

# Psychology and Popular Music

Quarters

Fall 2024 & Winter 2025

Location

Olympia Campus

Time Offered

Daytime (plus evening film series)

Class Standing

Freshman

Credits

14

Fall Course Reference Number  
(CRN)

10162 (with [Greener Foundations](#))

10038 (only Psychology and  
Popular Music)

Last updated: May 10, 2024

# Program information

I'm lookin' for a mind at work!

-- from "The Schuyler Sisters" in  
the musical *Hamilton*, 2015

Both psychology and popular music explore the complexity of the human experience. What are the overlaps and differences in those approaches? How can one discipline shed light on the meanings and range of the human experience in a way that the other can't? Activities will include lectures, seminars, and workshops in social science research methods and music theory.

# Faculty

Nathalie Yuen, PhD (she/her)  
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Office Hours: TBA

# Weekly schedule

## Mondays

10–11:50 am – Lecture, workshop

1–3 pm – Greener Foundations

## Wednesdays

10–11:50 am – Lecture, workshop

2:30–4:30 pm – Seminar

## Thursdays

10–11:50 am – Seminar

1:30–3:20 pm – Lecture, workshop

**First class: Monday, September 30 at  
10 am**

# Weekly schedule

Time	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu
10:00	10– 11:50 am		10– 11:50 am	10– 11:50 am
10:30	Lecture, workshop		Lecture, workshop	Seminar
11:00	SEM II D-1105		COM 107	SEM II D-2105 & D-2107
11:30				
Noon				
12:30				
1:00	1–3 pm			
1:30	Greener Foundations			1:30– 3:20 pm
2:00	TBD			Lecture, workshop
2:30				SEM II D-1105
3:00				
3:30				

# Required textbooks

## Psychology

We'll be using a free online textbook, *Psychology 2e* by Spielman et al: <https://openstax.org/books/psychology-2e/pages/preface>

## Music History & Theory

We'll be using three long chapters from a customized version of a free online textbook, *Open Music Theory* by Gotham et al, with lots of audio examples. The first section we'll study is on drumbeats: <https://viva.pressbooks.pub/openmusictheory/chapter/drumbeats/#audio-12926-1>

Then we'll move on to pop music styles:

<https://viva.pressbooks.pub/openmusictheory/part/popular-music/>

and music theory fundamentals:

<https://viva.pressbooks.pub/openmusictheory/part/fundamentals/>

*Wicked* (1995) by Gregory Maguire (a novel; any format is fine)

Additional readings and other materials will be posted on Canvas

# Optional textbooks and learning aids

Voice Training:

<https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/857>

Ear Training:

<https://teoria.com/index.php>

(free)

<https://www.musictheory.net/>

(2 apps @ \$5 each)

Writing Strategies:

<https://viva.pressbooks.pub/letsgetwriting/front-matter/title-page/>

# Anticipated credit equivalencies

## Fall Quarter

- 4 – Introduction to Psychology
- 4 – Music History: American Popular Music Survey
- 3 – Introduction to Quantitative Reasoning
- 3 – Fundamentals of Music Theory

## Winter Quarter

- 4 – Psychology: Lifespan Development
- 4 – Music History: Singer/Songwriters
- 3 – Introduction to Social Science Research Methods
- 3 – Fundamentals of Music Analysis



# Fees

\$80 per quarter covers entrance fees for musical performances and museums

# Fields of Study

Film and Media Studies

Music and Performing Arts

Psychology

# Preparatory for further studies and careers in

Psychology

Social Work

Communication

Music, Media

Social Sciences

Humanities

Arts

# Catalog description

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Both psychology and popular music explore the complexity of the human experience. What are the overlaps and differences in those approaches? How can one discipline shed light on the meanings and range of the human experience in a way that the other can't? Activities will include lectures, seminars, and workshops in social science research methods and public speaking.

We'll study empirical methods, learning to separate facts from fictions in studies of the human experience, but also the arts of psychologically informed persuasion so prevalent in contemporary media. In the psychology portion of this program we will develop a better understanding of people's behavior and mental processes using social science methods. We will also focus on the social and psychological uses of popular music—how diverse American musicals, popular songs, and the ways we share them on social media inspire and shape our emotions, memories, and identities.

In fall quarter, we will examine how people learn, think, and remember, as well as the biological bases of human behavior, in a grand overview of the field of psychology. We will explore what motivates people and how emotions, personality, and social interactions affect us. We'll focus on vital social issues of the day including the ongoing struggle for trans rights and the presidential election, and examine how advertisers manipulate minds via psychologically informed slogans, images, and underscoring. Through shared, safe vocal exercises and recitations, we'll develop our public speaking skills.

In winter quarter, we will focus on human development: how people both change and stay the same over the course of a lifetime. We'll analyze songs that reveal the inner life of a character on stage or screen, and what our own musical choices can reveal about our minds and emotions, from childhood to old age. Students will deliver research presentations in small groups, practicing public speaking while also becoming acquainted with library and archival research methods.

# Greener Foundations

This program is coordinated with Greener Foundations for first-year students. Greener Foundations is Evergreen's in-person 2-quarter introductory student success course sequence, which provides first-year students with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive at Evergreen. Student joining in winter quarter that are expected to take Greener Foundations will be prompted to register for a 2-credit Greener Foundations course in addition to this 14-credit program during registration. Students that took Greener Foundations in fall quarter will be automatically registered in winter quarter to complete the 4-credits of Greener Foundations.