



## School of Music, Plainview, TX

### University Mission

Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused, and distinctively Christian environment for professional success and service to God and humankind.

### Course Number and Name

MUSI 5379X – Film Music

### Term

Spring 1 – 2021

### Instructor

Dr. Scott Strovas

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### Office Hours, Building, and Location

Virtual office hours TBD and by appointment

### Course Meeting Time & Location

This is an online, asynchronous course. Synchronous meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of the learners and instructor of the course.

### Catalog Description

Study of the rhetoric of film scoring from an interdisciplinary perspective, with emphasis on the critical consideration of music's narratological and thematic implications on films of different genres and time periods; prior training in music not required.

### Prerequisites

N/A

### Required Textbook and Resource Materials

Access to the following (through DVD/Blu-ray acquisition or streaming services):

*Despicable Me* (2010)

*Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope* (1977)

*King Kong* (1933)

*Double Indemnity* (1944)

*Pride and Prejudice* (2005)

*The Great Gatsby* (2013)

*To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962)

*Psycho* (1960)

*Jaws* (1975)

## Optional Materials

You may choose to purchase or library loan any number of film music textbooks or other written and media materials. See the Course Bibliography on Blackboard.

## Course Outcome Competencies

Upon the conclusion of this course, learners actively engaged will be able to:

- 1) Identify common music-rhetorical devices in film and discuss ways music informs specific scenes or sequences, characterization, setting, tone, and other elements of narrative;
- 2) Apply methodologies and terminology common to film and film music criticism to analyze, discuss, and read and write about film music;
- 3) Craft succinct film and scene synopses, write descriptively and accurately about music, construct argumentative scene analyses, and present a conference-style argument paper;
- 4) Critically engage, respond to, and emulate scholarly discourse about film music.

## Attendance Requirements

Successful professionals in any career are dependable: they show up on-time and adequately prepared. Likewise, I expect you to approach assigned tasks and learning goals with vigor, work efficiently to meet deadlines, and contribute substantively to the class's evolving understanding of film music.

## Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Wayland Baptist University observes a zero tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. Per university policy as described in the academic catalog, all cases of academic dishonesty will be reported and second offenses will result in suspension from the university.

### ***A Note on Plagiarism:***

This course uses writing assignments to facilitate student synthesis and critical application of the methodologies and concepts presented in the course.

- **Important:** unless otherwise instructed, most writing assignments require minimal outside research. Hooray! Careful consideration of the writing prompts will ensure that the text—and equally important, the ideas submitted—are your own.
- A first instance of plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment, the lowering of the student's final average by one letter grade, and an official report of the offense to the appropriate academic office
- A second instance of plagiarism will result in the student's failure of the course and further action as dictated by the WBU Policy on Academic Dishonesty given above.

### ***Common examples of plagiarism include the following:***

- Quotation of any amount of text directly from an internet website, book, or other document without an appropriate citation and a signal phrase providing in-text acknowledgement of the contributing voice
- Paraphrasing the ideas presented in any written, media, or oral source without appropriate citation and signal phrase providing in-text acknowledgement of the contributing voice
- Using the evidence and conclusions of any source as the framework for one's own paper

- Turning in one's own paper from a previous course or assignment (self-plagiarism)
- Purchasing or otherwise downloading a paper from an internet website

### ***Citing Sources:***

If you are directed to incorporate scholarly sources into your writing, all of the following must be met to constitute appropriate citation of any source:

- CMS, MLA, or APA parenthetical or note-style citation format as required by the instructor
- Placement of text borrowed directly from another source within "quotation marks"
- When paraphrasing, clear introduction of another author's voice into the discussion by means of a signal phrase which acknowledges the contributing voice within the prose; note: signal phrases are also highly encouraged for quoted material
- Through use of the above methods, a clear distinction between one's own voice or ideas and those of any outside authors brought into the discussion

### **Disability Statement**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291-3765. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

### **Course Requirements and Grading Criteria**

#### ***Grade Distribution:***

- **Daily Assignments** (70% of final average): includes course discussion through discussion posts, blogs, and wiki entries, and writing assignments such as cue sheets, synopses, scene analyses, and the prewriting assignments and drafts which lead toward the conference-style presentation
- **Conference-Style Presentation** (30%): all learners will record and upload a 20-minute spoken video presentation (roughly 9-10 pages of 12-pt Times New Roman font text) which synthesizes the process of engaging a specific film (to be selected by each student) or film music topic with the professional expectation to present formal writing at an academic conference

#### ***Grade Representation in Interdisciplinary Topics in Music:***

- A: Exceeds Expectations (90 – 100%): Individuals who earn an A exhibit and improve on the intellectual autonomy and communicative skillsets demanded of the working professional, embrace academic challenges willingly, and grow personally through purposeful engagement with the course material.
- B: Meets Expectations (80 – 89%): Individuals who earn a B exhibit or make strides toward achieving the intellectual autonomy and communicative skillsets demanded of the working professional, embrace academic challenges willingly, and grow personally through purposeful engagement with the course material.

- C: Does Not Meet Expectations (70 -79%): Individuals who earn a C may complete the bulk of the coursework but struggle to demonstrate intellectual autonomy and communicate effectively; they likely will engage the course material minimally without considering fully its relevance to their professional and personal growth.
- D: Not acceptable (60 – 69%): Individuals who earn a D engage the course material minimally and ignore its relevance to their professional and personal growth.
- F: Not acceptable (59% and below): Individuals who earn an F fail to engage the course material ignore its relevance to their professional and personal growth.

### **University Statement on Capricious Evaluation**

Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Executive Vice President/Provost to the Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.

### **Course Content Advisory**

Art imitates and embellishes life. The critical examination of a film is not an endorsement of content which individuals may find objectionable. The films explored in this course have been selected primarily because of the integral ways they involve music as an element of narrative. Where possible, discretion is used in the selection of class materials to limit the viewing of potentially offensive content. Similarly, when giving presentations, students must notify and get approval of the instructor before screening any questionable material.

### **Your Instructor on Film Music**

*Music is hardly ancillary to film production. While it is rare that music teams are involved with or even privy to the actual scripting, filming, or editing of a production, they nonetheless play a substantial creative role in any final product. At its simplest, film music amplifies narrative setting and tone and provides a sonic glue that facilitates seamless transitions between even the most diverging sequences. More subtly, film music provides an ongoing, deeply nuanced psychological commentary which the lay viewer senses and responds to in emotional and physiological ways, even if not wholly aware that music is actually playing. Themes and leitmotifs define and transform alongside characters as they develop through different events and situations. Music communicates the unseen thoughts, intentions, and emotional states of characters even before action and dialogue reveal them. And music provides both the tapestry and the emotional hue for montage sequences, encasing a collage of scenes depicting different events, times, locations, and characters within a single musical cue.*

## Tentative Schedule and Complete Film List

The asterisk symbol (\*) denotes films which students are responsible for watching in their entirety.

### **Week 1 (Jan. 11): The Rhetoric of Film Music and the Animated Comedy**

- View course introduction video
- Complete module on broad methodologies for engaging film music
  - Read excerpt from Copland's *What to Listen for in Music* (1957), pp. 203-206
  - Read Kalinak's "The Language of Music: A Brief Analysis of *Vertigo*," in *Movie Music, the Film Reader*, ed. Dickinson (2003), pp. 15-23
    - Watch corresponding clips from *Vertigo* (Hermann, 1958; open-source access)
  - View lecture videos on film music archetypes and elements of music
  - View lesson on creating cue sheets (actively tracking/responding to music cues)
- Watch \**Despicable Me* (2010); submit a corresponding cue sheet
- Complete additional responsive work on Blackboard as assigned

Lectures include additional scenes selected from the following:

<p><i>Little Tich and his Big Boots</i> (1900)</p> <p><i>The Birth of a Nation</i> (1915)</p> <p><i>Blues Brothers</i> (1980)</p> <p><i>Steamboat Willie</i> (1927)</p> <p><i>The Jazz Singer</i> (1927)</p> <p><i>King Kong</i> (Steiner, 1933)</p> <p><i>Ben Hur</i> (Ròsza, 1959)</p> <p><i>The Magnificent Seven</i> (Bernstein, 1960)</p> <p><i>How the West was Won</i> (Alfred Newman, 1962)</p>	<p><i>Mission Impossible</i> (1966-1973)</p> <p><i>Blade Runner</i> (Vangelis 1982)</p> <p><i>Alien</i> (Goldsmith, 1979)</p> <p><i>Vertigo</i> (Hermann, 1958)</p> <p><i>The Graduate</i> (1967)</p> <p><i>Star Wars: Episode II</i> (2002)</p> <p><i>Up</i> (Giacchino, 2010)</p> <p><i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part II</i> (Desplat, 2011)</p> <p><i>Good Morning Vietnam</i> (1987)</p>
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### **Week 2 (Jan. 18): Epic, Adventure, Leitmotif, and Diegetic/Non-Diegetic Sound**

- Complete the module on the symphonic tradition of film scoring
  - View lecture module on early Hollywood film scoring
  - Watch \**Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope* (Williams, 1977)
  - View lecture on leitmotif and thematic transformation in *Star Wars*
  - Watch \**King Kong* (Steiner, 1933)
    - And submit a corresponding cue sheet, tracking especially the film's leitmotifs
- Complete module on diegetic/non-diegetic sound
  - View lecture on diegetic and non-diegetic sound (and music)
  - View lesson on engaging film music criticism through 3-column notes graph
  - Read excerpt from Buhler, "Star Wars, Music, and Myth," in *Music and Cinema*, ed. Buhler, Flinn, and Neumeyer (2000), p. 33-41
    - And submit 3-column notes graph
- Complete additional responsive work on Blackboard as assigned

Lectures include additional scenes selected from the following:

*Gone with the Wind* (Steiner, 1939)

*The Adventures of Robin Hood* (Korngold, 1939)

*The Bride of Frankenstein* (Waxman, 1935)  
*Casablanca* (Steiner, 1942)  
*The Man Who Knew Too Much* (Hermann, 1956)  
*East of Eden* (Rosenman, 1955)  
*The West Wing* (Season 2, 2000)

### **Week 3 (Jan. 25): Film Noir, Synopses, and Cue Analysis**

- View lecture on *noir* archetypes
- Watch \**Double Indemnity* (Rozsa, 1944)
  - And submit a corresponding cue sheet
- View lesson on writing synopses
  - And submit one synopsis of *Double Indemnity*, *Despicable Me*, or *King Kong*
- Complete the module on writing a cue analysis
  - View introductory video
  - Read a the model cue analysis from Strovas and Strovas, excerpt from “‘What are We Going to Do with Uncle Author?’: Music in the British Serialized Period Drama,” in *Upstairs and Downstairs*, ed. Leggott and Taddeo (2015), pp. 101-104
  - Watch corresponding clip from *Downton Abbey*, Season 2 (2011; Blackboard access)
  - Submit a 3-column notes graph on the reading
  - Complete additional responsive work on Blackboard as assigned
  - Submit a cue analysis of one of the films studied thus far in this course

Lectures include additional scenes selected from the following:

*Laura* (Raksin, 1944)  
*Blade Runner* (Vangelis, 1982)  
*Lethal Weapon* (Clapton/Kamen/Sanborn, 1987)  
*Sunset Boulevard* (Waxman, 1950)

### **Week 4 (Feb. 1): Period Films and Adaptations**

- View introductory lecture on scoring period films
- Watch \**Pride and Prejudice* (Marianelli, 2005)
  - Submit a synopsis
  - Submit a cue sheet
- Read model analysis of period drama music in Strovas and Strovas, excerpt from “‘What are We Going to Do with Uncle Author?’: Music in the British Serialized Period Drama,” in *Upstairs and Downstairs*, ed. Leggott and Taddeo (2015), pp. 95-101
  - Watch corresponding opening sequences from *Downton Abbey* Season 1 (2010) and *Upstairs, Downstairs* Season 1 (1971); access on Blackboard
  - Submit a 3-column notes graph on the reading
  - Complete additional responsive work on Blackboard as assigned
- View lecture on anachronism in film music
- Watch \**The Great Gatsby* (dir. Luhrmann, 2013)
  - Submit a film synopsis
  - Submit a cue analysis

- Submit a list of 3 films or film music topics for your conference-style presentation

### **Week 5 (Feb. 8): American Narratives and American Sound**

- View lecture on scoring American narratives
- Watch *\*To Kill a Mockingbird* (Bernstein, 1962)
  - Submit a film synopsis
  - Submit either a cue sheet or cue analysis
- Watch the film(s) on which your conference-style presentation will be based
  - If writing about one film, submit a synopsis and cue sheet
  - If writing about a topic comprising more than one film, submit at least 2 synopses and 2 scene analyses from your selected films which demonstrate their connection to your topic

Lectures include additional scenes selected from the following:

*Of Mice and Men* (Copland 1939)

*On the Waterfront* (Bernstein 1954)

*A Streetcar Named Desire* (North 1951)

*Anatomy of a Murder* (Ellington 1959)

### **Week 6 (Feb. 15): Thriller and Suspense**

- View introductory lecture
- Watch *\*Psycho* (Herrmann, 1960)
  - Submit a cue sheet
  - Complete assigned responsive work on Blackboard
  - Read excerpted commentary on from Sullivan, *Hitchcock's Music* (2006), pp. 243-258
    - And submit a 3-column graph
- Watch *\*Jaws* (Williams, 1975)
  - Submit a cue analysis which incorporates
  - Complete assigned responsive work on Blackboard
- Complete the module of pre-writing toward your Conference-Style Presentation:
  - Submit another scene analysis from your selected film(s)
  - View the lesson on writing abstracts/argument paragraphs
    - And submit a working abstract/argument paragraph of your presentation
  - Submit working bibliography of secondary materials (minimum 3 sources)
    - For each source, provide a statement of its relevance to your topic

### **Week 7 (Feb 22): Writers' Workshop**

- Individual Zoom conferences with Dr. Strovas (Monday and Tuesday)
- Submit the following:
  - By Tuesday, a 3-column notes graphs on each of your secondary materials
  - By Friday, a rough draft of your conference-style paper which includes a revised argument paragraph, revised and integrated scene analyses, and engagement with secondary texts

**Week 8 (Feb 29): Conference-Style Presentations**

- Individual Zoom conferences with Dr. Strovas (Monday and Tuesday)
- By Thursday, submit a video of your conference-style presentation
  - Include relevant film clips within your 20-minute presentation
- Q&A discussion board open through March 2
  - By Monday, March 1, each learner must direct at least one question to each presenter
  - Presenter responses due Tuesday, March 2