MUSL 3331 33638 Musical Instruments
Dr. David Ross (dross@utep.edu)
Summer 2013
Meeting times: MTWRF 0920-1130 am
FOX FINE ARTS M402

Musical Instruments

Description: A survey of musical instruments, concentrating on the instruments used in Western music. Selected ethnic instruments will also be discussed. Differences in construction, ways various instruments are sounded, and the historical development of instruments will be covered. This class is open to upper-level undergraduates, and no prior knowledge of music or music reading is assumed. This class will be taught as a “hybrid” class, meaning that class materials will be presented both in class presentations and also online, and students have the option of attending class or reviewing materials online via Blackboard. Tests will be given in class.

Class requirements: one term paper, tests/quizzes, optional class presentation as bonus

Recommended text: There is no required text, as materials will be presented in class. As a supplement, students can order: Musical Instruments of the World: An Illustrated Encyclopedia by the Diagram Group. (Several publishers) Unfortunately this is out of print, but copies are usually available from amazon.com.

Students can also use online sources such as Wikipedia to supplement information presented in class.

Class syllabus

1. Introduction

2. Classification Systems—Ancient Greece, China, others based on social/musical/religious, early Western attempts (Praetorius, Mahillon), modern “scientific” classification system developed by Curt Sachs and Erich von Hornbostel
3. Preliminary survey based on Sachs/Hornbostel system

4. Aerophones—instruments sounded by an enclosed air column

5. Chordophones—instruments sounded by a vibrating string

6. Idiophones—instruments where the body of the instrument vibrates

7. Membranophones—instruments sounded by a stretched membrane or skin

8. Electrophones—instruments where sound is produced via electrical circuits

Office Hours: By appointment
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