

**Course number:** MUS 223

**Course title:** Music and Environment

**Credits:** 3:3

**Prerequisites/corequisites:** none

**Instructor information:**

Dr. Aaron S. Allen, Music Building 329, 336-256-0165, [asallen@uncg.edu](mailto:asallen@uncg.edu)  
appointments via [asallen.youcanbook.me](http://asallen.youcanbook.me)

**For whom planned:** Open to any undergraduate university student. No previous musical experience is necessary.

**Catalog description:** Consideration of creative works and traditions relating human sound (music, noise, etc.) and the natural environment from artistic, humanistic, and scientific perspectives.

**Student learning outcomes:** Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to ...

1) ... describe the aesthetic aims and intellectual methods of music/sound that reflects the environment;

*Relates to LG1*

2) ... describe and interpret music/sound that express cultural values of the environment;

*Relates to LG3*

3) ... identify relationships between music/sound and the environment in regard to artistic expression in personal or collective experience;

*Relates to LG5*

4) ... analyze texts that connect music/sound and the environment; and

*Relates to LG1 and LG3*

5) ... communicate clearly and effectively, orally and in writing, about personal or collective human relationships with music/sound and the environment.

*Relates to LG1, LG3 and LG5*

In addition to achieving the above SLO, students will also achieve the following outcomes in the GEC curriculum related mostly to the GFA category:

LG1) Foundational Skills: Think critically, communicate effectively, and develop appropriate fundamental skills in [...] information literacies.

*Relates to SLO 1, 4 and 5. Students will discuss reading and listening assignments (forming opinions about them, sharing them with the class, and respectfully listening to other, potentially different, opinions).*

LG3) Knowledge of Human Cultures: Describe, interpret, and evaluate the ideas, events, and expressive traditions that have shaped collective and individual human experience through inquiry and analysis in the diverse disciplines of the humanities, [...] histories, and the arts.

*Relates to SLO 2, 4 and 5. Students will explore music-environment relations in the thought and art of selected Western and non-Western cultures distant in both time and space.*

LG5) Personal, Civic, and Professional Development: Develop a capacity for active citizenship, ethics, social responsibility, personal growth, and skills for lifelong learning in a global society. In so doing, students will engage in free and open inquiry that fosters mutual respect across multiple cultures and perspectives.

*Relates to SLO 3 and 5. Students will participate in civil discussions of both the objective and subjective features of art and science, of music and environment. Furthermore, students will reflect on the role of music humanity grapples with its place in nature.*

**Teaching methods and assignments for achieving learning outcomes:**

Each 75-minute course session will include lecture presentations and discussions. In lectures, I will use recorded music and related visual and textual material. Students will discuss reading and listening assignments with each other and me. I will emphasize discerning the main point (thesis, argument) of each reading.

Regular web-based writings will assess the students' knowledge of the assigned reading and listening materials through the identification, description, analysis, and interpretation of both the relevant concepts and music studied; in addition, these assignments help prepare for in-class discussion. I will provide feedback (on both stylistic and

content aspects) through written website comments and in-class discussion. The grading is by completion: 0 for not doing it, 1 for doing it poorly, and 2 for doing it adequately/well; there are fifteen such assignments.

Two midterm exams and one final exam will test student mastery of concepts and vocabulary and on the recognition of music and sounds, all of which will be emphasized in lectures and discussions. The two midterms will include short-answer questions in order to prepare for the longer essay (take-home) on the final exam; each midterm short answer and the final essay must provide a main point (thesis, argument) that is substantiated with both course materials and the student's individual perspectives. The final essay will, in part, ask students to reflect on their personal growth and how studying connections between music and environment have informed their understanding of the role of sound as humanity grapples with its place in nature.

### **Evaluation and grading:**

The distribution of grades is split 50/50 for engagement/testing:

20% Attendance and In-Class Participation (see also Attendance Policy below). *Relates to all SLO/LG, by encouraging and providing opportunities for listening to, understanding of and communication about all course material.*

30% Response Writings: weekly reflections posted to Blackboard (15 completion grades of 0, 1, or 2). *Relates to all SLO/LG, especially SLO5, by requiring the description and identification of music/sound, concepts and texts in thoughtfully communicated but low-stakes writings in a respectful on-line environment that also prepares for and informs in-class discussion.*

50% Three exams (15% midterm 1; 15% midterm 2; 20% final). *Relates to SLO1-3 and LG1&3, by requiring an understanding of vocabulary, concepts, texts and artistic works that relate music/sound and the environment.*

Grades are based on the following criteria:

*A* Student demonstrates a superior competency in completing course requirements and/or a superior comprehension of assigned material. Assignments are ready at each class meeting or given deadline for completion.

95-100 = A+, 90-95 = A, 85-89 = A-

*B* Student demonstrates an above-average competency in completing course requirements and/or above-average comprehension of assigned material. Assignments are satisfactory.

80-84 = B+, 75-79 = B, 70-74 = B-

*C* Student demonstrates an ability to adequately meet requirements of the course requirements and/or an adequate comprehension of assigned material. Assignments are not satisfactory.

65-69 = C+, 60-64 = C, 55-59 = C-

*D* Student demonstrates absolute minimum competency in the course; work falls below the acceptable standards defined as C but is of sufficient quality and quantity to be counted for credit.

49-55 = D

*F* Student fails to meet acceptable standards for earning a passing grade for the course. Assignments are not done and performance is poor.

0-49 = F

**Required texts/readings/references:** All recordings will be provided in the UNCG Music Library reserves; any supplementary readings will be provided via Blackboard.

Allen, Aaron S. 2013. "Ecomusicology." *The Grove Dictionary of American Music and Musicians*. New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming. [750-word article]

Glotfelty, Cheryll. 1996. "Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis." In *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, xv-xxxvii. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Gray, Patricia M., Bernie Krause, Jelle Atema, Roger Payne, Carol Krumhansl, and Luis Baptista. 2001. "The Music of Nature and the Nature of Music." *Science* 291, no. 5501: 52-54.

Ingram, David. 2010. *The Jukebox in the Garden: Ecocriticism and American Popular Music Since 1960*. Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi.

Schafer, R. Murray. 1993. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. Rochester, Vt.: Destiny Books.

**Topical outline/calendar** (*all reading/listening should be done before, i.e. in preparation for class on, the date listed*):

Week 1: Introductions

- T Read Allen.
- R Read Glotfelty and Gray.

Part I: Soundscapes

Week 2: Soundscapes I

- T Read Schafer, intro, chapter 1 (“The Natural Soundscape”) and chapter 2 (“The Sounds of Life”)
- R Read Schafer, chapter 3 (“The Rural Soundscape”) and chapter 4 (“From Town to City”)

Week 3: Soundscapes II

- T Read Schafer, chapter 5 (“The Industrial Revolution”) and chapter 6 (“The Electric Revolution”)
- R Read Schafer, chapter 7 (“Music, the Soundscape, and Changing Perceptions”)

Week 4: Soundscapes III

- T Read Schafer, chapter 8 (“Notation”), chapter 9 (“Classification”), and chapter 10 (“Perception”)
- R Read Schafer, chapter 11 (“Morphology”), chapter 12 (“Symbolism”), and chapter 13 (“Noise”)

Week 5: Soundscapes IV

- T Read Schafer, chapter 14 (“Listening”), chapter 15 (“Acoustic Community”), and chapter 16 (“Rhythm and Tempo”)
- R Read Schafer, chapter 17 (“The Acoustic Designer”), chapter 18 (“The Soniferous Garden”), chapter 19 (“Silence”), and epilogue (“The Music Beyond”)

Week 6: Soundscapes V

- T Review and Catch-up
- R Midterm Exam 1

Part II: Ecomusicology and Popular Music

Week 7: Ecomusicology and Popular Music I

- T Read Ingram, chapter 1 (“Popular Music and Environmental Ethics”) and chapter 2 (“Popular Music and Eco-Aesthetics”)
- R Read Ingram, chapter 3 (“Popular Music and ‘Nature’”) and chapter 4 (“Eco-Listening”)

Week 8: Ecomusicology and Popular Music II

- T Read Ingram, chapter 5 (“Blues and Country Music”)
- R Read Ingram, chapter 6 (“Folk”)

Week 9: Ecomusicology and Popular Music III

- T Read Ingram, chapter 7 (“1960s Rock and R’n’B”)
- R Read Ingram, chapter 8 (“Country Rock”)

Week 10: Ecomusicology and Popular Music IV

- T Read Ingram, chapter 9 (“Post-1960s Rock, R’n’B and hip hop”)
- R Read Ingram, chapter 10 (“World Music”)

Week 11: Ecomusicology and Popular Music V

- T Read Ingram, chapter 11 (“Electronica”)
- R Read Ingram, chapter 12 (“Jazz”)

Week 12: Ecomusicology and Popular Music VI

- T Read Ingram, afterword; Review and Catch-up
- R Midterm Exam 2

Part III: Ecomusicology and Symphonic Music

Week 13: Ecomusicology and Symphonic Music I

- T Listen to Beethoven, Symphony #6 and Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique*
- R Listen to Brahms, Symphony #1 and Brahms, Symphony #2

Week 14: Ecomusicology and Symphonic Music II

- T Listen to Mahler, Symphony #3 and Strauss, *Alpensymphonie*
- R Listen to Albert, *Symphony: Riverrun* and Zwilich, Symphony #2

Week 15: Ecomusicology and Symphonic Music III

- T Catch-up and Review

Final Exam Day TBD

**Academic integrity policy:**

Academic Integrity is fundamental to the university enterprise and is therefore expected at all times. Plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of dishonesty will reap appropriate consequences, ranging from no credit on an assignment to expulsion from the university. By placing your name on any assignment for this course, you are agreeing to abide by the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy ([academicintegrity.uncg.edu/](http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/)). If you are not sure whether or not something you are doing is a violation of the academic integrity policy, then just ask!

**Attendance policy:**

Although attendance is not mandatory, lack of attendance will negatively impact the participation grade. Class participation and attendance comprise a 10% of the grade; I will log your attendance, and your percentage of classes attended will result in your grade (e.g. if you attend 90% of classes, you will earn 9% on the final grade; if you attend 15% of classes, you will earn 1.5% on the final grade). Some flexibility is provided in submitting writing assignments on our Blackboard site, therefore no such assignment can be made up. Students must take midterm and final exams on the day scheduled, and they may be rescheduled only with 48-hours advance notice or, if less or after the day scheduled, then only with a written excuse provided by the student's dean.

