INTRODUCTION

“Sound and the City” is an ethnomusicological project that takes sound as the point of departure to understand migration, Indigeneity, ethnic diversity, and social inequality in downtown Xalapa, central-east Mexico. The city of Xalapa is the state capital and the largest political center in Veracruz, and where the governmental and judicial institutions are located. At the same time, Veracruz University (UV), the main academic institution in the area, is home to multiple schools in the arts, the humanities, social sciences, and engineering. These institutions attract people from north and south of the state to the city, creating social dynamics not only among distinctive Indigenous (Nahua), rural, and urban populations, but also between practitioners of formal and informal economies. These in-migrations have carried with them participatory music genres and established music communities such as son huasteco, son jarocho, classical music, and jazz. The first two are folk genres that combine Indigenous, African, and European musical traditions and are practiced by both Indigenous and mestizo populations. Similar to the rural towns where these musical traditions originated, fandango gatherings of son huasteco and son jarocho in Xalapa bring together different groups of people to play...
music, sing, and dance while sharing food. In fact, fandangos have become an inseparable aspect of the city’s identity and contesting spaces where different social groups interact. Moreover, Xalapa is the musical hub for classical music and jazz, where the Xalapa Symphonic Orchestra (OSX) and the JazzUV are the main venues for education and performance. These centers are nationally and internationally recognized for their musical pedagogy and attract high caliber musicians from around the world. Unlike other jazz and classical schools, however, the essential presence of folk musical genres in Xalapa creates unprecedented cultural and artistic intersections where musicians collaborate, exchange, and draw inspiration from each other.

This distinctive sonic experience becomes the analytical point of departure to understand socio-cultural diversity in the global world. In such a dynamic city, what are the politics of participation and how social groups identify with certain musical genres? How the groups interact with the urban environment to identify venues for music performance and participation? How do the different groups respond to the sonic environment as listeners, performers, and members of the music communities? How does music signal modernity and development in urban and rural settings? And how does the imagined rural/Indigenous is recreated in the urban context?

To answer these questions, the project will conduct ethnographic research with the music communities of *son huasteco*, *son jarocho*, classical music, and jazz. Throughout the project we will conduct interviews and surveys with community members and key collaborators; participate as passive/active observers in rehearsals, concerts, and fandangos; and position sounds in urban landscapes through GPS mapping.

The unique characteristics of the music scene in downtown Xalapa and its geographical location on the Sierra Madre Oriental, make this an exceptional place for students to experience first-hand ethnographic research methods, multidisciplinary scholarship, and actively participate in music performances of *son huasteco* and *son jarocho*, classical music, and jazz. The music in Xalapa is the story of the city, and we aim to make a collaborative effort to tell this story through multiple voices of the communities, the students, and the researchers. To do so, we will create a website that will include the collected material—audio, video, and photographs, our findings, and direct input of communities, students, and faculty.

**ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS**

**Credit Units:** Attending students will be awarded 8 semester credit units (equivalent to 12 quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a private, highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see grading assessment and matrix). This field school provides a minimum of 160 direct instructional hours. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and registrars at their home institution prior to attending this field school.

**Transcripts:** An official copy of transcripts will be mailed to the permanent address listed by students on their online application. One more transcript may be sent to the student home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: [http://bit.ly/2hvurkl](http://bit.ly/2hvurkl).

**PREREQUISITES**

Active participation in this course does not require any formal music training, and students will be instructed from scratch in folk music playing, dancing, and singing. Music also crosses linguistic barriers. While it is preferable that students speak Spanish to conduct their individual and group projects independently, it is not a prerequisite. The bilingual staff will be available to provide simultaneous
translation between Spanish and English. Students are required to take the Collaborative Institutional Training (CITI) mandatory by the IRB (Institutional Review Board). The minimum score is 80%. After completing the training, students will email the instructor the completion report.

**DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**

Our primary concern is with education. Traveling and conducting field research involve risk. Students interested in participating in IFR programs must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we do not take risk lightly. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it complies with all our standards and policies, including student safety.

We do our best to follow schedule and activities as outlined in this syllabus. Yet local permitting agencies, political, environmental, personal, or weather conditions may force changes. This syllabus, therefore, is only a general commitment. Students should allow flexibility and adaptability as research work is frequently subject to change.

Participants should be aware that conditions in the field are different than those they experience in their home, dorms, or college town. We will spend most of our time in the city of Xalapa, where summer temperatures range between 60°-80° F. While it can get quite hot and humid during the day, students should expect afternoon showers and should plan to dress accordingly. As with any urban center, student should be aware at all times to their surroundings and especially to vehicular traffic. Petty theft is a possibility, particularly in crowded locations such as bus stations and markets. Some excursions will take place in forested areas while others in remote villages, and student will be instructed in proper conduct before each field trip. Expect to walk around town at least 3-4 hours on a daily basis, and be prepared for the occasional folk dancing. A positive disposition is a must while interacting with others, and patience is required for activities such as music learning.

If you have any medical concerns, please consult with your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult with the project director - as appropriate.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

‘Sound and the City’ immerses students in the music culture of the city of Xalapa and trains them in ethnographic field methods. Students will acquire valuable research skills by developing research questions, writing field notes, conducting formal/informal interviews, surveys and observation/participatory-observation, documenting events through audio, video recordings and photography, and mapping sound. Moreover, students will be involved directly with the community through individual and group projects and will develop skills to enable effective data processing, communication, and community outreach. Active participation in son jarocho and son huasteco music gatherings is necessary to gain an inside perspective of the musical communities under study. Accordingly, classes for these genres will be scheduled on a weekly basis. The collected data will be used to develop a website that will include direct input from students in its design and content.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of the field school, students will:

- Understand the dynamics of migration, Indigeneity, ethnic diversity, and social inequality in multi-ethnic, multi-language, and pluricultural cities
- Understand the validity and scope of using sound for ethnographic research
- Understand research design, data collection, and analysis
• Effectively present results in public lectures and written reports

**GRADING MATRIX**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Active Participation</td>
<td>Students are expected to attend all events including lectures, in-and-out-the-classroom activities, and four field trips to obtain the full 30% of the grade. Absences are justified in the case of sickness alone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Daily meetings</td>
<td>Students will be required to attend daily meetings at the end of the day, starting in the 2nd week of the program. Active participation includes presenting work progress and discussing applications of the learning materials provided through lectures, readings, and exercises. To receive the full 10% of the grade students are required to attend all meetings. Absences are justified in case of sickness alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Four ethnographic exercises</td>
<td>At the end of each week, students will hand in an ethnographic exercise that reflects the learning objectives and methods discussed during that week. Guidelines will be provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Final Project written report</td>
<td>A 1,000-words essay is required, which will reflect the discussions, readings, and ethnographic exercises. Guidelines will be provided on how to write the report. All written assignments should be typed. The text should be double-spaced, with standard margins and font (1&quot; margins and 12-point Time New Romans font). Please include name, course number, and date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Final Project Presentation</td>
<td>At the end of the course, students will present the final projects’ results in well-organized talks of twenty minutes each. The talks will be accompanied by Power Point slides that will show audio, video, and photography material collected by the student during the course. Since an essential component of this field school is community outreach, the presentations will be open to the public.</td>
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**TRAVEL & MEETING POINT**

Hold purchasing your airline ticket until six (6) weeks prior to departure date. Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and a range of other factors may require the cancelation of a field school. The IFR typically takes a close look at local conditions 6-7 weeks prior to program beginning and make Go/No Go decisions by then. This time frame still allows the purchase of discounted airline tickets while protecting students from potential loss of airline ticket costs if we decide to cancel a program.

Students are responsible for making their own travel arrangements to the Veracruz International Airport (VER). Please plan to arrive on Sunday, June 23rd, between 8 am and 6 pm. All students will meet with the project personnel at the airport and will leave together to Xalapa in a rental van. Orientation and classes will begin on Monday June 24th, at 9 am sharp.

If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text, or email project director immediately. A local emergency cell phone number will be provided to all enrolled students.

**VISA REQUIREMENTS**

US citizens do not require a visa to enter Mexico for less than 180 days, but must have their passport valid for at least six months and have at least one blank page for the entry stamp. Travelers with passports that are found to be washed or damaged may be refused entry to Mexico.

Citizens of other countries are asked to check the Mexican Embassy website page in their home country for specific visa requirement.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

In Xalapa, students will stay in the central hotel *La Posada del Cafeto*. In two of the scheduled field trips to Indigenous communities to the north and south of the city, students will stay in local inns. All students will share a room based on room size and availability.
Food in Veracruz is a combination of Indigenous and European, and highland and coastal, cuisines. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are provided by the program 6 days a week, and students are responsible for their meals on free days each weekend. Breakfasts and dinners are usually taken in local restaurants, and light lunches in the field mostly consist of sandwiches, vegetables, and fruit. Even though students will have the opportunity of taste a variety of foods, keep in mind that vegetarianism and veganism are not common in Mexico in general, and food choices for these diets will be limited. Other specialized diets (halal, kosher, gluten-free, etc.) are difficult to maintain.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

(*Itinerary and timetable are subject to adjustments*)

All IFR field schools begin with safety orientation. This orientation includes proper behavior at the field area, proper clothing, local cultural sensitivities and sensibilities, potential fauna and flora hazards, review of IFR harassment and discrimination policies, and review of the student Code of Conduct.

**Sunday, June 23:** Arrival Day; Welcome Dinner

**Week One (June 24-29):**
- Orientations: safety, research, and city
- Ethnographic methods: research questions; observation and participant observation; fieldwork notes
- Workshop: Audio and video recording, and photography
- Workshop: Audio, video, and photography editing
- Workshop: sound mapping
- Workshops: son jarocho and son huasteco
  - 1st ethnographic exercise due
  - *Field trips: Moist forest; Botanical Garden Francisco Javier Clavijero in Xalapa, Veracruz*

**Sunday, June 30:** Free day

**Week Two (July 1-July 6)**
- Ethnographic methods: interviews and surveys; qualitative vs. quantitative research
- Workshop: Audio and video recording, and photography
- Workshop: Audio, video, and photography editing
- Workshop: sound mapping
- Workshops: son jarocho and son huasteco
- Daily Meetings
  - 2nd ethnographic exercise due
  - *Field trips: 1) Coatepec city, coffee museum, coffee tour by Casa Real del Cafe
    2) Visit to the Anthropology Museum of Xalapa, Veracruz University*

**Sunday, July 7:** Free Day

**Week Three (July 8-13):**
- Ethnographic methods: reformulating research questions; organization collected information
- Workshop: Audio and video recording, and photography
- Workshop: Audio, video, and photography editing
- Workshop: sound mapping
- Workshops: son jarocho and son huasteco
- Daily Meetings
  - 3rd ethnographic exercise due
  - *Field trip: Fandango/Huapango, rural town in Veracruz*
Sunday, July 14: Free day

Week Four (July 15-July 19)
- Ethnographic methods: writing a report
- Workshop: Audio and video recording, and photography
- Workshop: Audio, video, and photography editing
- Workshop: sound mapping
- Workshops: son jarocho and son huasteco
- Daily Meetings
- 4th ethnographic exercise due
- Final Report due
- Final Presentations
- Field trip: Field trip: Fandango/Huapango, rural town in Veracruz

Saturday, July 20: Departure day

EQUIPMENT LIST

Students are required to bring the following equipment:

- Notebooks
- Pen, pencils
- Audio and video recorder (smartphones and tablets can also serve as recorders)
- Photographic camera (point & shoot, SLR, or phone camera)
- Laptops or tablets to write assignments
- Hat
- Walking shoes
- Hiking boots
- Water bottle
- Rain coat
- Sunscreen

A full equipment list will be provided to all enrolled students before departure.

REQUIRED READINGS


**RECOMMENDED READINGS**

