



Music & Society In the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia Spring 25

MUH 4930/ HUM 6935- Special / 3 Credits

Tuesday: 4:05pm-7:05pm, MUB 142

Instructor

Dr. Payam Yousefi

Office Hours: Mon. 2pm-4pm Thur. 1-4pm

[Office Hour Sign Up Sheet](#)

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Course Description

MUH 4930 / MUH 6935: Special Topics in Music

Music & Society in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia

Grading Scheme: Letter grade

Tuesday, 4:05m-7:05pm

Location: MUB 142

COURSE DESCRIPTION

From the 8th century up until the early 20th century the court culture in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia was connected through a history of allied and adversarial relationships between various empires and constantly emerging dynasties. These historical circumstances created a network of interconnected urban centers, royal courts, pilgrimage sites, and trade routes linking this vast and diverse geography. This course introduces a selection of the classical, rural, and sacred musical traditions of these regions through a historically and ethnographically informed lens that outlines affinities and distinctions between the many musics spread out from North Africa to Northwestern China.

This course will survey the musical traditions in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia, outlining music from Iran, Turkey, Egypt, the Levant, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Xinjiang China, Morocco, and Tunisia among others. Students will be introduced to classical court musics, rural folk traditions, major instruments, notation systems, musical contexts, and the socio-political contexts that relate to the music of these regions. Further, the multiple meanings of the term *maqam* are presented by highlighting historical genres and contemporary manifestations of them, while accounting for the specific social and political circumstances of the day. Exposure to these traditions through an oscillation between historical context and contemporary practice will allow students to encounter these traditions in a way that contextualizes and critically probes canon formations and nationalist essentialisms.

In this class guided critical listening and collective class performance plays a key role in not only introducing students to key concepts but will also allow them to experience and embody different modes of musicality. Success in this class is not dependent on past musical experience and only requires a willingness to listen actively.

ORGANIZATION OF COURSE

The course is divided into three main sections that are then divided into smaller subtopics. (1) Middle East: Egypt, the Levant, Iraq, Iran, and Turkey; (2) North Africa: Morocco, Tunisia, and Spanish Andalusia; (3) Central Asia: Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and the Xinjiang province of China. Each week will address a musical tradition in detail through the use of listening examples, ethnographic video footage, musical notations, and instructive readings.

Course Objectives:

- To introduce diverse yet interconnected musics that are legacies of the dynastic era.
- To listen contextually to musics from the larger Islamic world with comprehension.
- To familiarize with various traditions within their cultural contexts.
- To experience these musics through our bodies and instruments at an introductory level.

Assessment:

- Participation (10%): Students are expected to take an active role in discussions, coming to class prepared to meaningfully contribute with their original thoughts. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with listening, media, and articles for each week's module. Weekly attendance is required.
- Weekly Responses (20%): Students are required to write a one-paragraph response to discussion prompts that are posted each week that engage with the listening and reading materials.
- Mid-term Listening Quiz (20%): In class listening quiz on material presented up to that point. Includes association and short answer (Week 8, March 4th)
- Final Listening Quiz (20%): In class listening quiz on cumulative material presented up to that point. Includes association and short answer . (April 15)
- Final Project (30%): A formal research paper on any musical tradition relating to this larger geographic area. The music does not need to be something we covered in class. All final projects must be approved by instructor in advance. (Guidelines will be posted in canvas).
 - In class presentation (Due Week 14 -- 4/22) (10%)

Grading Rubric:

94-100	A	74-76	C
91-93	A-	71-73	C-
87-90	B+	67-70	D+
84-86	B	64-66	D
81-83	B-	61-63	D-
77-80	C+	0-60	F

Course Materials:

- This course does not require a textbook. Readings and listening for each unit will be posted to canvas at least one week in advance.

*****Syllabus is Subject to Change, Consult Canvas for Updates*****

Additions will be made to the readings and listening examples for select weeks.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (1/14)—Music in the Eastern Arab World (*Mashregh Zemin*)

- Intro to Course
- Medieval music theoreticians in the Islamic World and their treatises.
- What is a *Magham* in the Eastern Arab World?
- *Iqaat*: rhythmic theory and metric cycles
- *Maqam* Music in Egypt and the Levant: *takht*, *waslah*, *muwashasha*, *taqsim*, *layali*, *mawwal*, *ughniyyah*, *dulab*, *firqa*

Week 2 (1/21)—Folk Traditions in Egypt and the Levant

- *Bedouin Shai'rs*: *rabab* and *qasidah* form (Poet Fiddlers and Epics of Honor)
- Levant line dance: *mijwiz*, *dabkkah*
- Egypt Folk tradition instruments: *shababbah*, *arghul*, *salamiyah*

Week 3 (1/28)—Abbasid Caliphate Golden Age 8th -13th century & the Bagdad Court as an Artistic World Center.

- Case study of multi-ethnic court culture of arts in the Abbasid Courts.
- Iraqi Maqam and a case study of Munir Bashir.
- Transnational Popular Arab Music in the 20th century: Case study of Muhammad Abdul Wahab, Um-Kulthum, and Egyptian Cinema.
- *Tarab* (ecstasy) in popular makam music.

Week 4 (2/4)—North Africa and the Classical Music of Andalusia (*Nuba*)

- History of Andalusia and Western Arab World (Maghrib Zemin)
- The Story of Abul Hasan Ziryab the 7th century court composer of Andalusian Nuba Suite
- Contemporary practice of Nuba Suite in Tunisia and Morocco.

Week 5 (2/11)—Persian Court Music in Timurid and Safavid Dynasty

- Musical treatises and theoreticians of Systemist Period of Timurid Dynasty (12th-15th CE)
- Musical Treatises of Safavid Dynasty (16th-18th CE)
- Major urban centers and courts: Tabriz, Baghdad, Herat, Bukhara, Samarqand.
- Vocal Genres: *naghsh*, *kar*, *sowt*, *amal*, *qowl*, *qazal*, and *tasnif*
- Contemporary recreations

Week 6 (2/18)—Persian Court Music in Qajar (18th-20th CE)

- Role of composers in the court. Role of female composers, singers, and dancers.
- Musical Terms: *radif*, *dastgah*, *gusheh*, *pishdaramad*, *chahar-mezrab*, *avaz*, and *tasnif*.
- Female musicians in contemporary Iran.

Week 7 (2/25)—Persian Modal Theory in The 20th and 21st Century

- Analysis of *dastgah* as a modal cycle and suite.
- Contemporary practice of classical Persian music: Nationalism, Westernization, and Revival
- Style and Politics

Week 8 (3/4)—Regional Music of Iran: Music in the Khorasan Region

- **In class mid-term**
- Eastern Khorasan *dotar*: instrument and repertoire descriptions.
- Northern Khorasan *dotar*: instrument and repertoire descriptions.
- *Bakhshi*: musical bards, poets, epics and oral histories.
- Terms for genres and instruments: *ashigh*, *ghoshme*, *torghe*, and, *dohol*.

Week 9 (3/11)—Music in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey

- Ottoman Treatises: overview of transcribed repertoire from the Ottoman Courts.
- Overview of musical life in the Ottoman courts and musical life during the nationalist years of the Republics of Turkey (1923)
- Classical Turkish music's categories post 1925
- Terms: *makam*, *osul*, *fasil*, *peşrev*, *kar*, *beste*, *sarki*, and *son samai*

Week 10 (3/18—Spring Break No Class)

Week 11 (3/25)—Music of the Whirling Dervishes

- Role of Sufi musicians in the Ottoman courts.
- Role of Sufi musicians in music transmission.
- Analysis of *ayin* Mevlevi music suite.

Week 12 (4/1)—Folk Music in Turkey

- Instruments: *zurna*, *duhol*, *baghlama*, *saz*, *karadeniz kemence*

Week 13 (4/8)—Folk Music in Turkey (Shiite musicians and ethnic Kurds)

- *Alevi* musicians and religious ceremonies: *jam*, *muhebbet*
- *Ashiq* musicians (poet bards)
- Kurdish music in Eastern Anatolia: *deng bejh*

Week 14 (4/15)—Meaning and Practice of Magham in Central Asia

- **In class Final**
- Tajik and Uzbek *shashmaqam*.

- History of Bukhara, Samarqand, and Herat as major centers of court culture in medieval Islamic world.
- Xinjiang China: Uyghur Turks and *onikki maqām*
- Folk cyclic traditions in Badakhshan region of Afghanistan and Tajikistan. *Falak*

Week 15 (4/22)—Final Presentations Open Discussion

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR WEEKS 1-4

- Browning, Robert H, ed. 1984. *Music of the Islamic World and its Influences*.
New York: Alternative Museum.
- Danielson, Virginia. 1996. "Umm Kulthum." In *Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East*, Vol.4, edited by Reeva S. Simon, Phillip Mattar, and Richard W. Bulliet, 1826-1827. London: Simon & Schuster and Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Hourani, Albert. 1991. *A History of the Arab Peoples*. Cambridge: The Belknap of Harvard of University Press.
- Marcus, Scott. 2002. "Rhythmic Modes in Middle Eastern Music." In *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Vol.6 (Middle East), edited by Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds, 89-92. New York: Routledge.
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- _____. 1983. "The Waslah: A Compound-Form Principle in Egyptian Music." *Arab Studies Quarterly* 5(4):396-403.
- _____. 1996. "Heroes, Lovers, and Poet-Singers: The Bedouin Ethos in Music of the Arab Near East." *Journal of American Folklore* 109(934):404-424.
- _____. 1998. "Improvisation, Ecstasy, and Performance Dynamics in Arabic Music." in *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, ed by Bruno Nettl and Melinda Russell, 95-112. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- _____. 2002. "Overview of Music in the Mashriq." In *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Vol.6 (Middle East) edited by Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dight Reynolds, 535-556. New York: Routledge.
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- Simms, Robb. 2004. *The Repertoire of Iraqi Maqam*. Maryland: The Scarecrow Press.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR WEEKS 5-8

- Blum, Stephen. 1972. "Music in Contact the Cultivation of Oral Repertoires in Meshed, Iran." Ph.D dissertation,
- _____. 1974. "Persian Folksong in Meshed (Iran), 1969." *Yearbook of the*

- International Folk Music Council*, Vol. 6: 86-114.
- _____. "Nava'i, A Musical Genre in North Eastern Iran." in *Analytical Studies in World Music*, ed. Michael Tenzer. New York: Oxford University Press, 41-57.
- Blum, Stephen, Amin Khalilian. 2007. "Musical Ontology of the Naqshbandi Order in Eastern Iran." Society for Ethnomusicology, Annual Meeting, Columbus, Ohio.
- Caton, Margaret. 1983. "The Classical 'Tasnif': A Genre of Persian Vocal Music (Volumes I and II)." Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.
- _____. 1986. "Melodic Contour in Persian Music, and its Connection to Poetic Form and Meaning." In *Cultural Parameters of Iranian Musical Expression*, edited by Margaret Caton and Neil Siegel, 18-26. Redondo beach: The Institute of Persian Performing Arts.
- _____. 1994. "Introduction to Traditional Iranian Dastgāh Music." *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 28(1):31-311.
- _____. 2001. "Performance Practice in Iran: Radīf and Improvisation." In *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Vol.6 (The Middle East), edited by Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds, 129-144. New York: Routledge.
- During, Jean. 1991. "The System of Persian Music." In *The Art of Persian Music*, edited by Jean During and Zia Mirabdolbaghi, 57-98. Washington D.C.: Mage Publishers.
- _____. 1991. "Music Mysticism and Metaphysics." In *The Art of Persian Music*, edited by Jean During and Zia Mirabdolbaghi, 167-176. Washington D.C.: Mage Publishers.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR WEEKS 9-13

- Bates, Elliot. 2011. *Music in Turkey: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Blum, Stephen, and Hassanpour, Amir. 1996. "'The Morning of Freedom Rose up': Kurdish Popular Song and the Exigencies of Cultural Survival." *Popular Music* 15(3):325-343.
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Attendance Policy, Class Expectations, and Make-Up Policy

Attendance for this class is mandatory!

Students are allowed 1 unexcused absence.

Each absence beyond 1 will lower final grade by 2 points

Acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to engage in class include:

Illness of the student or student's child; Title ix-related situations; Serious accidents or emergencies affecting the student, their roommates, or their family; Special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences); Military obligation; Severe weather conditions that prevent class participation; Religious holidays; Participation in official university activities (e.g., music performances, athletic or academic competition) **requires an email from your coach/supervisor**; Court-imposed legal obligations. **All requests for an excused absence must be accompanied by necessary documentation.**

If an issue arises outside the reasons listed above, please communicate with me ASAP

Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog

(<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>Links to an external site.) and require appropriate documentation.

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Netiquette/Communication Courtesy:

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions, and chats.

University of Florida Policies

Academic Integrity

The University of Florida is designated a “Research 1” University, which means that UF takes *every* form of scholarship very seriously and that it holds all of its students to a high standard of academic integrity. Below is a link to UF’s official honor code – [please take a minute to read it](#).

Students are required to submit original work on all assignments – turning in anything less than original work on tests, quizzes, essays, and discussions will be considered plagiarism, i.e. passing off another person’s work as your own without properly crediting that person’s intellectual property. Instances of plagiarism will result in a 0 for that assignment and will be reported to the dean of students for further action.

You are responsible for making yourself aware of and for understanding the policies and procedures that pertain to academic integrity.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the

possible sanctions. Click here to read the [Conduct Code](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

Getting Help:

Additional resources are [available here](#). For Counseling and Wellness resources, Disability resources, Resources for handling student concerns and complaints.

Additional UF Resources

UF Libraries

- [Find your Librarian!](#) There is a librarian specialist for *every major* at UF
- [Ask a Librarian:](#)
- [Library Hours by Branch](#)
- [Library phone numbers by branch](#)
- [Assignment Calculator](#)
- [Project Starter Resources](#)

Health & Wellness

- ***U Matter, We Care:*** <https://umatter.ufl.edu/>
If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392- 1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student
- ***University Counseling & Wellness Center:***
3190 Radio Road (392-1575)
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. (Links to an external site.)
- ***University Police Department:*** <https://police.ufl.edu/>
392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies
- ***Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS):***
@Student Health Care Center, 392-1161
- ***Student Health Care Center***
352-392-1161 and <http://shcc.ufl.edu> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. (Links to an external site.)

Academic Resources

- ***Teaching Center Tutoring*** (General study skills and free tutoring)
Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420.
- ***The Writing Studio*** (Free tutoring in writing)
Locations in Library West & Turlington by appointment: 352-864-1138.
- ***Career Resource Center***
Reitz Union (392-1601)