NEJS 105a
Music in the Bible and Ancient Near East
Brandeis University
Fall 2014
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PURPOSE:
The course studies the interesting, though spottty, evidence about musical practice and performance in the ancient Near East, including the Hebrew Bible. While we cannot listen to or reconstruct what music sounded like there and at that time, we can study three main types of data—texts, artistic depictions, and artifacts—to understand what instruments were used, what some of them may have sounded like, the interaction of voice, instruments, and dance, how music was contextualized (e.g., in temple ritual versus secular and even bawdy performances), how knowledge of and abilities in music were esteemed culturally, and even aspects of musical theory in Mesopotamia. Through this study, students will secondarily become more familiar with the cultural history of the ancient Near East and develop skills of critical analysis that can be transferred to other areas of study and professional work.

Background in music or in ancient Near Eastern studies is not required.

BOOK TO BUY FOR THE COURSE:

Other readings outlined below will be on Latte

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS:
Each unit will be accompanied by three or four article or chapter length readings. Because this version of the course is completely revised (with PP presentations and new questions and readings) the pace of topics is unpredictable.

I. Introduction
• Outline of the Course
• The Ancient Near East: Geography, Historical Overview, Languages, Sources
• The Critical Study of Texts
• Brief Review of the Organology of the Ancient Near East
Readings:
-Charpin, Mesopotamian History
-Murnane, Egyptian History
-One (grads: two) of the following: MacQueen, Hittite History; McMahon, History of Hittites;
  Yon, Ugarit; Brettler, Introduction to Hebrew Bible; Lemche, History Syria Palestine
-One (grads: two) of the following: Braun, Musical Instruments; Kilmer, Music and Dance;
  Hickman, Music Archaeology
II. Music, Dance, Ritual, and the Levites in 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13–15
• Music and Dance David’s Transfer of the Ark to Jerusalem, in Ritual Studies Perspective
• David’s Institution of Levitic Musicianship in the Cult, in Inner-Biblical Exegetical Perspective
Readings:
- 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13–15
- Wright, Music and Dance in 2 Samuel 6
- Kleinig, Institution of the Lord’s Song
- One of the following: Wright, Ritual Infelicity; Hutton, David and Rites of Passage
- Start reading Braun, Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine, 1–46 (buy this book)

III. Mesopotamian Drums
• The Babylonian Ritual for Re-Heading a Kettledrum (the ilissu)
• Other Mesopotamian Drums and Problems of Identification
Readings:
- Mesopotamian ilissu Ritual (Linssen edition)
- Sheata, Sounds from the Divine
- Gabbay, Balag Instrument
- Mirelman, Ala-Instrument

IV. The Biblical Psalms
• The Genres of Psalms
• Psalms as Poetry and Song
• Psalm Superscriptions
• Internal Evidence of Musical Performance and Cultic Contextualization
• The King as Musician: David and Shulgi
Readings:
- Psalms 9, 33, 57, 81, 98, 137, 108, 149, 150
- Undergrads: Greenstein, Psalms
- Grads: Gerstenberger, Psalms
- Gottwald, Poetry
- Shulgi Text
- 1 Samuel 16, 18, 19 (note esp. 16:14–16, 23; 18:10; 19:9)
- Klein, Shulgi of Ur

V. Music and Poetry in Ugaritic Texts
• The Poetry of Ugaritic Myths and Legends
• Were the Myths and Legends Sung?
• Internal Musical Motifs
Readings:
- Baal Cycle of Myths
- Aqhat Legend
- Ritual for the Month Iba’latu
- Intercessory Prayer
- Coogan, Canaanite Literature of Ugarit
- Caubet: Musical Practices and Instruments
VI. Tuning the Mesopotamian Lyre
• The Four Main Texts for Understanding how the Lyre is Tuned
• The Theory of Tuning and Scales (“Modes”)
Readings:
- Bayer, Mesopotamian Theory of Music
- Kilmer, Mesopotamian Music Theory Since 1977
- One (grads: two) of the following: Kilmer and Collon, Leier; Crocker, No Polyphony

VII. The Akkadian-Hurrian Musical “Notation” Text from Ugarit
• Study of the Evidence from the Text
• Various Competing Musical Reconstructions
Readings:
- Krispijn, Article on Hurrian Hymn
- Two of the following: Duchesne-Guillemin, Hurrian Musical Score; Kilmer, Cult Song; West, Babylonian Musical Notation

VIII. Music in Ancient Egypt
• A Study of Instruments, Singing, and Dance in the Various Periods
• Music in Egyptian Texts and Songs
Readings:
- Anderson, Music and Dance in Pharaonic Egypt
- Manniche, Selections
- Foster, Egyptian Hymns and Songs
- One of the following: Duschesne-Guillemin, Music in Mesopotamia and Egypt; Fischer, Organology in Egypt and Rennaisance

IX. More Music in Mesopotamia
• Archaeological Remains of Instruments (e.g., Ur Cemetery)
• Representations of Music in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs
Readings:
- Kilmer, Musical Instruments from Ur and Ancient Mesopotamian Music
- MacGregor, Foreign Musicians in Neo-Assyrian Royal Courts
- Horne, Ur Royal Tombs
- One of the following: Collon, Dance in Mesopotamia; Gabbay, Dance in Texts from Mesopotamia
- One of the following: Kilmer and Collon, Musik; Zettler, Banqueting and Music; Turnbull, Origin of Long-Necked Lute

X. Music among the Hittites
• Customs in Festivals
• Representations on Relief Vases
• Songs and Myths
• Neo-Hittite Evidence
Reading:
- ANTAHŠUM Festival
- Hoffner, Hurrian Songs/Myths
- Martino, Dance and Procession in Hittite Anatolia
- Brison, Nudity and Music in Anatolian Mythological Seduction Scenes
- Turnbull, Anatolia (Music)
- One of the following: Beckman, Religion of the Hittites; Wright, Hittite Religion

XI. Music and Sound in the Priestly (Ritual) Prescriptions of the Pentateuch
• The Priestly Trumpets and the Biblical Shofar
• Was the Priestly Cult Really Performed in Silence?
Readings:
- Numbers 10 and Exodus 28 (esp. 28:33–35)
- Knohl, Between Voice and Silence
- Wright, Ritual Speech in PH
- Braun, Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine, 113–188

XII. Other Attestations of Music in Ancient Syria-Canaan and the Bible
• Nebuchadnezzar’s Orchestra in Daniel 3
• War, Women, and Drums in the Bible
• Other Textual and Archaeological Representations
Readings:
- Braun, Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine, 189–320 (read quickly)
- Daniel 3
- Lesley, Illusions of Grandeur
- Meyers, Of Drums and Damsels
- One of the following: Avigad, King’s Daughter; Biran, Dancer (1986); Burgh, Sex Gender; Kalimi, Human and Musical Sounds; Mitchell, Music

WORK FOR THE COURSE:

Attendance and Preparation: 10%
Students are expected to attend class, do the readings for each class, and contribute to the discussion.

Unit Reading Reports: 40%
Students are to submit a short response paper (400 words) on the readings at the end of each unit. This should display engagement with a number of the readings, intellectual curiosity, critical assessment of evidence, a logical argument and construction, and be felicitous from a mechanical point of view. A report can argue a thesis or provide evaluation of the readings. Include a list of the readings treated in proper bibliographical form at the top of the summary (do not count this as part of the word-count requirement). Each report is due 5:00 p.m. the Monday following the conclusion of a unit. Grading rubrics: insightfulness 30%; logic and argumentation 30%; breadth of readings covered 25%; writing mechanics (spelling, format, bibliographical form) 15%.
Late reports will be reduced 1% for every business day late (roughly 5% per week).
Students will be allowed to rewrite two of these reports for better grades. The rewrites may be done at the end of the semester.

**Final Paper: 50% (Choosing topic 5%; starting bibliography 5%; final paper 40%)**

This should deal with some aspect of music in the ancient Near East. For undergrads the paper should be at least 3000 words; for grads, 4000 (the count includes footnotes but excludes bibliography). Papers should be focused and deal a relatively narrow data base and question. The topic should be chosen in consultation with the instructor or teaching assistant. Undergrad final papers should have a bibliography with 12 secondary sources, grad papers, with 18 secondary sources. A secondary source is a modern academic study, i.e., articles from professional journals, books by academic presses (as exemplified by the readings for this course). Papers should also use primary sources: ancient texts, artistic depictions, and/or artifacts.

Sample topics include (others can be imagined):

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<th>Women in music</th>
<th>Singing and song</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ancient Greek music compared</td>
<td>Dance</td>
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<td>Music in cultic practice</td>
<td>Continuity into later Jewish or Middle</td>
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<td>Musical features of hymns and laments</td>
<td>Eastern music</td>
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<td>Reconstruction of musical instruments</td>
<td>Anthropological or ritual studies analysis</td>
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<td>Identification of musical instruments</td>
<td>Poetry and musical performance</td>
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Each of these and other topics can and should be narrowed to deal with particular cultures and sources (e.g., *The Tetrachord in Greek Music and Comparison to the Tuning of the Mesopotamian Lyre* or *The Greek Aulos Compared to Twin-Pipes in Ancient Egypt*). Readings and topics in the syllabus may help you identify other paper topics.

The paper topic with short description is due October 1. A bibliography on your topic, with 10 items for undergrads and 15 for grads, is due October 15. The final paper is due December 1. Grading will follow the rubrics for the weekly reports.

**AUXILIARY MATTERS:**

Students with learning disabilities should contact me if they seek accommodations.

Complete academic honesty is expected in all assignments.

Attendance is a necessary part of class work and participation.

Computers may be used in class to take notes, access course readings, and even do searches on a relevant topic for class discussion. Accessing email, irrelevant websites, texting, etc. is not allowed and will adversely affect the participation score.

Please speak with me if you are experiencing serious difficulties that prevent you from keeping up with work.