FA 483 Special Topics: Film Scores: Meaning and Music in Cinema

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Department of Western Languages an Literatures

TTT 678

THIS IS A COURSE DESIGNED FOR UPPER-LEVEL STUDENTS. IT REQUIRES HARD-WORK, A GOOD DEAL OF INTERPRETATIVE CAPACITY, A REAL CURIOSITY TOWARDS THE GREAT MASTERS OF CINEMA AND FILM MUSIC. IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A LIGHT COURSE, DON’T TAKE THIS COURSE. NO BOX-OFFICE, COMMERCIAL FILMS.

NOT SUITABLE FOR FIRST THREE SEMESTER STUDENTS.

Course Description

This is a course in film music and cinematic meaning, an attempt to understand creation of meaning through music on the silver screen. Because of its very nature, the course involves two different genres of art: music and cinema. This makes it heavier in course work, as the number of items to be covered multiply by two. You will have screening homeworks on one side where you will screen whole films in their entirety or evaluate excerpts, and you will have pure listening homeworks on the other side, on albums and tracks. You will be requested to write short and/or long response papers on assignments.

Although, the course is entitled “Film Scores”, it does not discriminate other meaning formative elements of cinema, and aims at a holistic understanding of the films it tackles. Therefore, you shouldn’t expect a course in pure music. This is a course in both cinema and music. The films I dwell are not commercially oriented, box office films. I’m interested in works of art that search for a profound meaning in an existential journey. My primary film makers will be Hitchcock, Bergman, Fellini, Antonioni and Kubrick. However I’ll exemplify my arguments from excerpts of other films/composers.

In this course, I am aiming to give a general picture of the arena of film music, not in the sense of industry relations, sector outlook, or technical aspects, which I don’t find interesting at all, but in terms of artistic style, dramatic significance and narrative. I will try to illuminate the meaning-formative aspect of music on silver screen. Therefore, it is going to be of more dramatic, semiological, interpretative in nature. As for composers, the three big superstars of film music, namely, Nino Rota, Ennio Morricone and Bernard Herrmann, will receive special attention. But, I am going to consider other composers as well.

Instructions and Requirements

Attendance
FULL ATTENDANCE to the course is strongly advised, simply because the instructor doesn’t go with a book and the comments and lectures cannot be found in books. Hence being absent in a lecture, would result in diminished success. For the sessions that you don’t come, you cannot recover in anyway.

BUT

Although full attendance is advised, it is NOT A GUARANTEE FOR PASSING THE COURSE. It is perfectly possible that you have attended all classes and failed in the end, not being able to live up to expectations.

Conflict hours

It is not a good idea to take this course with conflicting hours, because unattended hours will directly reduce your performance and understanding.

Writing homeworks

There will be writing homeworks that will have to be delivered on time, that is, JUST IN THE FIRST CLASS HOUR IN PRINTED FORM. I naturally expect UNIVERSITY LEVEL written and organisational skills in the papers.

Listening/Screening Homeworks

There will be weekly listening/watching lists, entire films, excerpts or music tracks. There might be around 15 films to be watched in their entirety. This is just the film side. There will also be the music assignments. So, to repeat, this is a course with quite a bit of homework.

Readings

There will be readings over historical, theoretical, artistic topics, spreading over a wide range, to be left at Nazar Photocopy Center in South Campus, and rigorous listening lists to be assigned on the Naxos database of BU Library, weekly. (See: Naxos Music Library Instructions below). You are expected to do all of them punctually. You will be fully responsible of them in the exams.

Evaluation

40 %  Midterm
50 %  Final

Remaining % 10 percent will be constituted either by papers, or term paper, to be decided in due course.

Naxos Music Library Instructions

What is Naxos Music Library?

Naxos Music Library is a huge music archive on the web, belonging to the classical music label Naxos, formed to serve music lovers, academicians, students from all around the world via web access, provided as a subscription based service on fee. There are about 1 million tracks on Naxos that can
be listened through streaming. It contains not only Naxos labeled classical music albums but also labels such as EMI etc. Boğaziçi University has a membership to Naxos Music Library.

**How to access to and use Naxos Music Library via Boğaziçi University library?**

1. Go to library page:
   
   [http://www.library.boun.edu.tr](http://www.library.boun.edu.tr)

2. Do the proxy settings from the link:
   

3. Then, go to
   
   Library>>Elektronik Servisler>>Referans Kaynakları
   
   [http://www.library.boun.edu.tr/referans_kaynaklar.php](http://www.library.boun.edu.tr/referans_kaynaklar.php)

4. In the body, find Naxos Music Library link somewhere in the middle. Clicking it will take you to a page where you have to enter your Library Number (that appears on your university identity card), Name and Password.


   On the top of Naxos Music Homepage, you will see a search box located. Search either by work title, composer, keyword, label or catalogue number.

6. When leaving Naxos, **please log out.**

7. As written above, when doing a homework over Naxos, don’t leave it to the last day, as there might be rush on the server, and you may have a difficult entry.