



HANYANG UNIVERSITY

Hanyang International Winter School

Faculty Information	Name	Hee Seng Kye				
	E-mail	hskye@hanyang.ac.kr				
	Home University	Hanyang University				
	Department	Department of Composition, College of Music				
	Homepage	https://music.hanyang.ac.kr/home				
Course Information	Class No.	TBA	Course Code		Credits	3
	Course Name	From 8-Bit to Orchestra: The Art and Technology of Video Game Music				
	Lecture Schedule	Mon–Fri, 09:00–15:00 (Lunch break 12:00–13:00)				
	Course Description	Video game music has grown from simple arcade beeps to sweeping orchestral scores rivaling Hollywood soundtracks. This course explores how music shapes the gaming experience, from the nostalgic chiptunes of <i>Super Mario Bros.</i> and <i>The Legend of Zelda</i> to the cinematic soundscapes of <i>Final Fantasy</i> , <i>Halo</i> , and <i>Skyrim</i> . Students will examine adaptive music systems, rhythm games, and global game cultures, gaining hands-on experience analyzing and creating music for interactive media to understand both the art and the technology behind game music.				
	Course Objective	By the end of the course, students will be able to: - Trace the evolution of video game music across platforms and genres. - Apply methods and tools to study game soundtracks and adaptive systems. - Evaluate the aesthetic, narrative, and cultural significance of game music globally.				
	Prerequisite	No prior background in music or computer science is required.				
	Materials/Textbooks	All readings, music, and software below are freely accessible and align with the course's cost-free policy. These resources will support both foundational lectures and hands-on activities, including all listening journals, group case studies, and final projects. Students are expected to complete assigned readings or viewings before class sessions. Core Readings - Whalen, Zach. 2004. "Play Along: An Approach to Video Game Music." <i>Game Studies</i> 4 (1). https://gamestudies.org/0401/whalen/. - Medina-Gray, Elizabeth. 2019. "Analyzing Modular Smoothness in Video Game Music." <i>Music Theory Online</i> 25 (3). https://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.19.25.3/mto.19.25.3.medina.gray.pdf. - Berklee Online. 2022. "Video Game Music: A Look into the Past and				



		Present." <i>Take Note</i>. https://online.berklee.edu/takenote/video-game-music-past-and-present/. - Video Game Music and Sound Design. n.d. University of North Texas Libraries. https://guides.library.unt.edu/VGM. Supplementary Multimedia Key soundtracks will be analyzed via official releases on YouTube. All video clips used in class will come from official uploads or authorized educational sources. Students are encouraged to explore the official YouTube channels of publishers such as Nintendo, Square Enix, and others. "The History of Sound and Music in Video Games." 2022. YouTube Video. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlI2-h39gPw. 8-Bit Music Theory. n.d. YouTube Channel. https://www.youtube.com/c/8bitmusictheory. Analytical Tools - Nesky, John. Beepbox. https://www.beepbox.co/. - MilkyTracker. https://milkytracker.org/.		
Evaluation	Attendance	%	Quiz	%
	Assignment	%	Mid-term Exam	%
	Presentation	%	Final Exam	%
	Group Project	%	Participation	%
	Etc.	Evaluation Item		Ratio
		Attendance & Active Participation		20%
		Listening Journals (2 submissions)		30%
Group Case Study & Presentation		30%		
Final Project (Creative or Analytical)		20%		
Daily Lecture Plan	Day 1	Introduction: Why Study Video Game Music? - Morning (09:00–12:00): - Lecture: Course overview; Defining video game music; Interdisciplinary approaches. - Listening Session: Iconic themes across eras. - Afternoon (13:00–15:00): - Workshop: Analytical tools for studying game music. - Class Activity: "My Game Soundtrack Memory."		
	Day 2	The 8-Bit Era: Chiptunes and Early Arcade Culture - Morning (09:00–12:00): - Lecture: History of arcade and console music (NES, Game Boy). - Case Studies: <i>Super Mario Bros.</i>, <i>The Legend of Zelda</i>. - Afternoon (13:00–15:00): - Workshop: Analyzing chiptune tracks (melody, looping).		

		Group Activity: Design a simple 8-bit theme with online tools.
	Day 3	16/32-Bit Expansions: Melody, Memory, Storytelling - Morning (09:00–12:00): - Lecture: The technological leap (SNES, PlayStation). - Case Studies: <i>Final Fantasy VI & VII</i>, <i>Chrono Trigger</i>. - Afternoon (13:00–15:00): - Seminar: Analyzing leitmotifs in RPGs. <u>Listening Journal 1 Due.</u>
	Day 4	Orchestrated Worlds: AAA Game Scores - Morning (09:00–12:00): - Lecture: The rise of cinematic orchestration. - Case Studies: <i>Halo</i>, <i>Skyrim</i>, <i>The Last of Us</i>. - Afternoon (13:00–15:00): - Viewing Session: Comparing film vs. game scoring techniques. - Seminar Debate: "Are AAA game scores the new film scores?"
	Day 5	The Technology of Adaptive Music - Morning (09:00–12:00): - Lecture: Principles of adaptive music (loops, layering, transitions); Overview of sound engines (Wwise, FMOD). - Afternoon (13:00–15:00): - Workshop: Analyzing adaptive cues in gameplay video (<i>Journey</i>, <i>Celeste</i>).
	Day 6	Rhythm and the Body: Playing Music - Morning (09:00–12:00): - Lecture: Music and embodied cognition. - Case Studies: <i>Dance Dance Revolution</i>, <i>Taiko no Tatsujin</i>. - Afternoon (13:00–15:00): - Activity: Rhythm game play session and analysis. - Discussion: Music, body, and performance.
	Day 7	Narrative, Emotion, and Indie Creativity - Morning (09:00–12:00): - Lecture: Music as narrative and emotion. - Case Studies: <i>Undertale</i> (leitmotif & choice), <i>Journey</i> (dynamic scoring), and <i>Death Stranding</i> (licensed music & emotional punctuation). - Afternoon (13:00–15:00): - Workshop: Analyzing a chosen level's emotional arc. <u>Listening Journal 2 Due.</u>
	Day 8	Global Perspectives & Project Workshop - Morning (09:00–12:00): - Lecture: East Asian game music cultures (MMORPGs, rhythm games). <u>Case Study Presentations (Group I).</u>



		• Afternoon (13:00–15:00): ◦ Workshop: In-class time for final project preparation and instructor feedback.
	Day 9	Final Presentations & Course Wrap-up • Morning (09:00–12:00): ◦ <u>Case Study Presentations (Group II).</u> • Afternoon (13:00–15:00): ◦ Final discussion and course reflection. ◦ <u>Final Project Due.</u>