Contexts in Film Music History*  
Lastra, *Sound Technology and the American Cinema*  
Leppert, et al. *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*  
Neumeyer, *Meaning and Interpretation of Music in Cinema*  
Neumeyer, *Oxford Handbook of Film Music Studies*  
Richardson, Gorbman, and Vernallis, *The Oxford Handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics*  
Slobin, *Global Soundtracks: Worlds of Film Music*  
Wierzbicki, *Film Music: A History*  
Winters, *Music, Performance, and the Realities of Film*