

PSYCHOLOGY OF MUSIC

PSY 285

Spring Quarter, 2010
Kalamazoo College (Michigan, USA)
Recital Hall, Fine Arts Building

Dr. Siu-Lan Tan (Psychology)

*Let us keep open the connections whereby the human spirit may freely
move between the arts and the sciences, and thus make more of each.*
- violinist and conductor Yehudi Menuhin, 1916-1999.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Office: Olds-Upton 403-C. **Phone:** 337-7111 (I prefer e-mail, if possible). **E-mail:** tan@kzoo.edu (except weekends). **Office Hours:** Thursdays 2:30-5:00 and by appointment. *I recommend making an appointment (even for office hours), so you do not have to wait.*

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

This course is an introduction to a variety of topics within the psychology of music including the physics of musical sound (as applied to voice, piano, strings, wind, percussion), music perception and cognition, emergence and development of basic musical skills, recent research on advanced musical skills (practice, performance, sight-reading, improvisation, memorization), music and emotion, the social psychology of music, music and culture, and more. One or two special interest topics will be covered at the end of the course, such as recent research on the role of music in film.

Class periods will be comprised of lectures, discussions on prepared readings, demonstrations, and activities. **Expect to be a regular participant in whatever is happening in class.** Students may be asked to bring their musical instruments to class to provide lecture demonstrations.

Course Prerequisites Definitely required: 1) Completion of a college-level course in General Psychology (OR score of 4 or 5 on AP Psychology), plus a familiarity with basic music theory concepts and ability to read music in at least one clef. 2) At least 5 years of music training in instrument or voice is strongly recommended. **A general knowledge of basic musical terms and concepts will be assumed and will not be reviewed as part of this course.**

READINGS/MATERIALS

1. Tan, S.-L., Pfordresher, P., & Harré, R. (2010). *Psychology of Music: From Sound to Significance*. London: Routledge/Psychology Press.

Some additional readings will be provided in class.

2. Independent reading (from academic journals such as *Psychology of Music* and *Music Perception*) will also be chosen by students as materials for the Term Project (see page 2), which culminates in a discussion with your Professor to show what you have independently learned. You should also plan on some photocopying expenses, as you will be doing independent library research at a few different libraries, especially the Music and Dance Library at WMU.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Exams: There will be three long essay exams – requiring deep familiarity with all the readings and lectures, and ability to think through the material critically and conceptually. The exams are in long essay form (usually filling about 10 – 12 sides of Blue Book), and you will have 90 minutes to write. [**Exams: 100 x 3 = 300 points**]

2. Preparation/Participation and Short Writing Assignments: Please complete readings on due dates and always come to class prepared to participate in discussions. Occasionally, we will have in-class papers and short (take-home) assignments based on the readings - which will be kept in your personal Short Assignments Folder. If you choose not to talk much in class you should make a special effort to show how consistently well prepared you are on the readings through good In-class Papers and Assignments. *Please note that missed in-class papers and in-class activities due to absence cannot be made up.* If you only have one or two missing in-class assignments it should not be a problem; otherwise it will have some effect on your participation/preparation grade. [**Participation/Preparation grade, including Short Assignments and In-Class Papers: 100 points**]

3. Term Project: “You’re the Expert” – Independent Reading of Journals: You’ll select a topic from a few choices I will provide; you are expected to find your own readings and sources (from academic journals in this field – such as Psychology of Music and Music Perception) to become an “expert” on your topic independently. **After several weeks, you will meet with me for a “peer discussion” on what you have independently read and learned on your research topic.** (Topics to be determined after I have a sense of the composition of this year’s class). The project is assessed on the basis of the quality of the readings and resources you obtained, and how well you can convey your knowledge (including methodology and main findings of studies) with richness, depth, clarity, and precision *in spoken form*. You may bring your readings and notes with you. There is NO paper and no presentation, but you should be well prepared for a thorough discussion on what you selected to read. Work on the project takes place over several weeks of the course, and will take good time management skills and a high level of autonomy (though your instructor will provide you with the needed tools and structure). A detailed handout on the Term Project will be distributed later. [**Project: Approx. 100 points**]

4. Involvement with Music: This course requires you to be actively involved in musical activities. This requirement can be fulfilled in ONE of two ways: [**Required but not graded**]

Option A) Participate in an In-Class Concert. You are encouraged to participate in an informal class concert. We will have a few in-class concerts during the quarter. Please keep your performance at about 3 minutes or less. You may team up with others in the class or outside the class, or play solo; you can play classical or non-classical pieces of any genre, or your own compositions. You can play from memory or bring your music on stage with you. The class is not expecting to be graced by a budding Mozart, so feel free to perform at whatever level you have reached. *Your performance will not be graded: as long as you are well prepared, you will have fulfilled your assignment.* No paper needed for Option A.

- OR: Option B) Read about group rehearsal, attend an Ensemble Rehearsal, and submit a short paper by Monday of 8th week (or earlier). Please see me for a handout if you select this option.

GRADING SCHEME A- to A+ = 91-100%, B- to B+ = 81-90%, C- to C+ = 71-80%, D- to D+ = 61-70%, F = 59% and below.

COURSE POLICIES

1. Academic Integrity: The honor code is an integral part of Kalamazoo College life, and academic integrity is upheld as one of the highest callings of students and faculty. Out of respect for the academic reputation of our College, the following actions will be handled as severe infractions of the school-wide code: cheating on exams, quizzes or papers in any form; copying another student's exams, quizzes or papers with or without the permission of the student; plagiarism; and giving untrue reasons for absences, missed exams or presentations.

2. Missed Exams: **If you miss an exam, you must contact me by e-mail within 24 hours of the exam, AND you must provide documentation of serious illness, or medical or family emergency at the next class meeting.** Examples of acceptable forms of documentation include: Doctor's note (with date & signature on office letterhead), Emergency Room receipt (with date & reason), letter from Dean of Students. **Without documentation, a make-up test will definitely not be graded for full credit.** Make-up exams will consist of different questions than the standard exam, and will be administered as soon as possible after your return/recovery. *Please note that the exam given to the class is administered once only in order to preserve the integrity of the test, so the make-up test will consist of a new essay question.*

3. Missed Term Project Meetings: If you are absent any day on which your Term Project group is to meet with me or my TA, the meeting will NOT be rescheduled. Missed Group meetings with TA will NOT be made up; but you will be responsible for any information given during the meeting so you must ask your Group to catch you up. Also: Missed Group Meetings with your Professor will NOT be replaced by an individual meeting but will be automatically switched to a term paper (6-7 pages, APA citations & references) on your topic – your professor will give the due date.

4. Absentee Policy: Poor attendance (more than 3 absences) will automatically affect your grade. Any student who misses more than 5 classes will not pass the course. Perfect attendance (no more than 1 unexcused absence) will raise your final grade if your score lies within half-percent of a higher grade. (Typically, about one-third of the class is within 0.5% of a better grade at the end of the quarter, so this can make a significant difference!). Your instructor cares about attendance as it is essential to the quality of your experience in this course, and serves as a reflection of your commitment to the class

5. Incomplete Work: Please note that you cannot pass this course without completing 3 exams + term project + class concert/observation paper, even if the total score is within passing range.

'DAY OF GRACIOUS LIVING' POLICY

If it is DGL (the college's tradition for one unannounced day off during the school year, determined by the Student Commission President), class will automatically be cancelled for the day—even if there is an Exam or Term Project scheduled. The Lecture, Class Discussion, or Exam will be moved to the next class meeting – while Term Project meetings will be rescheduled. *Please definitely check for an e-mail from me either on DGL or early the next day, as it will inform the class about what the plans are for the next class period.* (Please note that DGL policies may be different for other professors).

FINAL WORD

I cannot tell you how *happy* I am to discover that there are so many students at “K” who love psychology and music! It's so nice to have a class in which *everyone* is bonded by at least two common interests. I'm looking forward to this quarter with you!