

**Music 407 -- Music Cultures of the World:
Polynesia, Africa, North America, British Isles, Asia
Syllabus for Study Abroad Program in London
Fall 2025 or Spring 2026 -- Prof. R. Anderson Sutton**

[NOTE This course will be proposed for Writing Intensive Focus Designation]

Course description

This course introduces a wide range of musical cultures, representing the remarkable diversity of musical practice and creativity as a dynamic form of human expression around the globe. The course develops written communication, with significant attention to writing skills. Beginning with an introduction to the field of ethnomusicology, the course moves on to cover music of Hawai‘i/Polynesia, Africa and African-America, the British Isles, and Asia. Active listening to representative examples of different genres, from those recognized as “traditional” or “ancient” to “modern” or “contemporary” is an important component of the course, and is intertwined with learning about the social and cultural milieu in which these various musical forms have developed and the types of meanings music has for its performers and its audiences. Students will gain an understanding of diverse contexts of musical performance and the affective power of music in human society. Taking this course while on the Study Abroad program in London will enable students to experience music directly in a wide variety of performance environments. London is truly a cultural “window on the world,” and we will take advantage of the opportunities it offers us, while also learning about the diversity of music that forms the rich tapestry of living musical traditions in Hawai‘i. The knowledge you acquire about diverse music cultures, especially those of Hawai‘i, will give you material to draw on as you interact with students and others you will meet in London.

Outline of Course Coverage

As a core UH Mānoa course on Music Cultures, we start by establishing a basis in the variety of musical practices known as “Hawaiian music.” In performance, these practices often involve dance (hula), and our coverage of the music will incorporate learning about hula, including the styles of ancient Hawai‘i (now usually referred to as *kahiko*) and later styles (now usually referred to as *‘auana*). As we learn about the cultural significance of Hawaiian music and dance, its suppression and near demise over the course of the 19th century, and the various outside influences that have been shaping Hawaiian music over the last 200 years, we will also learn to distinguish and describe musical stylistic features (in melody, rhythm, instrumental sound/timbre, vocal production, and lyrics). And beyond musical sound, we will consider the relation of music and dance to religious belief, to cultural identity, and to gender.

What we learn in our coverage of Hawai‘i will serve as a basis for broadening our inquiry, first to other Polynesian cultures (Māori and Tahitian), and then shifting to selected musical forms of Sub-Saharan Africa. Our coverage includes a representative genre of drumming/percussion ensemble music of West Africa, and continues with several vocal and instrumental examples from different cultural regions across the continent. In the process, we will expand our listening skills and vocabulary for describing the sounds of these genres, and encounter different functions of music in daily life and through important points in the life cycle.

Shifting to the music of African-America, we begin with a brief overview of musical elements that African-American music shares with some types of music in Africa, and proceed to the distinctive sounds of African-American sacred music (hymns, spirituals), work songs, and blues (their musical features, function in society). We will touch on some of the genres of music that grew from the blues: jazz, soul, funk, rap/hip-hop.

In discussing African-American music and its importance beyond the African-American communities that created it, we will have a natural bridge to England, where popular music groups (most famously, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones) drew heavily on African-American music as formative to their music. We will then widen our inquiry to cover select examples of distinctly British folk music, including English ballads and Scottish bagpipe music.

From our locus in the course at this point, we pivot to some of the Asian music that is part of the musical world of London, starting with the classical music of India, which we will hear live. We will learn how an informed audience listens for melodic patterns (*raga*) and rhythm intricacies within a rhythmic cycle (*tala*) of this great tradition. Moving eastward, we will cover one of the major musical traditions of Southeast Asia (gamelan music of Indonesia). And from here, we move northward and back to music that makes up part of the complex cultural tapestry of Hawai'i: music of the Philippines, China, Korea, and Japan/Okinawa, all of which have at least some representational in London and, if scheduling permits, we may be able hear live.

Course Objectives:

- By the end of the semester, students will have acquired the ability to listen analytically to music and to describe it with vocabulary they have learned through the semester. This will require students to put aside the inclination to judge music primarily in relation to their own personal tastes as enjoyable, or boring, or even unpleasant.
- They will have learned how to think and write analytically and reflectively about the elements of a live performance, going beyond the sound to consider the physical nature of the performance space, and social and behavioral aspects of performers and audiences.
- They will have produced written two short papers (reflective essay and a report about a musical encounter they have experienced) and a draft and revised final version of a final paper, based on a research project combining written sources and direct observation, articulating what they have learned about cultural difference.
- They will have participated in frequent discussions with other members of the class about various stylistic and functional aspects of the musical genres covered in the class, including the cultural meanings ascribed to these genres.
- They will have acquired a sense of the remarkable diversity of the world's musical traditions in their homelands around the world, and in the globalized city of London, an understanding of the various roles music plays in people's daily lives, in their

religious practices, and in their sense of identity—all of this enhancing the students' acceptance and respect for cultural diversity and individual difference.

Study Abroad Program Objectives:

These objectives correspond closely with the Program Learning Objectives specified for Study Abroad (SAC PLOs): that students participating in Study Abroad should gain 1) a deeper knowledge and understanding of other cultures and their environments; 2) different perspectives in regard to other nations; 3) increased capacity to analyze issues with appreciation for disparate viewpoints; and 4) increased respect and tolerance for differences.

- The readings, discussions, reflective writing, and attendance at events outside the classroom will deepen their knowledge and understanding of other cultures (SAC PLO #1).
- The topics covered in class and assignments, together with living in London, will enable students to gain awareness of different perspectives in regard to other nations—the UK/England, along with some of the other nations whose musical cultures we will cover, including those represented in the population of greater London as well as Hawai'i (SAC PLO #2).
- Assigned work, especially the written reports and research paper, will require students to expand their analytical capacity as the semester progresses to be adept at critically assessing cultural issues from different points of view (SAC PLO #3).
- Close study of the wide range of musical styles covered in this course, enhanced by adjusting to life in a new country, will almost surely result in increased respect and tolerance of difference (SAC PLO #4).

Study Abroad Course Student Learning Objectives:

The structure of the course--the assigned readings, listening to representative musical examples, and the writing projects with instructor feedback and revision, combined with experiencing music directly at musical events in the city of London, map well onto the following Study Abroad Course Student Learning Objectives.

- The discussions of readings and listening assignments, the experiences at events in London, and the focus for each of the writing assignments will address SAC SLO #1: *that students will become more aware of their own cultural values and biases—thinking critically and articulating in writing about their musical tastes and cultural assumptions.*
- Many of the activities this course involves will contribute directly to SAC SLO #2: *that students demonstrate knowledge of diversity with a focus on the population or topic of interest in the specific Study Abroad program.* The performance report, the in-class exams and coverage of British music (English, Scottish, Irish) and the several African and Asian cultures whose musical traditions are active in London will focus on the topic (music and its diversity). Over half the coverage is devoted to music of British origin or music from other parts of the world that has taken root in London.

- The discussions in class on cultural and aesthetic diversity, and the social interactions that will be a part of the event experience reported in the written work address SAC SLO #3: *that students learn to communicate appropriately and effectively with diverse individuals and groups*. Before each event we attend as a group, the assigned readings and the discussion in class will address appropriate conduct and effective communication with the individuals and groups with whom we will meet.
- Discussions of the assigned readings and listening examples in class, along with focus on analytical writing in the short reports and the research paper will contribute substantially to students achieving SAC SLO #4: *to be able to demonstrate an increased capacity to analyze issues with appreciation for disparate viewpoints*. Instructor feedback on written projects and discussion in class will contribute to this capacity.

Preparation and Prerequisites for this course

No previous formal training or experience in music performance is required, nor is the ability to read musical notation. All of us have some “musical background,” whether as casual listeners or dedicated performers. That background, together with an interest in learning about new varieties of music and experiencing music in new contexts, qualifies you for this course!

Approach and Course Expectations

This course combines active interchange in class and interaction and experiential learning in the city where we will be living. And it emphasizes writing skills, including revision in response to instructor and peer-group critique. In order to have meaningful interchange in class, students are expected to complete assignments before class and to come to class regularly, prepared to discuss the assigned readings and listening. Attendance and active participation in class are mandatory. More than 2 unexcused absences will result in a reduction in points toward the grade for the course. During lectures, students are expected to take notes and to ask questions, and to participate in any workshop activities, whether held in the classroom or on a class visit elsewhere. Submitting written assignments on time is essential; points will be deducted for late assignments, 10% per day of lateness. *NOTE:* There will likely be a few adjustments to the schedule of outside activities (musical events, and workshops) laid out in this syllabus, since it will need to adapt to the schedules will not be publicized until closer to the beginning of our semester in London, but for some I already have commitments from my network of contacts in London.

Course Requirements and Grading/Assessment

The course grade is based on written assignments (two short papers and a research project), attendance and participation in class discussions, and on two exams (a mid-term and a final):

1. The first of two short papers (**3 pages**) is a reflective essay on musical tastes. In your experience, why do people listen to music? Why do you listen to music, and what kinds do you listen to? You will receive editorial feedback from the instructor regarding matters of clarity and writing style will be expected to submit a revision a week after receiving the feedback. In this first report you should consider how your own cultural values and biases have developed with regard to your musical tastes, and anticipate what

barriers you may face as you experience and to try to understand new kinds of music. (SAC SLO #1)

2. A brief description of the research topic you have chosen for your main research project (tentative title, a basic statement of your purpose/hypothesis and one or two paragraphs outlining what you intend to do and how). Your topic should relate to one or more of the types of music covered in the class, or that you experience live in London. (SAC SLO #2)
3. The second of the two short papers will be a report (**3 pages**) on a musical event you have attended—either on your own or with the class. By this point, you will be expected to draw on the vocabulary you have developed from readings and discussions to describe the musical sound, the physical and social setting, and performer and audience behavior. Comment on how this event compares/contrasts with any recent musical event you experienced before coming to London. (SAC SLO #1, #2, and #4)
4. The final written assignment is a paper based on your independent research project. It should be **10 pages in length**, excluding bibliography and any supplementary audio-visual material. The paper should demonstrate the knowledge you have gained about the particular genre or type of music you have chosen to investigate, the methodology you used, and what you learned culturally from your interactions with musicians, audiences, and/or scholars you have consulted. As mentioned under item 2 above, the paper should relate to one or more types of music covered in the class, or that you experience first-hand in London. This can be primarily a fieldwork project or primarily a library research project. If primarily library research, you should use at least one local library (in London). Preliminary drafts should be turned in for comments at least nine days before the final due date, to enable instructor comments and suggested edits to be incorporated in making a polished final written paper. (All four SAC SLOs, esp. #2 and #4)
5. In-class discussions of readings and listening will be opportunities for each student to assess and rethink their understanding of the theoretical issues in the readings, and to sharpen their approach to their individual field research. Sharing thoughts and opinions orally in the classroom will improve the students' ability in situations where contrasting opinions will be aired, to engage and communicate effectively with others. (SAC SLOs #2 and #3)
6. In addition to oral interchanges in class (described above in item 5), each student will prepare and deliver a short oral presentation (ca. 6-7 minutes), aimed at communicating to the class the basic findings of the research project, mentioning briefly your methodology, and what was most challenging in the research and the writing process. (SAC SLOs #2, and #3)
7. Two written exams (mid-term and final) will cover the assignments (reading and listening) and material presented and discussed in class. (SAC SLOs #2 and #4)

Grading

Reflective essay on musical taste	10% (SLO #1)
Initial research project proposal	5% (SLO #2, basic level)
Second short report	10% (SLOs #1, #2, and #4)
Class attendance (including class events)	10% (SLOs #3 and #4)
In-class discussion	10% (SLOs #2, #3 and #4)
Mid-term exam	10% (SLO #2 and #4)
Oral presentation on research (6-7 minutes)	5% (SLOs #2 and #3)
Final written version of research project	30% (all SLOs, esp. #2 and #4)
Final exam	10% (SLOs #2 and #4)
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	100%

Grading Scale:

97%-100% = A+	83%-86% = B	70%-73% = C-
93%-96% = A	80%-82% = B-	67%-69% = D+
90%-92% = A-	77%-79% = C+	60%-66% = D
87%-89% = B+	73%-76% = C	Below 60% = F

Week-by-Week Schedule of Assignments and Activities

(Listening assignments: List to be distributed to students, with access via Laulima)

Week 1:

Introduction, course expectations, approach, and overview of musical activity in London

Basic listening skills and terminology for learning about music culturally.

Read: Shelemay, Kay. 2015. "What is a Soundscape?" *Soundscapes: Exploring Music in a Changing World*, 3rd ed., pp. 6-23.

■ Visit to Horniman Museum of Musical Instruments.

Week 2:

Music of Hawai'i: Chant and hula; pre-contact through early 20th century (musical change)

Musical sound and structure, instruments, roles of music in Hawaiian society

Read: Kahananui, Dorothy. 1962. *Music of Ancient Hawaii, A Brief Survey*, pp. 4-24.

Tatar, Elizabeth. 1987. *Strains of Change: The Impact of Tourism on Hawaiian Music*, pp. 1-15.

DUE: Reflective Essay, 3 pages (first of two short papers)

Week 3:

Music of Hawai'i: 1970s Renaissance into the 21st century (music and cultural/ethnic identity);

Contrasting Polynesian music cultures: Māori and Tahiti.

Read: Trask, Haunani-Kay. 1999. *From a Native Daughter*, "Lovely Hula Hands," pp. 136-150.

Donaghy, Joseph Keola. 2024. *Mele on the Mauna*, pp. 1-11.

(Recommended: Moulin, Jane. 1996. "What's Mine is Yours? Cultural Borrowing in a Pacific Context." *The Contemporary Pacific* 8(1): 127-153.)

DUE: Brief proposal for final project

Week 4:

Music of Sub-Saharan Africa: Music in daily life; music and the life cycle

Read: Turino, T. 2012 "Sub-Saharan Africa." *Excursions in World Music*, 6th ed., pp. 190-216.

■ Evening Attendance at an African Music Event (TBD)

Week 5:

Music of African-America: worship, work, blues and popular genres

Read: Titon, Jeff. 2016. "North America/Black America." *Worlds of Music, Shorter Version*, 4th ed., pp. 111-146.

In-class review for the first exam.

Week 6:

First exam (covering weeks 1-5)

(No new reading; review for first exam)

Music of the British Isles: Overview

- Evening Visit to a music event at a pub or club

Week 7:

Music of the British Isles: Folk music (English, Scottish, and Irish)

Read: MacKinnon Niall. 1993. *The British Folk Scene*, "The Session," pp. 99-107.

McKerrell, Simon. 2016. "Piping." In *Focus: Scottish Traditional Music*, pp. 31-39.

Alves, Williams. 2013. "Traditional Music of Ireland." In *Music of the Peoples of the World*, 3rd ed., pp. 138-145.

Week 8:

Music of India

Read: Alves, William. 2013. "India." In *Music of the Peoples of the World*, 3rd ed., pp. 244-281.

DUE: Report on a Musical Event, 3 pages (second of two short papers)

Week 9:

Music of Southeast Asia: Indonesia and the Philippines

Read: Sutton, R. Anderson. 2016. "Asia/Indonesia." *Worlds of Music, Shorter Version*, 4th ed. pp. 209-242.

- Late Afternoon visit to Javanese gamelan group rehearsal, Indonesian Embassy

Week 10:

Music of East Asia (I): China and Korea

Read: Wong, Isabel. 2012. "The Music of China." *Excursions in World Music*, 6th ed. pp. 88-131.

DUE (9 days before Final due date: First Draft of final project paper for comments)

Week 11:

Music of East Asia (II): Japan and Okinawa

Read: Fujie, Linda. 2005. "East Asia/Japan." *Worlds of Music, Shorter Version*, 2nd ed. pp. 159-169, 174-177, and 180-183.

In-class review for second exam

DUE: Brief oral reports on final project, 6-7 minutes.

Week 12:

Summary and final discussion

Second exam

DUE (2 Days after Second exam): Final Version of final written project

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Alves, Williams. 2013. *Music of the Peoples of the World*, 3rd ed. New York: Schirmer/Cengage Learning, “Traditional Music of Ireland,” pp. 138-145; and “India,” pp. 244-281.

Donaghy, Joseph Keola. 2024. *Mele on the Mauna: Perpetuating Geneologies of Hawaiian Musical Activism on Maunakea*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press.

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Trask, Haunani-Kay. 1999. *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press.

Turino, Thomas. 2012. “Sub-Saharan Africa.” In Nettl, Bruno, ed. *Excursions in World Music*, 6th ed. New York: Routledge, pp. 190-216.

Winter, Trish, and Simon Keegan-Phipps. 2013. *Performing Englishness: Identity and Politics in a Contemporary Folk Resurgence*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Wong, Isabel. 2012. “The Music of China.” In Nettl, Bruno, ed. *Excursions in World Music*, 6th ed. New York: Routledge, pp. 88-131.

Week 9:

Music from Indonesia in London

Read: Mendonca 2002: 151-163; 240-256.

(Recommended: Sutton 2016: 209-242.)

- Evening or Late Afternoon: Javanese Gamelan Group Siswa Sukra (Indonesian Embassy)

DUE: Second short paper (event report)

Week 10:

Music from East Asia (China, Korea, Japan) in London

Read: Choose *one* chapter on Music of East Asia from Rommen & Nettle, eds. 2021. *Excursions in World Music*, 8th ed.: “China and Taiwan,” by Lei Ouyang; “Korea,” by Joshua Pilzer; or “Japan,” by Marié Abe.

Introductory workshop on Chinese instrumental music (in class, or at SOAS, Univ. of London)

- Evening: Korean music performance (depending on schedule, popular or traditional)

Week 11:

Oral Presentations of individual projects, each followed by Q&A.

Week 12:

Wrap up Oral Presentations. Summary, review discussion.

Due: Final written version of field research project

Listenings: (List to be distributed to students, with access via Laulima/or new UH LMS)

Bibliography:

Clausen, Bernd, Ursula Hemetek, Eva Saether, and European Music Council, eds. 2009. *Music in Motion: Diversity and Dialogue in Europe*. Study in the frame of the “ExTra! Exchange Traditions” Project. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.

DeKoningh, Michael, et al. 2003. *Tighten Up! The History of Reggae in the UK*. London: Sanctuary.

Farrell, Gerry, with Jayeeta Bowmick & Graham Welch. 2005. “South Asian Music in Britain.” In *Diasporas and Interculturalism in Asian Performing Arts*, Um Hae-kyung, ed., pp. 104-128.

Frith, Simon. 2003. “Music and Everyday Life.” In *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton. New York: Routledge, pp. 92-101.

Grout, Donald and Claude Palisca. 2001. *A History of Western Music*, 6th ed. New York: Norton, pp. 320-323, 407-417, 473-476, 689-692.

Heaney, Michael. 2023. *The Ancient Morris Dance*. Oxford: Archaeopress. “Introduction,” pp. ix-xi; “Part V: Revival, 1899-present,” pp. 353-421.