Course: **Music and Society in Latin America**  
Spring ’17  
TMUS 216 (9682) & TLCS 216 (9681)  
Tue & Th 1:15 – 2:35 PM       PC-0078  

This course meets Arts, Humanities & International Perspectives requirements [DP-ARTS: DP-HUM: INTLPER]

Required reading, listening and research materials are available through the course’s Blackboard website at  [http://blackboard.albany.edu/](http://blackboard.albany.edu/)  
Regular access to course’s website is essential to participate successfully in this course.

**Course Description:**

Today’s Latin America is home to rich and varied musical manifestations. Some are clearly connected to ancient pre-Hispanic traditions. Others are recent *syncretic* constructs evincing autochthonous thinking while combining European, African and even North-American influences.

The course will deal with examples of native music; musical genres that are clearly based on European forms; dance music that exhibits strong African ties; and *mestizo* music -- an amalgam of the above-mentioned elements.

Additionally, to be examined are the great civilizations that flourished in the Americas before Europeans *discovered* this continent at the end of the 15th century; the effect of colonization on native cultures; the struggles for self-rule that took place during the 19th century; and the distinct political and cultural identities that emerged during the 20th century.

It is hoped that within a few weeks participants in the course will gain an informed acquaintance with Latin America, its people and its music.

**Course Objectives:**

- Develop an appreciation and understanding for the people of Latin America and Latinos in the US.
- Become acquainted with the geography, history and culture of countries south of the US while gaining an understanding of the region from the perspective of its people.
- Listen, understand and appreciate selected musical compositions from different musical eras while becoming familiar with basic musical concepts and terms.
- Gain an appreciation for how musical thought has evolved through time.
- Enhance critical thinking abilities while improving research, writing and oral skills.
- To learn how to develop logical and convincing arguments as well as organize supporting details.
Attendance Policy:

Attendance is required. Partial attendance (arriving late and/or leaving early) will be treated as an absence. Three unexcused absences during the semester will be tolerated.

Four unexcused absences will trigger an automatic deduction of one letter grade from the final grade. Five or more unexcused absences during the term will lead to failure.

Course Requirements

Four online quizzes. Weekly in-class discussions. Two in-class oral reports. Two research papers. Final Essay.

Four Online Quizzes available through the course’s website. They are due: 2/13; 3/8; 4/12 & 5/8. Access to quizzes after their due date will be granted only with a valid, documented excuse.

In-Class Discussions to be held on a regular basis throughout the semester. Discussion topics will reflect all written, audio and video materials posted on the course’s website.

Two In-Class Oral Reports on topics assigned by instructor relevant to all course materials. Reports will be scheduled on a date agreed upon by student and instructor.

The first report is to be presented no later than March 9. The second, no later than May 9.

One of the two required reports could be fulfilled as a group collaboration. The other one should strictly be an individual undertaking.

Students in consultation with instructor may exercise the option of selecting a topic for their individual report. Topics for oral reports will be announced in class as the term progresses.

Two Research Papers: The papers must deal with topics assigned by the instructor and posted in the syllabus. Each research paper should be approximately 1,500 -- 1,750 words in length (5 - 6 typewritten pages). E-mail version of the reports will not be accepted. Research papers are due no later than March 7 & May 2.

Final Essay (Exam): Due on or before Monday, May 15 @ 12 PM.

Grading Policy

The grade of incomplete will not be given in this class.

No extra credit work will be allowed for this course.

The final grade will be computed by averaging the grades of all the posted requirements as follows:

Online quizzes: 20% points (5% each quiz)
In-class discussion participation: 10%
Two Oral reports: 20% (10% each)
Two Research Papers: 30% (15% each paper)
Final Essay: 20%

A list of class points and their equivalent letter grades follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 – 100%</td>
<td>A-/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>80 – 89%</td>
<td>B-/B/B+</td>
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<td>70 – 79%</td>
<td>C-/C/C+</td>
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<td>60 – 69%</td>
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<td>90 – 93.9 = A-</td>
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<td>80 – 83.9 = B-; 84 – 86.9 = B; 87 – 89.9 = B+</td>
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<td>70 – 73.9 = C-; 74-76.9 = C; 77 – 79.9 = C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 – 63.9 = D-; 64 – 66.9 = D; 67 – 69.9 = D+</td>
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The following guidelines will be used when determining the final grade:

A to A-  Outstanding work and effort.
B+ to B-  Very good. The work shows mastery of information in a clear and precise form.
C+ to C-  Good. The work indicates that the information has been learned, but needs more thought.
D+ to D-  Below average. The work demonstrates less than the required effort and indicates a minimal understanding of the material.
E  Failure. The work is inadequate, showing no effort or knowledge of the materials.

Late assignments will be downgraded and read only at the discretion of the instructor.
All assignments will be graded taking into consideration their attributes and timeliness.
The proper use of written and spoken language as well as the accuracy and relevance of information used in discussions and all reports will be taken into consideration when determining the grade.

Students are responsible for checking posted grades for all assignments and exams on a timely basis.
They are also responsible for “weighting” all the above-mentioned requirements in the appropriate manner.
Appeals concerning the accuracy of a posted grade will be accepted up to five business days after it appears on the Blackboard grade book.

Grades reflect the amount of learning accomplished during the semester.
The instructor does not decide the grade but merely registers the grades earned by students.

Assignments schedule at-a-glance

Oral Reports: 3/9 & 5/9
Written Research Reports: 3/7 & 5/2
Final Essay: 5/15

Brief Course Outline and Projected Schedule:

1/24  Prelude.
Latin American Music: An Overview.

1/31  Latin America: People, Geography and History.
Latinos in the US. The push and pull of immigration.
No class on Feb 2.

2/07  Globalization and its discontents.
US - Latin American interactions during the 19th and 20th centuries.
Free market democracies. The IMF. Trade agreements: NAFTA & CAFTA.
Feb 13 @ 7 PM: The Art Song in Latin America and Spain (Feb 13 @ 7 PM in Recital Hall)

2/14  Music Theory for Non-Musicians.
Listening to music. Music as organized sound. Culture as reflected in music.
Organizing human activity through music.
The basic characteristics of sound: pitch, volume, duration and timbre. Tuning systems.
The basic elements of music: rhythm, melody, counterpoint, and harmony.
Tonality. Shape and texture.
No class on Feb 16.
2/21 Exploring Music History
Music during the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Contemporary Eras.

2/28 Viva México!
The Aztec and Maya civilizations. Music during the Colonial Era. Independence Wars
The 19th and 20th centuries. The Revolution of 1910.

3/07 Music in México
Romanticism and Nationalism. Folk music. Ponce, Chávez and Revueltas.
Midterm Essay due March 9.

3/14 Spring Break
No class on March 14 & 16.

3/21 The Caribbean: Music that Excites
African influence. The "clave." The "danza."

3/28 The Caribbean (Continued)
Popular genres: rumba, merengue, cha-cha-chá, salsa.
Nationalism: Amadeo Roldán, Héctor Campos-Parsi.
Recent developments: Roque Cordero, Aurelio De la Vega, Leo Browuer, William Ortiz.

4/04 Brazil: The Land of Carnival
Brief history of Brazil.
Musical life during the Colony. Monarchy and Opera: Carlos Gomes.
No class on April 11

4/14 Brazil: The Land of Carnival
Cosmopolitan tendencies after the 1950's: Hans-Joachim Kollreuter and Gilberto Mendes.
MPB: Musica Popular Brasileira -- Choro, Samba, Bossa Nova, etc.

4/18 Argentina and the Andes
Argentina: our distant cousins. A nation of immigrants. Recent political and economic problems.
The Gauchesco tradition and the awakening of Nationalism: Alberto Williams.

4/25 Argentina and the Andes (continued)
The art of Alberto Ginastera. Recent developments: Juan Carlos Paz, Alicia Terzián and others.
Tango: Gardel and Piazzolla

5/02 Review and/or Student Presentations

5/09 Course Ends

5/15 Final Essay Due (by 12 PM)
Research Paper Topics

Each research paper should be approximately 1,500 - 1,750 words (5-6 typewritten pages).
The paper should address all issues raised by the posted questions.
All sources of information for the paper – including books, audio examples, journals and/or URL’s for websites consulted – should be clearly acknowledged.
Please submit “hard copy” of your paper on or before due date.

Research Assignment No. 1  
Due on or before 3/9

Choose Topic A or Topic B:

Topic A

The tonal system is a method formulated in the 17th century to impose order on the world of pitch.
Please explain its most important features and how the system developed and functions.
Define terms such as tonic, tonality, harmony, modulation, musical texture, polyphony and homophony.
Explain some basic differences between how music is organized in the western and non-western traditions.
Describe how the workings of the system are in evidence in a specific musical example you love and in a musical example heard as part of this course that impressed you.

Topic B

México is a dynamic and ever-changing country.
Discuss briefly the most important phases in Mexican history including the rise and fall of the Aztec civilization, the Colonial era, the Independence War, the US-Mexico conflict, the French Intervention and the Mexican Revolution.
Of course, refer as much as possible to musical practices associated with these different historical eras. What was the place of music in Aztec society? Can you describe some of the surviving Aztec instruments? What changes did the Colonial authorities impose? How did Mexican music progress during the 19th and 20th centuries?
Please define the term "Aztec Renaissance" and speak about important artists and composers associated with Mexican Nationalism. What are their important works? What is their connection with other Mexican artistic figures – especially painters and/or writers -- of their time? How did they use the folk music of their country in their works? What role does Nationalism play in the work of younger composers?

Research Assignment No. 2  
Due on or before 5/9

Choose Topic A or Topic B:

Topic A

Discuss Cuba’s relationship with the United States before and after the Castro Revolution.
Write about Cuba’s history during the 19th and 20th centuries concentrating on events leading to the Cuban Revolution of 1959.
How do you feel about the current US-Cuba diplomatic and economic relations? Would you suggest any changes?
Remember to integrate into the discussion issues related to Cuban music during the 19th and 20th centuries. Write about the Danza and its transformations. Discuss the internationalization of Cuban popular music and also touch upon the works of serious composers such as Roldán, Caturla, De la Vega, Brouwer and others.
Topic B

Discuss Puerto Rico's relationship with the United States.

Trace briefly the history of Puerto Rico leading up to the Spanish-American War of 1898. Then write about the various laws and amendments issued by the US government dealing with Puerto Rico. When did Puerto Rico assume the status of a Commonwealth? How does the average Puerto Rican feel about statehood? What is your opinion on the issue Puerto Rico becoming a state?

To the extent possible, integrate into the discussion issues related to Puerto Rican music including folk genres such as the Danza, Bomba and Plena. Discuss how contemporary Puerto Rican composers have been influenced by these genres.

Final Essay  (Final Exam) Due 5/15

Various topics of great significance to today’s Latin America were explored as part of this class.

In addition to musical phenomena specific to several Latin American countries, the course also touched on issues of historical, geographical and political nature as well as issues dealing with immigration of various groups to the US and its subsequent impact on life in this country.

Write an essay summarizing what you consider the three most important issues covered in class throughout the semester.

Remember to build your essay around specific topics and to provide appropriate justification for your points of view.

To avoid unwanted confusion, the introduction of your essay should clearly identify the three topics you are addressing. Divide the paper into three sections so that each section states in its title the topic being discussed.

Lastly, remember that music should play an important role in your essay. At least one of the three topics of your choice should involve a detailed/technical discussion of music. Furthermore, make sure to demonstrate your awareness and familiarity with relevant musical topics throughout the essay.

Preparing for In-Class Discussions

The primary purpose of these discussions is to assist you in understanding and reviewing materials being covered in class. Discussion participation should help you organize your thoughts concerning the issues discussed in class as well as in the assigned readings.

Your discussion comments should deal with three types of information:

- Observations you have noticed in the ideas, concepts and technical nitty-gritty covered in class, readings as well as materials and issues posted for each discussion.
- Inferences you draw based on these observations.
- Personal conclusions, opinions and reactions based upon your observations and inferences.

Materials covered in the discussions can also provide groundwork for some of the writing projects required during the semester. If appropriate, ideas you experiment with in a discussion can later be expanded into more complex projects.
Cheating:

Students caught cheating during an exam will immediately fail the entire course. They will also be referred to the Office of Undergraduate Studies for appropriate disciplinary actions. Using notes or getting information from another student during exams will also be considered cheating. Appropriating discussion comments or research papers from other students will also be treated as cheating.

Accountability, Technology and Success

- You chose to enroll in this class. This implies that the course material is of interest to you. Therefore, it is your responsibility not to schedule other activities during class time such as work, naps, meetings with other instructors or students, etc.

- Remember that the instructor is under no obligation to make-up class-lectures, exams or activities. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed from other students.

- Please turn off cell phones and pagers during class. Refrain from eating and drinking in the classroom.

- While in the classroom laptops, cellphones and/or PDA’s can only be used for taking class notes. The instructor reserves the right to view any open materials (books, papers, cellphones, laptops, etc.) to determine if they are being used for class purposes.
  
  *(If you don’t want the instructor to see it, don’t use it during class!)*

- Official and class-related emails will be sent only to your albany.edu address and/or via the course’s website.

- Communicate with the instructor via the course’s website. The website will also carry important announcements and materials related to the class. Make sure to consult the website regularly.

- Be prepared to learn when you come into the classroom. Read assigned materials before class. Complete written assignments and quizzes on time. Listen to and become familiar with all the musical examples discussed in class by accessing the Blackboard website regularly.

- *Remember that a 3 credit course requires at least 6 hours of work each week.*

Policy on Accommodating Disabilities

Accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in any Reading Department class, please notify the Director of Disabled Student Services (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.

About General Education Courses

General education courses offer explicit understandings of the procedures and practices of disciplines and interdisciplinary fields. They provide multiple perspectives on the subject matter, reflecting the intellectual and cultural diversity within and beyond the University.

General education courses emphasize active learning in an engaged environment that enables students to become producers as well as consumers of knowledge. They promote critical thinking about the assumptions, goals, and methods of various fields of academic study and the interpretive, analytic, and evaluative competencies central to intellectual development.
Art courses in the General Education curriculum are devised to provide instruction relevant to a medium of creative expression. Courses may focus on the physical practice and techniques of the medium, on its critical and theoretical interpretation, on its historical development, or on a combination of these approaches. Courses explicate the methods used to study and critique the medium as a vital element of personal or cultural expression and exchange.

Humanities courses are concerned with defining and disputing that which is understood to be quintessentially "human:" studying language, texts, thought, and culture; their definition, interpretation, and historical development; and their reflection of human values, beliefs, and traditions. These offerings are meant explore the underlying assumptions, methods of study, practices, theories, and disputes appropriate to various disciplines.

International Perspective courses focus on specific cultures (other than those of the United States and Europe). These courses emphasize the features and processes whereby cultures and regions gain their specific identity. These courses balance topical focus with chronological breadth while engaging students in considerations of the "local" as opposed to the "global."

Selected Bibliography

a) Books directly related to the course:

- Music of Latin America by Nicolas Slonimsky (Crowell, 1945)
- Music in México by Robert Stevenson (Crowell, 1952)
- Music in Aztec and Inca Territory by Robert Stevenson (University of California Press)
- Latin American Music Review (University of Texas Press)
- The Music of Brazil by David P. Appleby (Univ. of Texas Press, 1983)

b) Books dealing with musical topics related to the ones raised in class


c) Books dealing with social/historical topics related to the course:

- A History of Latin America by Benjamin Keen (Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1983)
- The Buried Mirror by Carlos Fuentes (Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1992)
- Americas: New Interpretive Essays by Alfred Stepan (Oxford Univ. Press, 1992)

d) Reference books:

- Dictionary of Contemporary Music by John Vinton (E.P. Dutton, 1974)
- Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture (MacMillan Library Reference USA, 1996)
- The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Latin America and the Caribbean (Cambridge Univ. 1992)

e) Books on Musicianship:

- The Music Kit by Tom Mannoff. W.W.Norton.

Amendments/corrections/rectifications to this syllabus will be posted on the course’s Blackboard website as needed throughout the term.