

MUS 538: The General Music Program

MB 1172; Tu-Fri, 2:30-4:20 p.m.

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Office hour T 10:30-11:30 and by appointment, Music Annex room 312

The basic approach of our course will be to critically examine some of the visions available for general music in contemporary music education. The readings, one book each from general music, musicology, and music education, are meant to complement hands-on experiences and discussions.

To situate this scholarly work within the realities of practice, we will teach a general music class together during the final week of our course. This course will be offered to middle school students participating in the Illinois Summer Youth Music camp. During this week, we will teach an elective for the first hour of class, then dismiss our students for another hour of discussion and debate. What we choose to teach and how we choose to teach it will be determined collectively, and we will collectively share the responsibility of teaching.

Texts

In addition to articles distributed via email, we'll read the following three books:

Attali, J. (1985). *Noise: The political economy of music*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and Education* (Vol. 60). West Lafayette, Ind.: Kappa Delta Pi.

Wiggins, J. (2009). *Teaching for musical understanding* (2nd ed.). Rochester MI: CARMU Center for Applied Research in Musical Understanding Oakland University.

Instrument

A central part of the course will be to make a ukulele, and from building an instrument then build our own musicianship and our own ensemble. We'll use a kit from Grizzly, which along with a set of strings, gig bag, and finish costs \$50.00 You can also buy one, but who'd want to skip making one?

Assessment

You are all teachers, and a primary goal for this course is to have you think about how the ideas found within this course can be meaningful in your own practice. In honor of that, the primary work of the course is for you to write about how you might use, adapt, or reject the ideas presented in the readings and in our work together in class. For each class session, take notes, and each evening write a short reflection on the day's activities, responding to how the readings and activities can relate to your own work. Your grade will be based 70% on this, and 30% on your own teaching (during the last week, and for other short teachings across the "semester").

Calendar

Week 1: Introducing the ukulele, the Illinois general music tradition *a la* Wiggins

Class 1

Beginning keyboard improvisation, introduction to the ukulele, and finishing the unfinished "UFT#1". Discuss Kenneth Koch's poem, "Down at the Docks"

Class 2

Read and submit response to Thibeault and Evoy's General Music Today column, "Building Your Own Musical Community: How YouTube, Miley Cyrus, and the ukulele can create a new kind of ensemble". In-class discussion of interest-driven learning. We'll also begin building our ukuleles.

Class 3

More playing ukulele, and more building, with help from special guest Channing Paluck. Homework for Friday, learn to play a song of your choice to share with the class, using YouTube and the Internet in general as learning resources.

Class 4

Present your song via ukulele. Read and respond to Wiggins' Chapter 1-2. Discussion of Turino's participatory/presentational dichotomy in relation to the ukulele. Working with lyric/chord notation for sing-along events.

Week 2: Completing Wiggins, Beginning Dewey

Class 5

Read and respond to Wiggins Ch. 3, 4, 5. Playing single note lines on ukulele, introduced through call and response playing. Continue to play and learn songs.

Class 6

Planning time for teaching your Wiggins inspired ukulele lesson. Introduction of tablature notation system and using the ukulele as ensemble instrument through Jehan Tabourot's (1519-1595) *Pavane* (introduced through movement, then canon, then played on ukulele using tablature).

Class 7

Groups teach their ukulele lessons, 20-minute lesson followed by 10 minutes of discussion.

Class 8

Read and respond to Dewey Ch. 1, 2. Playing rounds on the ukulele, demonstrated with Micahel Praetorius' (1571-1616) *Viva La Musica*. Plan for ISYM class that begins on Monday. *You'll want to begin the Attali reading right away, as it is deep and long.*

Week 3: Dewey and co-teaching ISYM songwriting class

Monday, 3:15-3:45: special optional session. We'll start the students out with a few chords, "Will the Circle Be Unbroken" and the scale pattern for the key of G (from sol to sol).

Class 9

Read and respond to Dewey Ch. 3, 4, 5.

Co-teach class to ISYM campers. Plan for following classes.

Class 10

Read and respond to Dewey Ch. 6, 7, 8.

Co-teach class to ISYM campers. Plan for future classes.

Class 11

Read and respond to Attali's *Noise: The political economy of music* Ch. 1.

Co-teach class to ISYM campers. Plan for last class. Performance by campers

Thursday evening at ISYM talent show, optional for MUS 538 members.

Class 12

Read and respond to Attali Ch. 2.

Co-teach class to ISYM campers.

Week 4: Noise

Class 13

Read and respond to Attali Ch. 3 (This is a BIG chapter, as is the following one; you may want to read ahead).

Class 14

Attali Ch. 4. Wednesday night performance at the Blind Pig pub in downtown Champaign. Invite friends! We'll start at 7, and likely will have a guest performance afterwards by world-class stride and early American music pianist Paul Asaro.

Class 15

Attali Ch. 5 and Afterward. Send a list of big ideas from the course to me via email by 8 p.m. (*Be aware that, although this is less reading, we'll be busy playing the night before*).

Class 16

Wrap-up dessert at Thibeault home. Discussion your of big ideas. Course evaluation forms. Bring your ukes "to receive one more chance to sing"!

See next page for additional s outside of class

Suggested Additional Readings

I'm always happy to provide resource ideas for specific requests, but here are some thinkers, journals, and books to further expand your thinking.

Educational Thinkers

There is a small set of educational thinkers whose ideas are so central that to be unfamiliar with them is to be at a serious deficit. In my opinion, this set includes Jerome Bruner, John Dewey, Howard Gardner, Maxine Greene, Elliot Eisner, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and Nel Noddings. Also of great importance are ideas from three thinkers whose work is known and loved by practitioners: Alfie Kohn, Jonathan Kozol, and Deborah Meier. To become intimately familiar with these thinkers is enriching and fulfilling.

Research in Journals

It is both a blessing and a curse that general music research does not have a singular home, with the very best research appearing practically anywhere. As always, the best research tends to be published in a few top journals such as JRME, CRME, MER, IJME, etc. Practitioners consider *General Music Today* to be an essential resource, and the articles in that journal do undergo peer-review.

Books

- Campbell, P. S. (1998). *Songs in their heads: Music and its meaning in children's lives*. New York: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from
- Gee, J. P. (2007). *Good video games and good learning: Collected essays on video games, learning, and literacy*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Green, L. (2002). *How popular musicians learn: A way ahead for music education*. Cornwall, England: Ashgate.
- Nachmanovitch, S. (1991). *Free play: Improvisation in life and art*. Jeremy P. Tarcher.
- Small, C. (1998). *Musicking: the meanings of performing and listening*. Hanover: University Press of New England.
- Solis, G., & Nettle, B. (2009). *Musical improvisation: Art, education, and society*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Squire, K. (2011). *Video games and learning: Teaching and participatory culture in the digital age*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Turino, T. (2008). *Music as social life: The politics of participation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.