MUSC2XXZ: Music and Well-Being: The Sonic Healing Lab
WINTER SESSION 2022

Course hours: Jan. 4-17, Monday through Friday, 10:00am-12:00pm and 4:00pm-6pm
Course Instructor: Suhail Yusuf
Email: syusuf@wesleyan.edu
Office Hours: TBA and by appointment
Course website: [https://www.wesleyan.edu/wintersession/courses.html](https://www.wesleyan.edu/wintersession/courses.html)

Course Description: Music has been, and continues to be, an essential component of the practices of traditional healers in most indigenous cultures. Methods vary greatly from culture to culture, and from ancient to modern times. Hindustānī (North-Indian art) music is unusual in having a very well-established written record, as well as an oral history. But although knowledge of the medicinal effects of Hindustānī musical tones and modes was once integral to understanding and selecting the rāgs (melodic systems) that make up this music, much of this knowledge has been lost. The sarangi (North-Indian viol) is an instrument closely associated with musical healing. Oral history transmitted through generations of sarangi players makes it possible to trace a lineage of music’s medicinal purposes back to the Mughal era.

This course draws on my experience and knowledge as a Hindustānī music scholar and an eighth-generation sarangi player from a hereditary musical family to open up a space for the development of community-focused performance methodologies. It looks at ways that my inherited tradition can provide a model for musical healing in contexts outside of India. Acknowledging the capacity for music to activate and influence autonomic system responses, components of the course involve research into the neuroscience of musical healing, public health initiatives, and the relationship to composition and to improvisation.

An integral part of the course, the “lab” will teach you strategies for listening and learning songs composed in rāgs. It will include structured breathing and yogic-postural forms, combined with healing strategies drawn from diverse sound-based creative practices. Borrowing tools from ethnomusicology, music-therapy, and cultural anthropology, the course will extend the listening part of the lab to draw comparisons and analyze music healing practices from a variety of cultures, from Arab cultures to Native American, American, and Indian. Detailed and guided listening will make it possible for you to integrate emerging understandings of the relationships between ritual, music, and the health care. The course goal is to broaden your understanding of music as therapy, while raising awareness of the cultural processes that are constructed through musical practice.

Grading rubric:
Reflections: 30% (10% each)
Quiz: 20%
Comparative Essay: 20%
Class Participation: 10%
Final Project: 20%
Attendance Policy:

You are strongly encouraged to attend every class. While there are no specific penalties for missing a class (aside from “zero” grades for that day’s class participation, which can add up), it is unlikely that any student who misses class with any frequency will be able to succeed. With significant emphasis on listening to recordings (including many not available on Spotify), the information and perspective presented in class will be very important. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to submit that week’s assignment on time and to catch up on any materials covered. You are encouraged to find at least one “buddy” who can share notes with you and/or record the class for you.

Assignments (subject to change):

- **Reflections**: you will be asked to write and submit (on the Discussion Boards on Moodle) brief reflections on what struck you in the week’s music and readings. This is a fairly informal writing assignment. However, each grade from these assignments will be averaged equally at the end of the term.

- **Comparative Essay**: this essay will variously compare two or more assigned pieces of music, or two or more assigned writings (articles/chapters), picking apart the various elements that make up each performance/text.

- **Final Project**: Maximum flexibility allows you to choose whether to take your ideas to the next level through paper writing, composition, oral (lecture) presentation, performance, or some combination of these (e.g., a lecture-recital or a broadcast). There will be an ongoing dialogue with each student to narrow down their chosen topic and mode of delivery. All students will make a brief in-class presentation to share a summary of their findings.

- **Please note**: Students should expect some readings and assignments to be due during winter break, prior to the beginning of Winter Session class meetings.

Note that all assigned readings and listenings are to be completed before the class dates under which they are listed. All readings and links to listenings as well as further information about specific assignments is provided on the class Moodle.

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of Wesleyan University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students, however, are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known to me in a timely manner. If you require accommodations in this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible (during the 2nd or 3rd week of the semester), so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at [www.wesleyan.edu/deans/disability-students.html](http://www.wesleyan.edu/deans/disability-students.html)
## SCHEDULE
(subject to minor adjustments according to the circumstances)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue.1/4</td>
<td><strong>Music, Health, and Wellbeing</strong></td>
<td>(MacDonald, Kreutz, Mitchell 2012)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What do we mean by Music and Wellbeing?</td>
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<td>• Why is it Important?</td>
<td>(Moreno 1995)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Theories of Music and Wellbeing</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Understanding The Music of North India</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Rāg</td>
<td>(Bor 1999)</td>
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<td>• Tāl</td>
<td>(Jairazbhoy 1971: 27-46)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Due:</strong> Moodle post (reflection 1)</td>
<td>(Slawek 1998)</td>
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<td><strong>Module I: Music, Wellbeing, Meaning/ Hindustani Music</strong></td>
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<td>Day 2</td>
<td>Hindustani Music in Ancient and Mughal era and its Medicinal Properties:</td>
<td>(Sarkar &amp; Biswas 2015)</td>
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<td>Wed.1/5</td>
<td>• Listening/ Analyzing: Vedic Chants</td>
<td>(Brown 2003: 81-117)</td>
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<td>• Listening/ Learning: Rāg Todi,</td>
<td>(Ruckert 2004: 18-32)</td>
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<td>• Analyzing: Ragamala paintings</td>
<td>(Schofield 2019 podcast)</td>
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<td>Day 3</td>
<td>Sarangi players and healing practices</td>
<td>(Sorrell 1980: 89-113)</td>
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<td>Thu.1/6</td>
<td>• Learning/ Learning: Rāg Khamāj and Mārwa</td>
<td>(Bor 1987: 48-118)</td>
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<td>• In class sarangi presentation</td>
<td>(Yusuf Ch 3)</td>
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<td>Day 4</td>
<td>Affect and Microtones</td>
<td>(Daniélou 1995: 58-94)</td>
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<td>Fri.1/7</td>
<td><strong>Importance of Tuning and Harmonics</strong></td>
<td>(Daniélou 1995: 19-28, 95-120)</td>
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<td>• Listening/ Learning: Rāg Yaman</td>
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<td>• In class demonstrations</td>
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<td><strong>Guest Speaker:</strong> Manuel Perez (Composer, Wesleyan)</td>
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Due: Moodle post (reflection 2)

Module II: Music, Mystics, and Healing

Day 5
Mon.1/10

Mystics, Music, and Healing Practices in India and Pakistan
- What is Qawwali?
- Adâb-i-Mousiqui (etiquettes in music)
- Guest Speaker: Dhruv Sangari (Sufi singer, India)

Sufi music and dance
- Listening / Learning: Qawwali song

Shamanistic Healing Rituals

Quiz 1: Hindustani music, Healing practices, and the role of microtones
Due: Moodle post; comparative essay on Rāg’s supernatural effects

Day 6
Tue.1/11

Yoga and Music
- Indian Music and Yoga in the West
- In class practice of Yogic postures
- Listening/Analyzing: India by Coltrane
- Guest Speaker: Judy Smith (Yoga practitioner, UK)

Day 7
Wed.1/12

Situating Sufism and Yoga
- In class practice of Yogic postures while listening to Rāg phrases

Quiz 2: Sufi music and Yoga

Module III: Music and Healing in Other Cultures

Day 8
Thur.1/13

Music and Healing in the Arab World
- Listening: Ancient music of Egypt by Racy
- What are the issues?

Music and Healing in Native American culture
- Grandfather’s Medicine: Powwow music

Due: Moodle post (reflection 2)
from Western Massachusetts

**Due:** Moodle post (reflection 3)

**Day 9**
**Fri. 1/14**

**Building Communities through Therapeutic Deep Listening in North America**
- In class (ritualistic) listening to pieces by Oliveros, Pran Nath, Cage, and Riley
- **Guest Speaker:** Yifeat Ziv (Experimental music composer, UK)

**Day 10**
**Mon. 1/17**

**Project Presentations**

All Project Write Ups DUE: 4:30pm Wednesday January 19, 2022

**References**


Ernst, Carl W. 2016. *Refractions of Islam in India: Situating Sufism and Yoga.* SAGE Publications India,


Lavezzoli, Peter. 2006. The dawn of Indian music in the West. A&C Black.


