

Class blog participation

Due date: various, throughout the semester

Participating in an online discussion forum (a blog) is a large portion of this class (30% of your overall grade). It is an opportunity to apply the ideas we cover in class to an expanded range of music and topics, largely curated by you! You'll also be asked to reflect on your experience with the class blog in another formal writing assignment (due December 2).

There are two kinds of blog posts in which you are required to participate:

1. Online class discussions (8) – led by the professor. You'll be participating in these class discussions with not only students from your section of Mu 110, but also students from another section of Mu 110 and students from Purchase College.
2. Student blog posts (25) – led by you. Every student will create a blog post to be shared with other students in their section of Mu 110 (either C5A or F5A), and the only people commenting on these posts will be fellow colleagues in that section. There will always be two (2) student blog posts happening simultaneously in each section.

Both kinds of blog posts are an opportunity to engage in a lively conversation and learn from each other.

Creating a WordPress account. You'll receive two invitations to WordPress sites to the email address you provide in class: one for the class website (www.drjonesmusic.me) and one for the class blog for your section of Mu 110. Accept these invitations and create a WordPress account (if you don't have one already). Remember your email/username and password!

In the past, some students have found it helpful to download the WordPress app to their smartphones or tablets so they can participate in the blog without being at a computer.

Commenting on blog posts. Sign into WordPress. Online class discussions are located at www.drjonesmusic.me; student blog post discussions are found at the website for your section of Mu 110 (www.c5amusic.wordpress.com or www.f5amusic.wordpress.com).

Read the blog post and any comments that have been made on it so far. You can “reply” to other students’ comments by clicking “reply” next to their comment and also leave your own comment in the comment box at the bottom of the page marked “Leave a Reply.” If you choose, you can also use @ + username to specifically respond to another student, just as you would on other social media platforms.

Blog post participation requirements: You must comment on each blog post at least three times while the blog post is up—the goal is to keep the conversation going, to keep it lively, and to enjoy the (surprising) contributions your colleagues make to the discussion:

1. Respond to the blog post. Comment on it, respond to its questions, take issue with a claim that it makes, or add your thoughts to the conversation. If you're reminded of another article/book/blog you've read or another piece of music you've heard, you can also include a link to it, but the link by itself won't count as a comment without, well, any contextual *commentary* from you.
2. Ask a question. This may be a question in response to the blog post itself or a colleague's comment.
3. Respond directly to a classmate's comment or question.

It is possible to earn extra credit for your blog post participation grade (i.e., a grade higher than 100 for a given blog post) by contributing significantly to the conversation in terms of insightfulness, by adding additional links or information, or by being particularly engaging conversationalist. Quantity is not the same as quality.

Blog post discussion rubric (participation grade; partial credit) – minimum of three kinds of comments (33% each):

	Extra credit	Yes	No
<p>Comment You contribute to the online discussion by commenting on the blog post, responding to its questions, taking issue with a claim that it makes, or adding your thoughts to the conversation. A strong comment includes a link to another article/book/blog (with contextual commentary from you) that adds new depth to the conversation.</p>			
<p>Question You ask a question of the person who posted the blog or of another student</p>			
<p>Respond You respond directly to another student's comment or question and add to the conversation by commenting on their comment, responding to their question, taking issue with a claim they make, or adding your new ideas. A strong response includes a link to another article/book/blog (with contextual commentary from you) that adds new depth to the conversation.</p>			

Writing blog posts. Each student will have his or her own time slot for blog posts (assigned in class 9/2). There will be two student blog posts happening at a time in each section of Mu 110. Blog posts are written and revised with instructor feedback over the course of one week.

Timeline example (SBP #1):

September 4, 5pm	First draft due (in-class participation grade). You'll receive instructor feedback on ways to make your blog post even better before it is made available to the class.
September 10, 5pm	Final draft due
September 11, 12:01am	Blog post is open for comments from the class. Remember to comment on the other SBP#1 from your section that's also live at the same time. Watch the comments on your post and jump into the conversation as you wish.
September 14, 11:59pm	Blog post closes for comments from the class

WHAT'S IN A BLOG POST?

- An interesting title—this should be unique, enticing, and make people want to read more from the post.
- Provide some background information about the music that tells someone who's never heard it before what they should know and listen for. You cannot say something along the lines of, "No information needed, just listen"—you must provide some context for the music. You can do so by answering questions like these (not all of these are relevant for all pieces of music, so use your best judgment):
 - When is it from?
 - Where is it from?
 - Why was it made?
 - Who made this music and why?
 - Is there any special context for this piece that we should know about or special features that we should listen for?
 - How does this music reflect the culture or society from which it comes?
 - How does this music influence that culture or society?
 - What does this music mean? (Think of all the ways we've talked about meaning in class to answer this; there is never just one meaning!)

When providing information about your piece of music, include links to other websites or sources that can back up the ideas you're offering—these other websites should verify the information and allow your readers to delve deeper into the ideas you've included in your blog post.

- Embed a link to your chosen piece of music (YouTube or similar). This can be any piece of music that interests you!

- Pose a general question to get the conversation started for your peers. Think of this like a free write that we do in class, but this time *you* get to come up with the writing prompt for your colleagues.
- Photos or pictures are optional.
- Sign your name at the end of your post.
- Length: 400-1,500 words.

Blog post rubric – these are the criteria I’ll use to grade your blog post

Student: _____

	Strong	Good	O.K.	Weak
<p>Title The title is engaging, accurate, avoids clichés, and is not too long.</p>				
<p>Background Information The blog post is insightful rather than vague or superficial; the blog post creates a vibrant and informative context for the music at hand; whenever necessary, the blog post uses specific examples that are interesting, relevant, specific, sufficient, and directly connected to the main idea; any musical examples are accurately described.</p>				
<p>Conversation starting The blog post poses at least one provocative, open-ended question to generate student conversation.</p>				
<p>Structure The blog post is well-organized and easy-to-follow; the blog post contains an effective, engaging, and clear introduction; the blog post presents a logical flow of ideas; the blog post avoids straying or meandering; the blog post includes separate paragraphs that are organized by distinct main ideas.</p>				
<p>Use of technical vocabulary The blog post uses discipline-specific vocabulary appropriately and accurately.</p>				
<p>Written Skill The blog post is well-organized and generally contains appropriate grammar, punctuation, and spelling; the blog post demonstrates appropriate and effective word choice and style; the prose is easy to follow, precise, and clear; the essay avoids both vagueness and redundancy. A blog post does not need to be written in formal, academic English.</p>				
<p>Accuracy and sources The blog post contains generally accurate information, and wherever possible includes a link to another website or source that verifies or supports claims made in the blog post.</p>				
<p>Requirements The blog post includes a working link to the music at hand, fits within the assigned word count, and concludes with the author’s name. A strong blog post goes beyond all the above-listed requirements and is fun, personable, and engaging to read while still being informative.</p>				