



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 3307 VC01 – Music in Film and Visual Media

Term

Summer 2026

Instructor

Mr. Caleb Burnett
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Office Hours, Building, and Location

Virtual office hours by appointment.

Course Meeting Time & Location

This class is fully online and asynchronous. Synchronous meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of the learners and instructor(s) of the course.

MUSI 3307 Catalog Description

Examines the practical and rhetorical function of music in film and related digital media, with emphasis on the collaborative role of the composer as a creative voice in the production process.

Prerequisites

ENGL 1301 and 1302

Required Textbook and Resource Materials

The primary learning resources for this class are films and other visual media. Due to the waning availability of DVDs, DVD players, and the complicated copyright structure of streaming video, these materials are not provided through Pioneer Academic Access (your textbook fee). Where possible, instructors will provide links to films on free, reputable streaming services and websites. However, students may need to acquire films independently through subscription services, digital rentals, or purchasing physical DVD/Blu-ray discs.

A note on Pioneer Academic Access:

Please be aware that you can 'opt out' of Pioneer Academic Access, but doing so removes your access to all materials for the specific term in which you are enrolled. Evaluate the course resources of all of your classes before making the decision to opt out or keep Pioneer Academic Access.

Additional resource materials include the following:

- A good pair of speakers, headphones, or earbuds
- Regular access to a computer with a word processor (*you will be writing in this class!*)

Course Outcome Competencies – What you will learn in this course!

Upon the conclusion of this course, students committed to the learning process will be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate understanding of media scoring and an ability to distinguish its prevailing rhetorical conventions across films of different genres and eras
- 2) Listen actively to musical cues and describe salient features of the music such as melody, harmony, and timbre
- 3) Interpret the ways in which music contributes to a viewing experience, especially its role in the construction of narrative, setting, atmosphere, character, and related considerations within film, television, and other visual media
- 4) Use appropriate vocabulary for analyzing and discussing music within visual media;
- 5) Critically engage and respond to scholarly discourse about film music.

Attendance Requirements

Successful professionals in any career are dependable; they complete tasks on schedule and communicate effectively to colleagues.

Likewise, this online course operates on a “module” basis, requiring the completion of most course requirements within specified time frames. While this course is asynchronous, meaning there will not be a standard meeting time, the class will still progress as a guided unit through the material.

“Attendance” is determined by the student’s accessing of Blackboard, the viewing of online lectures, and completion of assignments by the specified dates. *Logging on to the class Blackboard site fewer than 2-3 times per week likely will prove detrimental to the learner’s overall performance.*

Important note: Life happens. Contact us if you cannot meet the deadline for one or more assignments in a given week. ***We are more than happy to work with you if you need extra time, but communication is essential. You cannot go “off the grid” for six weeks and expect to complete the course in the last two weeks of the semester.***

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. See Wayland’s the [Full WBU Academic Integrity Statement](#).

POLICY ON GENERATIVE AI: This course prioritizes intellectual autonomy. By definition, the submission of work produced by Generative A.I. (e.g. ChatGPT) is plagiarism—it is the submission of work you did not produce as your own. Based on measures provided for in the Full WBU Academic Integrity Statement, the use of generative AI or submission of any material which is not the student’s own independent work will result in failure of and immediate dismissal from the course.

No grade is worth outsourcing your intellectual work to a machine.

Invest in yourself – Develop your own intellect – Become your best person.

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 Disability Services Coordinator and Academic Coach serves as the coordinator of students with disabilities and must be contacted concerning accommodation requests (office (806) 291-1057). Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

Grade Distribution:

- **Quizzes** (30% of final average)
- **Writing Assignments** (35%) – includes discussion boards, film synopses, scene descriptions, and listening cue sheets
- **Midterm and Final Portfolio / Presentation** (35%)

Grade Representation in American Film Music:

A: Outstanding Achievement (90 – 100%): Individuals who earn an A exhibit a clear desire to get better: to improve on skillsets, embrace academic challenges willingly, and grow personally through purposeful engagement with the course material. Characteristics include diligent effort, a significantly high degree of intellectual autonomy and perseverance, and high achievement in all areas of the course, demonstrated by clear, precise, timely, accurate work.

B: Above Average (80 – 89%): Individuals who earn a B exhibit a clear desire to get better: to improve on skillsets, embrace academic challenges willingly, and grow personally through purposeful engagement with the course material. Characteristics include persistent effort, a high degree of intellectual autonomy and perseverance, and achievement in multiple areas of the course, demonstrated by clear, precise, timely, accurate work.

C: Average (70 -79%): Individuals who earn a C engage the course material minimally without considering fully its relevance to their professional and personal growth. Characteristics include inconsistent effort, some degree of intellectual autonomy, and achievement in some areas of the course, demonstrated by imprecise work.

D: Below Average (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.

Department of Music 70% Rule:

No course grades below C or 70% will fulfill degree requirements for the BA or BM in music. If a student earns grades below 70% in any course required in the major, the student will be required to repeat that course until they receive 70% or higher.

Course Content Advisory

Art imitates and embellishes life. The critical examination of a film or other visual media is not an endorsement of content that individuals may find offensive. The content explored in this course is selected primarily because of its ability to facilitate discussion about conventions of film scoring. Instructors will use discretion when building lectures and in the selection of required film viewings to avoid material with egregious language, violence, nudity, and insensitive depictions of race and gender. However, students will indeed encounter limited examples of this type of content. Instructors cannot guarantee that students will not encounter material they may find offensive, and students with concerns should review and research the film list of required viewings before continuing in this course.

Inspirational Quote

The first thing that college is for is to teach you to think. That doesn't simply mean developing the mental skills particular to individual disciplines. . . . It is only through the act of establishing communication between the mind and the heart, the mind and experience, that you become an individual, a unique being—a soul. The job of college is to assist you to begin to do that.

-William Deresiewicz, former Yale University Professor of English, 2014

Tentative Calendar

We'll watch a different film or set of films each week to profile scoring concepts, film genres, compositional styles, and composers.

WEEK 1 – The Orchestral Film Score

- Elements of Drama
- Source music and underscore
- Timbres of the Orchestra
- Melody, Theme, and Leitmotif
- Harmony, Tonality, Time, and Texture

WEEK 2 – King Kong (1933)

- Musical-Drama through the late 19th c.
- European Émigré Composers and the “Golden Age” of Hollywood
- Cue Sheets
- Cue and Sequence Analysis

WEEK 3 – Jurassic Park (1993)

- The Music of John Williams
- John Williams and Steven Spielberg: A Lifetime of Collaboration

WEEK 4 – Double Indemnity / To Kill a Mockingbird

- Uniquely American Narratives
- Archetypes of Film Noir
- The Americana Soundtrack

WEEK 5 – Back to the Future (1985)

- The Narrative Implications of Popular and Source Music
- The Music of Alan Silvestri

WEEK 6 – Psycho (1960)

- Bernard Herman, Alfred Hitchcock, and the Foundations of Horror/Thriller

WEEK 7 – The Batman (2022) / Spiderman: Into the Spider-Verse (2018)

- Trends in Contemporary Scoring
- The Digital Score: Mixing, and Sound Design
- Superhero Films
- Video Game Adaptations

WEEK 8 – Individual Viewing Projects

- Digital Student Presentations and Responses