

## Music 438: Designing Musical Experiences

### Fall 2013

Matthew Thibeault, Ph.D. (mdthib@illinois.edu), matthewthibeault.com, @mdthib

Office hour Friday 9:45–10:45 and by appointment (Music Ed Annex 312)

Class meets Fridays, 11–11:50 a.m. with additional meetings arranged.

2 credit hours

### Primary aims

This course rests on the belief that a music teacher can do her best work when she herself enjoys making and sharing music, can envision multiple ways to create musical experiences for students, and can meaningfully choose or guide student choices for what musical materials best suit growth while allowing freedom.

The standard product of a music school is the musical specialist, typically a performer who specializes in a single instrument, often with aspirations to win an audition to be part of an elite ensemble such as an orchestra. By contrast, this class will develop your abilities as a playful participant who aspires to play multiple instruments, to improvise and compose, to sing. We will work to help you develop a broad curiosity for music.

Finally, most music educators think of literature and repertoire courses as only existing for band, orchestra, piano, and voice, but the music generalist also has a both a literature repertoire and a pedagogic repertoire. This course will present several versions of rich musical materials, from rich examples of folk music, to popular music.

### General class expectations

- Be on time.
- Read and respond to all assignments.
- Homework: you will receive assignments that require you to work outside of class. Plan on three or four hours per week outside of class for readings or assignments. All assignments will be submitted electronically and are due before class on the day they are due.

### Grading

Your grade breaks down as follows:

40%= reading responses posted to Compass (due 9 p.m. the night before we discuss them)

30%= teaching (visiting Robeson and writing reflections to Compass)

20%= final reflection paper for the course (6-8 pages)

10%= leading a reading

**Reading responses (40%):** When we do good scholarly work, we process what we read. You must post a reflection for every reading, by 9 p.m. the night before the reading is due. The reflection should address the four questions for analytic reading we discussed (What's the point? What's new? Who says? Who cares?), and can also include discussion questions for class. This emphatically is *not* a request for you to simply summarize, indicate a like or dislike, or tell us what happened in your school. These are graded pass/fail, with a full letter grade lowered for every day late (in other words, you get a C if you turn in a response two days late).

**Teaching reflections (30%):** We will assist the ukulele club at Robeson Elementary, led by Sarah Filkins (students in grades 3-5). The club meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2–3 p.m. (class starts at 2:10, you must arrive early to coordinate with Sarah). Carpooling is recommended. You will be responsible for attending three sessions, and formally reflecting on the experience. Your reflection should be 1–2 pages (250–500 words), and should describe what happened, how it went, what you were able to do, and what you understand about the musical experiences had by the students. Post to Compass within two days of attending. Ideally, you should stop right outside the Robeson classroom and make notes right after you are done.

**Final reflection paper (20%):** This paper is an invitation to personally reflect upon, process, and organize some of the ideas in the course, with a particular emphasis on what you hope you will take with you as you move onto your next adventures. The paper length is 5-7 pages (1250–1750 words, excluding references). You should give your paper a title, and you should cite works you find relevant using APA style (if in doubt, just download Zotero and use it with Microsoft Word).

**Leading a reading (10%):** Each of you will be responsible for leading a reading. On the day you lead, you should come prepared to talk for five minutes about what you found significant in the reading, ending with two or three questions to help us begin the discussion. The goal is for you to take ownership of the ideas for a given reading, and step up your analysis and participation. On the day you lead the reading, your reading response should be more substantial (approximately 400 words).

## Course requirements

### Required texts

Dewey, J. (1998). *Experience and education* (Vol. 60th anniversary). West Lafayette, Ind.: Kappa Delta Pi. Original work published 1938

Turino, T. (2008). *Music as social life: The politics of participation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### Building an ukulele

We'll be building our own ukuleles from kits, about \$50 total (kit, good strings, case, etc.).

## Calendar

*Note: each week we'll work on our ukulele playing, and also explore different approaches to general music experiences. Our progress will be flexible and responsive to your needs, and thus can't be mapped out completely in a syllabus. Topics will include an overview of general music, informal and popular pedagogies, methodologies such as Orff/Kodály/Dalcroze, the pedagogy of the echo, rounds, approaches to improvisation with beginners, and uses of solfege and time-name systems.*

*In addition to the dates mentioned below, you are also responsible for two visits to the Robeson ukulele club, where you will be a member/mentor/tutor/teacher. We will also have a potluck dinner and jam, and an optional Blind Pig performance\*.*

### August 30: introduction and overview

**Sunday, September 1 (5–6:30 p.m. at Matt's home)**

We'll share music and food. Bring your uke and some food to share.

### September 6

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

In class presentation and discussion of Dewey, J. (1934). *Art As Experience*. New York: Perigee Books. (First paragraph, along with educational translation by McDermott.)

### September 13

Read Dewey chapters two and three.

*Bring your ukulele to class this week and for the rest of the semester*

We'll cover the basics of recording an ensemble easily using an ORTF setup.

### September 20

Read Dewey Chapters four and five.

Nachmanovitch, S. (1991). *Free play: Improvisation in life and art*. New York, NY: Penguin Putnam. (Chapters "Practice" and "The Power of Mistakes.")

*Recommended:*

Thibeault, M. D. (2012). The power of limits and the pleasure of games: An easy and fun piano duo improvisation. *General Music Today*, 25(3), 50–53.  
doi:10.1177/1048371311435523

### September 27: Turning to Turino's four field theory of music

Read Dewey Chapters six, seven, and eight.

## October 4

Turino, T. (2008). *Music as social life: The politics of participation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Read chapter one).

## October 11

Turino chapter two

Matt shares his participatory presentation for CIC.

## October 18—no class (Matt presenting at CIC)

## October 25

Turino chapter four

## November 1—no class (Matt presenting at CMS/ATMI)

## November 2: Saturday sing-along!\*

Late morning performance at CU Folk and Roots Festival. Time TBD

## November 8

Turino chapter five

## November 15

Turino chapter six

## November 22

Turino chapter seven

## November 29—no class (Thanksgiving break)

## December 6: One more chance to sing

Turino chapter eight

Dewey, J. (2008). *Art as Our Heritage*. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *The Collected Works of John Dewey, The Later works, 1925-1953* (Vol. 14, 1939–1941, pp. 255–257). Carbondale (Ill.): Southern Illinois University Press. (Original work published 1941. We listened to a recording Matt came by through means unknown.)

*\* Note: dates marked with an asterisk are optional. They are often the most fun, but are neither graded nor required.*