

MUH 4930/6935 Music in Early Modern Latin America

University of Florida, Spring 2026
Thursdays 4:05–7:05pm (Periods 9–11)
MUB 146

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Office Hours: Fridays 10:30am–12:30pm and by appointment

Overview

This course explores the role of music in Spain's American territories between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, examining an array of repertoires, institutions, territories, and cultures. Through music we will examine the impacts of European empire, the vexed encounters between Europeans, Africans, and indigenous peoples of the Americas, and trace the changes of American (and European) societies during a long and complex period of social and cultural transformation. Although we will primarily focus on the music in Latin America under the Spanish empire, we will also touch on the music of Spanish Florida, California, and the Philippines as well as music of the French, English, and Portuguese empires. We will also examine the musical past from the standpoint of the present via contemporary issues of class and economy, performance practice, historiography, archives, and patrimony.

By the end of this class, you will be able to:

- Understand and examine a range of traditions and practices of music-making across the Americas and different historical and political processes of empire in relation to music.
- Drive discussion, undertake original research, and write about music from early modern Latin America using descriptive and analytical techniques beyond those that you had before this course. This includes critically engaging with music through close reading, listening and research.
- Analyze and evaluate a range of arguments regarding the role of music in early modern societies, both generally and with respect to specific examples.
- Recognize and explain distinguishing features of various musical genres, composers, institutions, and regions in early modern Latin America and other relevant locations.

All course material will be available on Canvas (<https://lss.at.ufl.edu>) or elsewhere online.

Assignments

1. Weekly Responses

Write a short post on Canvas responding to the assigned class material by 10:00 am on the day of class. Your response should demonstrate thoughtful engagement with all assigned materials for a given class meeting and include at least one key quote from each reading. You should provide a critical response to the readings and place the readings in dialogue with one another, making connections and comparisons. You may also connect the readings with content from prior class meetings and/or compare the readings to your own research interests and applicable performance experience. End your response with a question(s) for class discussion. Responses will help structure class discussion.

2. Final Project

Conduct an original research project that relates to the themes of the course. You will carry out this project in five stages: submit a preliminary research topic for your project, short proposal consisting of an abstract and annotated bibliography, paper outline, present a conference-style talk on your research project with a question-and-answer session, and complete a final paper. I will post more detailed guidelines on Canvas.

Research Topic

Proposal

Paper Outline

Final Project Presentation

Final Paper

Without prior discussion and written approval from me, no late assignments will be accepted. Make-up for assignments will only be given for excused absences consistent with university policies and require documentation (please see policy details below, under “Participation and Attendance”).

Grading

Class Participation	20%
Weekly Responses	30%
Final Project Topic	5%
Final Project Proposal	5%
Final Project Outline	5%
Final Project Presentation	10%
Final Project Paper	25%

University Grading Policies

Grading Scale (%) for UF Music History Classes:

A	94.00-100.00	B+	87.00-90.99	C+	77.00-80.99	D+	67.00-70.99	E	0-60.99
A-	91.00-93.99	B	84.00-86.99	C	74.00-76.99	D	64.00-66.99		
		B-	81.00-83.99	C-	71.00-73.99	D-	61.00-63.99		

Participation and Attendance

Participation in class discussions is a crucial component of the course's intellectual journey. I expect you to come to class having carefully completed the readings and any listening/film assignments, ready to discuss your analysis of key issues.

I will evaluate your participation on the following criteria: being on time to class, engaging in discussion (quality over quantity!), and staying focused and attentive during class. Being attentive during class includes limiting digital devices only to class-related work.

Students will also be responsible for leading selected class discussions on assigned material.

University Attendance Policies

Attendance is mandatory for all class meetings. If you must be late or absent for any reason, please contact me *prior to the beginning of that class meeting* or your absence will be unexcused. Unexcused absences will result in a zero for participation on the day of the absence, counting against your grade for the course at 2% per infraction.

Please keep in mind that you are responsible for all assigned work regardless of attendance or punctuality. Additionally, please look first to your classmates for review of material you missed. I am happy to answer any questions and discuss course material during my office hours.

Acceptable reasons for an excused absence are consistent with university policies available at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>. If you have a conflict with a School of Music ensemble performance or dress rehearsal, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can plan accordingly. If concerning patterns of absence or lateness arise, we will need to discuss.

Accommodations and Accessibility

The University of Florida is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment consistent with university policy and federal and state law. Please let me know if you experience any barriers to learning so I can work with you to ensure you have equal opportunity to participate fully

in this course. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) (352-392-8565; DRC@ufsa.ufl.edu). Once you are registered, please deliver your accommodation letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and how I can help you succeed in this course.

Additional Policies

The instructor can alter the syllabus throughout the semester and will notify students of any significant changes made to it.

If you have concerns about writing, please make use of the [UF Writing Studio](#) as an additional resource for this course. They are available in person and online to help students achieve their writing goals at any stage of their writing process. The Writing Studio tutors are kind, encouraging, and interested in helping you! The staff at the Writing Studio will assist with questions related to your writing but will not proofread or edit your work for you. The Writing Studio also has valuable resources in the form of citation guides, workshops, and videos on subjects including time management, note taking, citation/plagiarism, and study tips. Although limited drop-ins are welcome, the best way to guarantee an appointment is to schedule one [online](#).

Recommended writing/style manual for this course is The Chicago Manual of Style, which is available on campus or off-campus using a VPN at
https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at:

<https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

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—including the use of generative AI tools—and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Conduct Code.](#)

Cheating on assignments and/or using someone else’s ideas without providing proper citation (plagiarizing) are serious matters. A student cheating or plagiarizing is subject to an automatic E on the assignment and further disciplinary action after referral to the Dean of Students Office. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor. For more details about the academic policies and resources, see [University Policies](#).

Schedule and Readings (subject to change)

Week 1 (1/15): Introductions

Week 2 (1/22): Music in the Early Colonial World

Week 3 (1/29): Indigenous Musical Culture

Week 4 (2/5): Missions

Week 5 (2/12): Constructing and Reconstructing Missions in the US and Florida

Week 6 (2/19): Cities and Urban Music

Week 7 (2/26): Cathedrals

Topic for Final Project due by class

Week 8 (3/5): Convents

Week 9 (3/12): Villancicos

Proposal for Final Project due by class

Week 10 (3/19): NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Week 11 (3/26): Transatlantic Theatre

Week 12 (4/2): Performance Practice

Outline for Final Project due by class

Week 13 (4/9): Archives, Patrimony, and Repatriation

Week 14 (4/16): **Final Project conference-style presentations**

Final Paper due Wednesday, 4/29 11:59 pm