

Analysis #1: Ballet

Online reference: <https://drjonesmusic.me/analysis-1/>

This assignment will be completed in steps:

October 2	In-class first draft; revise and type at home
October 9	Draft submitted for instructor feedback
October 16	Feedback provided by the instructor
October 21	Share one paragraph with your section online for peer feedback
October 23	Final draft due in class
October 22-28	Peer feedback (online)

Formatting, submission, and general guidelines

Use these for all typed assignments in Mu 101.

The basics:

- 12-point font (Times New Roman is a standard choice)
- Double spaced (if you’re working in MS Word, make sure you’ve set your text style to “No Spacing” rather than “Normal” before you change the double space so there aren’t any extra blank lines between paragraphs)
- 1” margins
- Indent (tab) the first line of each paragraph

Hard copy submissions should be stapled together in order:

- Rubric
- Process letter (describe how you responded to or incorporated previous instructor feedback in the preparation of your final draft)
- Final draft
- Previous draft (typed, with instructor feedback)
- First draft (in-class)

If you need to email me a file because you will miss class, name it like this: LastName, FirstInitial – Assignment (Example: Jones, A – Course Intro Essay first draft)

- The only file formats I will accept are .doc, .docx, or .pdf. Attach your file directly to your email; I will not accept a link to a cloud service (e.g, OneDrive, Google Drive, iCloud).

This isn’t a research-based course, so **do not** go digging for outside sources to complete this assignments. You have all the materials you need to successfully analyze these pieces already: your ears, your eyes, and your own past experiences or knowledge—wherever you are right now is poised for growth if and only if you actively work to improve your critical thinking.

Grading and late assignments

The final draft of this assignment will be graded on a scale of Credit/No Credit. Earlier drafts will only receive feedback; they will not be graded.

If you do not submit a final draft, it will be marked “No Credit” and cannot be made up and will not be accepted late. If you know that you will be absent, make arrangements to submit your work *before* it is due—send it via email, send it to class with a friend, or drop it off in my mailbox.

If you submit your final draft on time and is marked “No Credit,” you can resubmit it as many times as you like until it receives “Credit.” Each new version must include the previous version and a “Process Letter” in which you explain what you’ve done differently in this revised version and what you’ve learned in the process.

A final draft submitted without a process letter will be marked “No Credit” until a process letter is also submitted.

The prompt

Musical analysis, like all analysis, is made up of two things:

$$\text{Analysis} = \text{Description} + \text{“So what”}$$

For this essay, you’re going to explore three examples of dance music like a musicologist would: by analyzing what you see and hear.

In class, we will watch three videos of ballets (you will have the opportunity to watch these again outside of class, if you wish). Each of them is by a different composer, living in a different country, at a different time. One thing they have in common is that they each depict idealized versions of the past—they’re each an escape from the point in time the composer and their audiences lived into an imagined version of the past:

- Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, *The Sleeping Beauty*, Act III Pas de deux (1890)
- Igor Stravinsky, *Rite of Spring*, opening (1913)
- Aaron Copland, *Appalachian Spring*, opening (1944)

Your essay must do these three things, but it may do so in any order or format you like:

- Describe and compare at least 2 distinct musical details you hear across these three pieces
- Describe and compare at least 2 distinct visual details you see across these three pieces
- “So what”: Explore whatever ideas these different pieces of music set in motion for you—anything that draws upon your experience of listening to and watching these performances is fair game.

Your essay also needs:

- A title—something that persuades another person to read what you’ve written
- An introduction that sets up your discussion of these pieces: What’s the context for your thoughts about these pieces? Or, what idea/issue got you thinking in the way you do for this essay?
- A conclusion that broadens the scope of your essay beyond just these three ballets. Why do the ideas your essay has touched upon *matter*?

Writing suggestions

1. Treat these performance videos like soundscape journal activities: Write down everything you hear. Try to make sense of the sounds you hear by organizing them in the various ways you know how: high/low, loud/quiet, energetic/calm, your background knowledge, etc.
2. Do the same for the visual elements you see.
3. Look for gestures that jumped out at you from both the sonic and the visual portions of these performances. By using details that were compelling in both the music and the dance, you'll make your writing more coherent and thereby stronger.
4. Decide which details you've jotted down are interesting enough to make it into your essay.
5. Create an essay prompt for yourself. Use the class-generated questions handout as a guide—there are an infinite number of questions you can ask about a piece of music, your listening experience, and what it all means. The best questions are often the hardest ones.
6. Write, write, write! Then, edit, edit, edit! Figure out what you really mean and what you really want to say. Make sure those things are clear. Cut out everything else (or use them in another piece of writing).
7. Use the feedback you receive on your first draft to revise and prepare your final draft. Choose a paragraph to share with the class (online).

Analysis 1 – Rubric (staple to the front of your draft)

Student: _____ Section: _____

Title	Credit	No Credit
A strong/good title is engaging, accurate, avoids clichés, and is not too long.		
Introduction	Credit	No Credit
A strong/good introduction frames the essay's topic in a manner that is insightful, clear, and engaging.		
Musical features comparison	Description	Credit
A strong/good essay vividly and accurately describes musical features from all three pieces. A strong/good essay uses discipline-specific vocabulary appropriately and accurately.		
Visual features comparison	Credit	No Credit
A strong/good visual detail vividly and obviously connects to a musical detail that has been described.		
Critical thinking	“So what”	Credit
A strong/good essay is insightful rather than vague or superficial; a strong/good essay goes beyond the superficial by thoughtfully incorporating comparison, contrast, and/or synthesis; a strong/good essay addresses the implication of the ideas under consideration.		
Support	Credit	No Credit
A strong/good “so what” argument uses specific examples to support its ideas that are interesting, relevant, specific, sufficient, and directly connected to the main idea; strong/good examples support your argument explicitly; any musical examples are accurately described.		
Conclusion	Credit	No Credit
A strong/good conclusion broadens the scope of the essay by relating its ideas to other topics, new questions, or contexts; a strong/good/ok conclusion is not a repetition of the introduction.		
Structure	Credit	No Credit
A strong/good essay includes an introduction and a conclusion; a strong/good essay presents a logical flow of ideas and avoids straying or meandering; a strong/good paragraph remains focused on a single main idea, and all sentences within a paragraph support its main idea.		
Written skill	Credit	No Credit
A strong/good essay is well-organized and generally contains correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling; a strong/good essay demonstrates appropriate and effective word choice and style; in a strong/good essay, the prose is easy to follow, precise, and clear; a strong/good essay avoids both vagueness and redundancy; a good/strong essay avoids inaccuracies; a strong/good essay analyzes rather than summarizes.		
Revision and process letter (final draft only)	Credit	No Credit
A strong/good essay effectively incorporates suggestions for revision and editing. A strong/good final draft demonstrates improvement compared with the first draft. A strong/good process letter clearly states the author's editing intentions, which are apparent in the essay itself.		

Overall grade: _____