

EXPRESSIVE CULTURE: SOUNDS
Repetition: It Makes the Difference
College Core Curriculum: CORE-UA 730-010
Fall 2018

COURSE

Instructor: Alice Teyssier
Instructor Email: teyssier@nyu.edu
Office: Waverly Building, room 266H
Office Hours: By appointment
Lecture Times: M/W 11:00am-12:15pm
Lecture Location: Silver 320

RECITATION INSTRUCTORS

Brian Fairley

brf275@nyu.edu

CORE-UA 730-011: Fr 12:30-1:45pm, SILV 218

CORE-UA 730-012: Fr 2:00-3:15pm, SILV 218

Sofy Yuditskaya

sy737@nyu.edu

CORE-UA 730-013: Fr 12:30-1:45pm, SILV 318

CORE-UA 730-014: Fr 2:00-3:15, SILV 318

The recitation instructors for this course are brilliant graduate students who will soon be professors themselves. The recitation sections they lead are a central part of this course, and their evaluations of your written work and classroom participation will constitute the bulk of your grade. More importantly, they are on hand to answer your questions, help you learn how to become better writers and thinkers, and to make sure that your experience this semester is rich and positive. I trust that you will work closely with them, learn from them, and treat them with respect.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Repetition is not repetition. The same action makes you feel something completely different by the end.”

-Pina Bausch

The act of listening musically requires imaginative participation. This course deals with the simple act and yet complex concept of repetition, which invites a more direct confrontation with the sensory attributes of sound. Students will explore the impact of repetition—and its important counterpart, difference—through introductory texts and a wide array of sounds and musics. Students will study the role of musical and music-like repetition in rituals, in speech, in establishing influence as well as repetition's pervasiveness in different cultures and eras. Becoming aware of the patterns and differences in music will become a practice applicable to daily life, wherein messaging, learning, propaganda, and individuation are exposed and analyzed.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

There is no textbook required for this course. Reading materials and listening samples will be provided on the course Classes page, under the “Resources” tab. Readings and listening for each week should be completed before Monday’s lecture.

ASSIGNMENTS

You will be expected to complete several different kinds of assignments over the course of the semester:

a) **Reading Responses:** The readings for this course cover a large swath of topics, some of which may pique your interest more than others. Over the course of the term, choose three assigned articles or readings on which to meditate more thoroughly and respond with 300 words. Responses may be turned in at any point in the term, but must be completed by Thanksgiving break. Submit your responses to your recitation instructors via the Courses site.

b) **Concert Report:** Attend a live concert, on which you will hear at least one piece of music/song of which you have heard a recording. This will require a bit of prior research, and your recitation instructors and I can help you in this endeavor. Prior to the concert, study the recording and make notes about ways in which you perceive the music. What elements are being prioritized? What stands out to you? At the concert, enjoy the live music unimpeded (no note-taking, no recording devices); after the show, reflect on your experience. Note what surprised you, what inspired you, how differently you felt hearing the music live vs. on the recording you have gotten familiar with. Was your experience heightened by having studied the music ahead of time? Compose 750-1000 words in response (about 3-4 pages, double-spaced).

c) **Group-elaborated projects and performances:** The last three weeks of the term will be reserved for the performance and presentation of final compositions. Within your recitation sections, you will break into groups of 4; in groups, you will conceive of, compose, rehearse and perform a 5-minute work based on the topics covered in class. Each group will have 20 minutes to set up, perform and give a short presentation and Q&A regarding their work, in which all must participate. PERFORMANCES NOVEMBER 26 – DECEMBER 12 IN LECTURE.

d) **Term Paper:** You will establish a topic to propose to your recitation leader by November 9. This can be an artist, a work, an approach, a movement or a historical period that you will analyze through the sound and affect vocabularies studied in class. An abstract and list of readings/listening you plan to use will be due by November 21 (before Thanksgiving break). You will then have until the end of the semester to complete your 1250-word term paper. DUE ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 14.

Your papers will be graded for clarity of thesis, mastery of course terms and the quality and complexity of your thoughts. Do not hesitate to check in with me or with your recitation instructor for feedback, help and questions about your paper at any time; we will be happy to assist you.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Attendance to all lectures and sections is mandatory, and due dates for your assignments are not flexible. You should not expect an extension for a paper or a make-up presentation unless you provide us with a written, detailed request, subject to the professor's approval, in advance of the due date with a valid reason. Similarly, an absence will bring down your attendance score unless you provide appropriate reasons for your inability to attend (i.e. a note from your doctor).

Participation in lectures and sections is not only part of your grade, but it also allows you to contribute to the development of the class. If something interests you and you contribute, chances are you will have better explored, and perhaps even guided, the design and development of the class. This class will largely be what you make of it.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Short Papers and Section Assignments	30%
Final Performance	25%
Attendance and Participation	20%
Term Paper	25%

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Learning to engage with the work of other people by appropriately crediting their ideas as they impact your own is central to intellectual and academic life. This means that you should reference them in the body of the text and include proper citations and bibliographical references. Any case of academic dishonesty will be reported immediately and may result in disciplinary action or even expulsion.

ETIQUETTE

I expect my classroom to be the site of vibrant and respectful discourse. Carrying on conversations during lectures and recitation sections is distracting, so please refrain from talking when lectures and sections are in progress (this also holds for when video and audio examples are being played). The issues being discussed are complex and require concentration to engage with them. Your individual behavior goes a long way in setting a positive tone for the class. Your questions, comments and insights are more than welcome during lectures; just raise your hand and make your comments available to the entire class. In recitation sections, of course, all are expected to contribute regularly to discussions.

Tardy entrances, early departures and bathroom breaks are an extreme distraction to your colleagues and to your instructors; unless there is some sort of emergency, these will be noted and count against your grade. Please do not use your computer or telephone during lectures or sections, not even discreetly. Furthermore, please turn your cellphones off so that they don't interrupt the lectures and discussions.

SUPPORT AND ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Moses Center for Students with Disabilities provides comprehensive services and programs for students with hearing and visual impairments, mobility impairments, learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders, chronic illnesses, and psychological impairments. Your recitation instructors and I will work with the Moses Center to provide you with the appropriate modifications, accommodations and services for this course.

DISCLAIMER ON THE SYLLABUS

This syllabus is a working document! As the semester progresses, updated breakdowns of unit schedules, reading and listening lists and guest lectures will be made available. Updates to the syllabus will be posted on the NYU Classes site and announced in class; please be on the qui-vive for any and all changes.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Sept. 5 **INTRODUCTION**
Sameness and Difference

Sept. 10-28 **UNIT I: SONOS**
Modes and tools of repetition, Structural Values, Repetition vs. Reproduction

Readings: Peter Kivy, from *The Fine Art of Repetition*; Walter Benjamin, from *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*

Listening: Mark Applebaum, Ludwig van Beethoven, Maurice Ravel, Annie Mac, Philip Glass, Morton Feldman, Bernhard Lang, Steve Reich, Meredith Monk, Philip Glass, J Lin, Talking Heads, Jimmy Smith, Wendy Walter Carlos, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Dan Tepfer, Derrick May

Oct. 1-19 **UNIT II: LOGOS**
Semantics and Perception, Notation vs. Oral histories, Ritual, Repetition as a form of influence

Readings: Elizabeth Margulis, “Aesthetic responses to repetition in unfamiliar music”; George Kubler, from *The Shape of Time*; Diana Deutsch, “The Tritone Paradox”; Deleuze and Guattari, from *Difference and Repetition*

Listening: Steve Reich, Alvin Lucier, Elliot Carter, M.I.A., Salvatore Sciarrino, Peter Ablinger, Daft Punk, worship and ritual music, Gérard Grisey, Musical Illusions and Paradoxes (Diana Deutsch)

Oct. 22-Nov. 9 **UNIT III: NOMOS**
The Weaponization of Repetition, Legalizing Repetition (Authorship and Authenticity), The Shape of Repetition to Come

Readings: Lily Hirsch, “Music as Torture”; James Snead, “On Repetition in Black Culture”; Kodwo Eshun, from *More Brilliant than the Sun...*

Listening: Muzak, Johannes Kreidler, Migos, scene from *A Clockwork Orange*, Metallica, music from children’s shows, AI music examples

Nov. 12-19 **BONUS UNIT [Prof. Teyssier on leave]**
Guest Presentations

Nov. 26-Dec. 12 **FINAL PERFORMANCES**