

# MUS 15: David Bowie

Section Meeting 1

*Monday, January 11, 2021*

# Meeting Outline

1. Announcements
2. General Information
3. Course Overview
4. Introductions
5. Listening
6. Questions

# **Announcements**

# Announcements

- Discussion 1 is DUE by next Monday, [Jan 18](#) at 11:59 pm.
- Paper 1 is DUE by Thursday, [Feb 4](#) at 6:30 pm.
- All other Unit 1 assignments are DUE by Thursday, [Feb 11](#) at 6:30 pm.  
These include the weekly in-module assignments and the end-of-unit tests.
- If you haven't done so already, go to the course Canvas page and read all of the text in the "Home", "Syllabus", and "Announcements" tabs.
- Then, complete Module 1 and Discussion 1. These are located under "Modules" and "Discussions" on Canvas. I strongly urge you to start right away so you don't get behind!

# **General Information**

# General Information: My office hours

- My office hours are set by appointment. The advantage of this setup is that it allows me to meet individually with each student who needs help at a time that works for both of us.
- If several students need help on a particular assignment, I'll consider holding special office hours
- **I'll also reserve time during each weekly discussion for questions.**

# General Information: Section website

[chadmckell.com/bowie](https://chadmckell.com/bowie)

- All of the section materials will be posted on the section website linked above. These materials will mainly highlight important points already shown on Canvas.

# General Information: Zoom

- All section meetings and office hours will be held over Zoom
- If you can't hear me or the audio quality is poor, please interrupt me so that I can resolve the issue
- Unless there are objections, I will record each section lecture and message the class a private link to the recording. If any of you prefer not to be recorded, please email me your concerns so that we can come up with a solution.



# **Course Overview**

# Course Overview: What is this course?

- **From the Course Syllabus:**

- This course will focus on **Bowie's musical output** and trace a path from his early youth bands to his swan song, Blackstar, and along the way we will **question our own ideas about artistry, authenticity, and Rock and Roll.**

# Course Overview: What are the objectives?

- **From the Course Syllabus:**

- Listen for **meaning in music**
- Develop an **awareness of the social, interpersonal and economic machinations** behind the creation of Popular Music.
- Foster a discourse around **what we expect** from our musical idols and how they meet these expectations.
- Understand the **basics of how Popular Music is constructed** from technological, cultural and aesthetic building blocks.
- Become acquainted with the **remarkable and varied career path** of a man who was one of the major influences on worldwide music from the late 1960s until the present.

# Course Overview: Online format

- Aside from our weekly section meetings, the course will take place entirely on Canvas. **Below are some important aspects of the online format that you must know to succeed in the course.** (These bullet points are taken directly from Canvas):
  - Any assessment points associated with a module will not be awarded until the module is completed, and a missed module will prevent you from moving to the next.
  - Both of the tests are included within the last module of the unit so you will be unable to complete these tests without first completing the preceding modules.
  - At the end of each unit, all preceding modules, including tests, must have been completed for grades to be awarded. Any work not completed at the end of a unit will be awarded a zero.

# Course Overview: What will you be graded on?

- In-module assignments (10-20)
- End-of-unit tests (2)
- Discussions (10)
- Papers (2)

# Course Overview: What will we do in sections?

- Review important announcements, deadlines, and course information
- Listen to music and discuss how it's relevant to the course objectives and assignments
- Answer any questions you may have about the quizzes, tests, discussions, and papers

# **Introductions**

# Introductions: Who am I?

## Chad McKell

- Major: 2nd-year Ph.D. student in Computer Music
- Hometown: L.A. area (near Six Flags Magic Mountain)
- Research: physics-based sound synthesis (<https://chadmckell.com/research>)





# Introductions: My academic background

B.S., Brigham Young University, **Biophysics** (2002-2009)

- Courses: physics, mathematics, biology, chemistry
- Research: atomic force microscopy



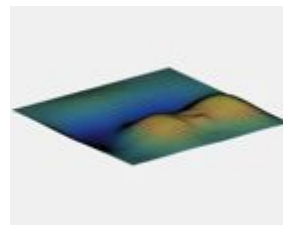
M.S., Wake Forest University, **Physics** (2009-2015)

- Courses: computational physics, classical/quantum mechanics
- Research: optical trapping, fluid dynamics (JOSA, ICMC)



M.S., University of Edinburgh, **Acoustics and Music Technology** (2016-2017)

- Courses: acoustics, digital signal processing, complex analysis
- Research: physics-based sound synthesis (Razer Nari Ultimate)



# Introductions: My recent work experience

**Lofelt**, Freelance Software Developer (Apr-Aug 2017)

- Topics: elastic solid dynamics, digital filter design (MATLAB)
- Projects: Razer Nari Ultimate headsets



**Moog Music**, Freelance Software Developer (May 2018)

- Topics: modulated delays, digital filter design (C++)
- Projects: synthesizer effects



**Applied Research in Acoustics**, R&D Scientist (Jul 2018 - Jul 2019)

- Topics: acoustics, digital signal processing (MATLAB)
- Projects: naval sonar systems



# Introductions: Who are you?

I'd love to hear more about each of you. Please take about 1 minute to introduce yourself. Below are questions you could answer (**no need to answer them all**):

- What's your major?
- Where are you from?
- What kind of music do you like to listen to?
- Do you compose music? If so, what kind of music do you like to make?
- What genres of popular music interests you the most?
- What do you hope to get out of this course?
- What other music courses have you taken that you've enjoyed?
- What other music courses interest you?
- What are your long-term goals with music?
- Is there anything else you would like to say?

# **Listening**

# Listening: David Jones

- [Liza Jane](#) by David Jones and the King Bees
- [Take My Tip](#) by David Jones and the Manish Boys
- [You've Got a Habit of Leaving](#) by David Jones and the Lower Third

# Discussion

# Discussion: General guidelines

- **To earn full credit, you must adhere to the weekly topic, satisfy the word-length requirement, and respond to another student's post.**
  - While we encourage high-quality writing (e.g. proper grammar and punctuation, original and insightful commentary, well-researched historical facts, and persuasive arguments), this is not strictly required.
- Since you all come from a variety of educational backgrounds, I want to free you up to write about topics that you feel competent about and/or that you find most interesting. Therefore, if you feel really compelled to write about a different topic related to each module, please email me your idea and I'll see if I can accommodate your request.

# Discussion: Week 1 Topic

- **Please address the following topic for Discussion 1:**
  - Discuss the idea of artistic authenticity. Specifically, discuss how a music performance can be real vs. fake (by “real”, I mean a performance that springs up naturally from a person; by “fake”, I mean one that is copied directly from someone else). In Module 1, Professor Babin characterized Bowie’s *The Width of a Circle* as authentic (real) and his song *China Girl* as inauthentic (fake). Do you agree with this characterization? Feel free to write about other examples in popular music instead of the two songs mentioned above, such as Lead Belly’s *Rock Island Line* vs. Lonnie Donegan’s version.
- **Here are some ideas to get you thinking:**
  - What makes a music performance authentic (i.e. how is artistic authenticity judged)? Consider who the musicians are, what they represent, the lyrics they used, and the historical context that the songs were performed in. Do you think it’s possible for a music performance to be truly authentic? Are there degrees of authenticity? What value does a conversation about artistic authenticity have for society?



# Discussion: Week 1 Topic

- To earn full credit for this assignment, your post must be at least 250 words long, and you must provide a 2-3 sentence response to at least one other student's post.
- *In your response to the other student, please be supportive by providing constructive feedback.*

# Questions