The “effects” of music listening and learning: cognitive transfer, well being and education

Instructor: Dr. Beatriz Ilari, University of Southern California, USA

Contact e-mail: beatrizilar@yahoo.ca

**Description**
This seminar will examine studies concerning the so-called "effects of music" on other domains, namely mathematics, phonological awareness and pre-reading skills, cognitive development (intelligence), social and prosocial behaviors, to name a few. Students will have the opportunity to read recent works in diverse areas such as music psychology, music education, neurosciences, social psychology, and music therapy, and discuss critically how these findings relate to music teaching and learning in the 21st century.

**Aims**
The aims of this seminar are a threefold:
- To discuss recent research concerning the non-musical outcomes of musical engagement;
- To familiarize students with research methods from an experimental paradigm and their analytical tools;
- To think critically about the implication of these studies for the field of music education

**Course requirements and evaluation**
This course will be based primarily on discussions concerning the specific topics outlined below. For this reason, it is vital that students keep up with the heavy reading load. All articles will be sent prior to the beginning of the course, to allow more time for students to read and grasp its contents. Based on the literature discussed in class, students will be asked to choose a topic of their choice and develop it into a full manuscript. They will develop an argument that will be backed up or contested by empirical studies. Their manuscript should be between 15-20 pages in length, following the APA guidelines (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

At least 10 empirical articles need to be cited in the paper, and up to 6 articles may be the same from the class readings. Along with the paper, students should enclose 10 forms for empirical research (see attached document).

**Course calendar**
Each class will have required and supplemental readings. Students are asked to complete all required readings (*) and to choose one or two supplemental readings each week, as marked below.

**Class 1 – Introduction to the course, tools of quantitative research; introductory theories on cognitive transfer; musical development and enculturation, critical periods**


Plus choose one from:


Class 2 – Some findings concerning music and the brain


Plus choose two from the list below:


In class, view and discuss excerpts from: ‘This is your brain on music’ (PBS, 2009); ‘The musical mind’ (NOVA-PBS, 2010)

Class 3 – Music listening and measures of intelligence (I): The Mozart effect, IQ,


Plus choose at least one from the list below:


Class 4 – Music learning and intelligence (II): longitudinal studies, academic achievement


Plus choose one from the list below:


Class 5 – Music and math

Select one:


Plus experiment with one of the following games and think about the relationship between music and math:


Class 6 – Music, phonological awareness and pre-reading skills


Plus choose one from list below:


Class 7 – Music, social and prosocial behaviors


Plus choose one from the list below:


Class 10 – The ‘other’ arts and cognitive transfer


Plus choose one from the list below:


Class 9 – Music and well being; music therapy

Choose one from the list below:


In class, discuss and view excerpts from ‘Awakenings’ (1989) & ‘The music never stopped’ (2011)

Class 10 – Epilogue: implications for music education in current times


Final discussion / excerpts from the film ‘Ecoute’ (IRCAM, 2003)

Additional readings and sources


EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FORM

FULL REFERENCE

VERY SHORT SUMMARY (200 words maximum)

AIMS

METHOD
  - SUBJECTS
  - DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE
  - MUSICAL STIMULI (WHEN APPLICABLE)

RESULTS

DISCUSSION

IMPLICATIONS

CRITIQUE