

**Arts Core (ARTS 1C) Spring 2008**  
**Michael Dessen, University of California, Irvine**  
**Syllabus**

NOTE: This is the syllabus for the Music portion of Arts 1C (weeks 6-10). For the drama portion (weeks 1-5) please see Prof. Reynold's syllabus.

Course meets: Tuesdays/Thursdays, 3:30-4:50, HIB100

Course webpage: <http://music.arts.uci.edu/mdessen>

My office: 105 Music and Media

Phone: (949) 824-0386

Office hours: Thursday 11am-1pm, and by **appointment**

Email: [mdessen@uci.edu](mailto:mdessen@uci.edu)

### **Course topics**

This segment of ArtsCore will introduce a wide range of topics in music. Using examples from many different traditions, we'll explore technical and cultural aspects of how music is produced and how we experience it. The topics and case studies are grouped as follows:

Week 6: Time and Rhythm. In addition to common terms such as pulse, meter, and tempo, these two classes will also explore rhythmic feel and microtiming, as well as larger-scale rhythmic processes and how they shape our experience of time.

Week 7: Sound and Pitch. This week we'll briefly explore the physics of sound, pitch and timbre, as well as central concepts in Western music such harmony, melody, and consonance/dissonance. We'll also consider examples from non-Western music as well as 20th century Western forms, and ask what distinguishes music, sound and noise.

Week 8: Instruments, Ensembles, and Technologies. Using some of the same examples from previous weeks, here we'll look more closely at instruments and ensembles and ask how aesthetic and social functions are interrelated. In addition to some "traditional" examples we'll also consider how recent developments in audio, digital and internet technology are establishing new modes of music making.

Week 9: Form, Function, and Process. This week we'll look at a few different musical forms and processes, from sonata form in classical symphonies to cyclic form in African-based forms. In addition to considering formal qualities of different musical structures or processes, we'll also ask how such forms articulate cultural values, meanings, or even conflict.

Week 10: Culture, Power, and Community. Music often expresses identity and community, and yet music is also a global industry in which sounds are closely tied to power and money. In this final week we'll explore several examples from the contemporary music industry, considering the intertwined legal and ethical dimensions of music's social power.

### **Lecture notes and reading/listening assignments**

There is no text for this course, and all reading and listening assignments will be provided through MyEEE. The reading and listening assignments will be announced in class as we go, and also emailed to the class listserv.

The slideshows will be posted to the Dropbox for you to download shortly after each class, but they are only outlines of the lectures and you may need to take additional notes.

### **Sound collage assignments**

In addition to the reading and listening assignments, you will also complete two short assignments that introduce you to working with sound and composition. No previous musical skills are necessary, but you will need access to a computer (using free software specified in the assignment handout) as well as a computer microphone. Some of you will already have a microphone built into your computer, especially if it is a recent model. If not, you can purchase a USB computer microphone for roughly \$25-\$30. Some will be available soon at the UCI computer store, or you can purchase one on your own. A good pair of headphones is also highly recommended for full enjoyment of the music examples and assignments.

More details on these two assignments will be provided in the handouts. You'll submit them by uploading them to a dropbox on MyEEE. The due dates are:

Sound collage assignment #1: Due by midnight on Monday, May 19th. Assignment details will be emailed on Thursday, May 8.

Sound collage assignment #2: Due by midnight on Monday, June 2nd. Assignment details will be emailed on Tuesday, May 20th.

### **Final exam**

The final exam will be given on Tuesday, Jun 10, 4:00-6:00pm, as listed on the UCI class schedule. The exam will be mostly multiple choice type questions, with some listening identification based on the listening assignments that were discussed in class.

### **Grading**

Your grade for this music section of the course will count for 50% of your course grade, and your grade for the section with Professor Reynolds will count for the other 50%. The 50% for this half will be calculated as follows:

Sound collage assignments: 2 @ 7% each (graded pass/fail) = 14%

Final exam: 36%

In addition, there will be an extra credit assignment (attending one of 3 concerts at the end of the quarter) worth an additional 3%. Details on the concerts you may attend and how to receive the extra credit will be provided soon through the class listserv.

### **Late assignment and exam makeup policies**

Assignments must be submitted on time to receive credit. If you miss the exam time due to a valid, documented severe illness or other such emergency, you must contact the instructor ([mdessen@uci.edu](mailto:mdessen@uci.edu)) the same day of the exam and provide written evidence (doctor's note, etc.) in order to reschedule.

### **Special needs**

If you have a disability that affects your ability to complete the assignments or tests on time, you or the Disability Services Center must contact me at the beginning of the semester to make advance arrangements.

### **Office hours and getting help**

If you have any trouble with the course, it is important to seek help early rather than wait until the end of the quarter. If you want to meet but cannot make my office hours, please [email me](#) some times you are free.