Week 1: Introduction
Listening experiment: Comparing performances

- Performance A
- Performance B
Instructor

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Intro

• Introduce yourself: name, year, program, musical experience
• Why are you taking this class?
• What do you hope to get out of it?
• Is there something particular you’re interested in exploring/learning about?
What is psychology of music?

• Why music? What are all the things we use music for?
• Interdisciplinary field: intersects with music theory, psychology, neuroscience, computer science.
• Research methodologies are primarily drawn from the cognitive sciences.
Typical questions in music psychology

• Some questions:
  – How is the brain organized to handle the many aspects of music such as rhythm, melody, harmony, dynamics, and timbre?
  – Does each musical quality such as rhythm and melody have a unique effect on us, or do they combine to produce “emergent” experiences?
  – What is the link between music and emotion as well as links between other abilities such as speech and mathematics?

• What do you think are the interesting questions in music psychology?
Course overview: Topics covered

- Evolution and origins (next week)
- Psychoacoustics and pitch
- Development
- Rhythm, beat, meter, timing, tempo
- Melody
- Harmony and tonality
- Emotion and expectation
- Music and the brain
- Performing
- Composing and improvising
Course overview: Grading breakdown

• Class attendance and participation: 10%
• Weekly reading questions: 30%
• Discussion leading 15%
• Research Project 45%
Research project

• Topic choice 5%
• Annotated bibliography 10%
• Literature review 15%
• Experiment design 15%
• Experiment participation 10%
• Oral presentation 5%
• Final written report 30%
• Peer evaluation 10%
Weekly readings

• Overview/survey of the topic area.
• Research papers that cover a specific aspect of the topic.
• Background reading on experimental methodology and statistics.
• Optional readings that provide more background or additional perspectives.
Weekly reading questions

• Two discussion questions for each article submitted by email by midnight on the Monday on the week it’s discussed in class.
• Assignments are scored out of 4 points.
• All of the assigned articles should be read critically—you should not accept the authors’ claims at face value.
  – Are their hypotheses warranted?
  – Do they do a good job of designing an experiment to test their hypotheses?
  – Are their interpretations of the data justified? Can some other theory also explain the results?
  – How might you improve the experiment?
  – What is the next experiment that should be done to further test the theory in question?
Discussion leading

• Students are required to lead one discussion session for an article during the course of the semester; you will be partnered with one or two students for the session.

• Leading a discussion is not only about summarizing the key issues, hypotheses, methodology, results, and interpretation. You will also be expected to stimulate discussion among your peers.

• You should be open to differing interpretations of the subject matter and encourage vigorous discussion on the topic.

• Be prepared to bring up insightful or provocative questions to spur debate.

• It is up to you how you organize the discussion leading with your partner(s).
General class structure

• 6:45 – Lecture
• 7:30 – Paper discussions
Course website

- http://www.nyu.edu/projects/farbood/2042