

## Syllabus

### Course Information

Course title: Topics in Ethnomusicology

Course number: MUHL5321-001/4300-003

Course discipline: Music

Course description: This seminar is a detailed examination of topics in ethnomusicology, the study of musical behavior in its original contexts, and its history, philosophies, methods, and topics of study. We will seek to understand the root sources and goals of ethnomusicology, the theory and methods employed by working ethnomusicologists (especially in the context of “fieldwork”—the study of music in its originating contexts), and the particular strengths and insights that such approaches can provide: not only in cultures distant in space, but also those distant in time or experience from our own.

The course is strongly recommended as one possibility for fulfilling the upper-division MUHL requirement for all majors, including both performance and academic concentrations; it should be of particular interest to music educators, performers, and those interested in 21st century global culture.

In this course, we trace the history of the discipline: from its roots in late-Victorian “comparative musicology” and the complicated social, political, and colonial context that surrounded it, through the seminal fieldwork of Western-trained academics in Native America, Central Europe, and Africa, through the multiplication of methodological approaches after World War II, through the revolutionary shift in disciplinary perspectives that ensued as native ethnomusicologists and informants began to critique the post-colonial attitudes from which the discipline originated. We will explore topics of ongoing debate, as well as various philosophies, methods, and goals of fieldwork; particular culture or geographic areas which have received particular focus (and why and how that focus may be re-examined); and applications of ethnomusicological perspectives and methodologies to new culture areas or music/cultural phenomena.

Our theme will be the complex combinations of social, historical, political, colonial, economic, biographical, and artistic factors which have shaped the discipline, its discussions, its topics of study, and its practical results, in shifting cultural and philosophical contexts. We will focus on ideas and processes that have shaped ethnomusicology’s study of musical-cultural behavior.

THIS COURSE FULFILLS THE CORE CURRICULUM VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS REQUIREMENTS.

**Computer access:** Since this course relies heavily on web-based activities, it is essential that students gain access to a reliable computer with Internet capabilities. If your computer is slow, doesn't support media applications, or if your Internet connection is prone to busy signals or disconnects, please schedule your day so that you can use a computer in the library. Technical problems do arise, but do yourself a favor and get acquainted with a good computer.

**Please note:** you the student are responsible for identifying, articulating, and seeking solutions for any computer problems you may encounter; most commonly, you can do this via the Academic Teaching and Learning Center, in the basement of the Main Library. "Computer problems" will not be considered an acceptable excuse for late or missed assignments.

Course date: Tuesday, August 29, 2006 through Tuesday, December 5, 2006  
Location: Music M245  
Meeting day(s): TR  
Meeting time(s): 11:00-12:20PM  
Prerequisite(s): MUSI1200, MUHL2301/2302/2303 and permission of instructor

#### **Instructor Information**

Name: Dr Christopher Smith  
Email: For MUHL4300/5321 issues, the best means of contacting me is by employing WebCT Email (under "Course Menu"). However, I am only available via this email MTWRF 10AM-4:30PM.  
Office location: M203: Music Building (just north of the "band lot") at the corner of 18th and Boston  
Office hours: By appointment  
Phone: 806/742-2270 x249  
Biography: Find a Chris Smith [Biography](#). Find Chris Smith's [commercial site and CD](#).

#### **Course Goals**

Course goals:

- To develop, sharpen, and employ analytical tools that permit critical listening, reading, writing, and speaking about the history, literature, practices, and philosophies of the scholarly discipline of ethnomusicology;
- To develop skills and experience in the practical tools and skills of ethnomusicological research, including fieldwork methods, interview and observation techniques, and effective use of technology.

- To develop professional-level insight and analysis of at least one musical sub-culture extant on the South Plains of Texas.

### **Outcomes and Assessments**

Outcomes and Assessments: What you will be expected to learn and to do

: *Upon completion of this course, students should have the following skills:*

1. You should have a framework for looking at the history and premises of ethnomusicology, and recognizing both the unique strengths and individual foci which have shaped this scholarly discipline.
2. You will be able to summarize the major ethnographic traditions, developments, and disciplinary schools addressed in class, distinguish them from one another, and show how specific scholarly solutions to various ethnographic tasks reflect specific cultural and historical contexts.
3. You will be expected throughout the term to be able to summarize the texts we study, up to a reasonable level of proficiency, and to speak comparatively and analytically about each. You should also be able to identify genres, pieces, and other important names and terms we encounter as they are referenced in these texts, to summarize the cultural concerns of those traditions, and to show ways in which contrasting ethnomusicological approaches may be best suited to each.
4. You will be expected to be able to relate shifts in ethnomusicological method and perspective to concurrent shifts in scholarly, political, and cultural history.
4. You will be expected to be familiar with some basic tools for analyzing (i.e., taking apart and describing) performances as they have been employed by ethnomusicologists. This would certainly include, but would not be limited to: musical and textual transcription, fieldwork and interview method, various approaches to “framing” and interpreting both visual and sonic elements of performances, and methods for relating social behavior to musical behavior. Much of our analysis will need to accommodate terminology and ways of hearing indigenous to the various musical cultures. The use of Western notation and terminology, which are alien to most of these musics, will often be de-emphasized.

### **Textbooks**

Required *Ethnomusicology: A Contemporary Reader*, Jennifer C. Post, ed. ,

reading: Routledge, 2006  
Required reading: *Readings Packet*, CJS, ed, Available at Copytech, "MUHL4300-003/MUHL5321-001"  
Required reading: *THIS WEBSITE (very important) and additional readings as assigned*

### **Course Requirements**

Introduction: This course will include lecture, listening, discussion, extensive readings, a mid-term essay exam, and a semester-long fieldwork project culminating in a formal research presentation.

Requirements: **Reading and listening**  
For each class meeting, one or more readings and one or more recordings will be assigned. Readings will be found in the Course Readings packet or online; primary listening material will be available as mp3 files via this WebCT site. It will be essential that students complete the reading and listening assignments prior to the meeting in which they will be discussed.

### **Examinations**

The mid-term examination will be administered as a qualifying-exam style essay test describing theoretical foundations for the fieldwork project. Additional single-essay tests may be assigned over the course of the semester, at the discretion of the instructor, and will be expected to refer to readings, listening, and in-class discussion.

**The Mid-Term examination is scheduled for Tuesday October 17, during the regular class meeting time.**

Prior to the final exam, which will focus on both lecture and listening materials, a list of readings and essay topics to be prepared will be distributed. On the test day, students will be expected to write short essays addressing selected topics.

**The Final Exam is scheduled for Tuesday December 13, 7:30am-10:00am.**

### **The Blog**

This course will make use of a shared class journal (e.g., a Weblog or "blog"), maintained online at <http://muhl5321.blogspot.com>. The course blog will be employed for a variety of purposes: for example, you will be provided guidelines and "seed questions" to prompt your own personal responses to the material, perspectives, and insights gleaned during the semester. Very importantly, students will be expected to upload field-notes (properly anonymized) from the fieldwork project, session-by-session over the course of the semester, and to comment on one another's research and the content of the notes. A minimum total of at least 3000 words documenting at least 5 fieldwork sessions will be expected of each student. Additional points

will be assigned on the basis of number of entries, quality of data and expression, and range of integrated ideas.

### **Fieldwork project**

Over the course of the semester, each student will engage in a 12-week project of ethnomusicological fieldwork project: developing topic ideas, locating contacts, writing a formal topic proposal, designing both a research model and a theoretical basis for the study, conducting the fieldwork, and presenting the results in the style of a formal conference paper. Students will be expected to develop and employ appropriate technology and research methods, including (for instance) audio- and video-recording, still images, diagrams, etc. Students will also be encouraged to employ a complementary set of fieldwork methods, including fieldwork interviews, archival study, statistical research, kinesics, participant observation, and so on.

In Weeks 12-14 of the semester, the majority of our class time will be spent in delivering and responding to each other's papers or lecture-recitals. These presentation is the major written requirement of the semester.

### **Grading:**

**Exams:** 35%

**Attendance, preparation, and participation:** 30%

**Research:** 35%

### **Policies**

Introduction:

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The following policies are required for this class by the professor and/or by the University.

Additional information:

**Attendance and participation:** Because our time together in class is very limited, it is essential that we make the most efficient and constructive use of that time. Therefore, attendance is mandatory and any unexcused absence will be penalized, with immediate adverse effect on final grades.

**Course content issues:** This course will observe the university's guidelines for avoiding sexual harassment. However, because the arts often imitate and represent human living and because sexuality, politics, religion, and personal ethics are all part of life, some materials in this course may deal with sexual, political, religious, or ethical behaviors, situations, or language. People offended by such subjects may want to reconsider taking this course.

**Conduct:** Students participating in MUHL classes are expected to

maintain a respectful and professional level of conduct. In the event of student misconduct, it is MUHL policy that teaching staff may exercise any or all of the following:

Ejection from class  
Grade of F for class session  
Report of student misconduct to upper-administration, faculty colleagues, and/or studio teacher  
Grade of F for course

**Computer and technology usage:** Students are encouraged, when possible, to employ modern technology during class-time, including laptops, iPods, etc.

Students employing technology during lectures are required to sit in the front row of the classroom, nearest the instructor.

Technology usage is expected to be relevant to class work, and is strictly prohibited in any testing situation.

Playing video games, text-messaging, and so on are likewise strictly prohibited. Any such activities are grounds for ejection from class.

**ADA Compliance:** any student who because of a disability may require special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary accommodations. Student should present appropriate verification from AccessTECH. No requirement exists that accommodations be made prior to completion of this approved university procedure.

**Class Attendance:** Absence due to religious observance: The Texas Tech University Catalog states that a student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day will be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.

Absence due to officially approved trips: → The Texas Tech University Catalog states that the person responsible for a student missing class due to a trip should notify the instructors of the departure and return schedule in advance of the trip. The student may not be penalized and is responsible for the material missed.

**CHANGE IN TTU OPERATING POLICIES** The 45th day of class is the *last* day to drop a class. After that day, all students must complete the course and receive a grade. The grade of WF will no longer be

given.

Please note: It is essential that any student missing a class, for an excused or unexcused absence, should promptly contact classmates and visit the course website to get class notes and catch up with missed work.

It is our experience that students who frequently miss class do poorly or fail. Any day you are late or absent, please get class notes from one or more classmates. You are responsible for knowing what is said in class, including announcements. Instructors cannot take responsibility for filling you in on what you missed.

**Academic integrity:** It is the student's responsibility to know and understand Texas Tech University's policies, procedures, and penalties regarding academic integrity, as discussed in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct. Negligence or ignorance of the policy will rarely be accepted as an excuse for violation of the policy. Cheating on examinations or plagiarism or falsification on the research project is likely to result in an F for the course.