



# SOUND AND THE CITY: ETHNOGRAPHY & ETHNOMUSICOLOGY AT XALAPA, VERACRUZ, MEXICO

*Course ID: ARCH 330H*

*June 21-July 18, 2020*

*Academic Credits: 8 Semester Credit Units (Equivalent to 12 Quarter Units)*

*School of Record: Connecticut College*

## FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTORS:

**Dr. Veronica Pacheco**, Latin American Studies, CSULA; Department of Ethnomusicology, UCLA  
([veropac@ucla.edu](mailto:veropac@ucla.edu))

**Dr. Randall Kohl**, Music Department, Veracruz University, Xalapa ([rkohl@uv.mx](mailto:rkohl@uv.mx))



## 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* or *huapango* gatherings of *son jarocho* and *son huasteco* in Xalapa bring together different groups of people to play music, sing, and dance while sharing food. In fact, these gatherings 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 observants 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>.

## 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.

The IFR does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. We encourage students to explore such insurance on their own as it may be purchased at affordable prices. [insuremytrip.com](http://insuremytrip.com) or [Travelgurad.com](http://Travelgurad.com) are possible sites where field school participants may explore travel cancellation insurance quotes and policies. If you do purchase such insurance, make sure the policy covers the cost of both airfare and tuition. See this [Wall Street Journal article about travel insurance](#) that may help you with to help to decide whether to purchase such insurance.

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 ranges 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

<b>30% of grade</b>	<b>Active Participation.</b> 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.
<b>10% of grade</b>	<b>Daily meetings.</b> Students will be required to attend daily meetings at the end of the day, starting in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> 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.
<b>20% of grade</b>	<b>Four ethnographic exercises.</b> 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.
<b>10% of grade</b>	<b>Final Project written report.</b> 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" margins and 12-point Time New Romans font). Please include name, course number, and date.
<b>30% of grade</b>	<b>Final Project Presentation.</b> 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.

### 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 21<sup>st</sup>, 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 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 9 am sharp.

If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text, or email the 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

Students will stay in the central hotel or rented house in Xalapa. In 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 21:** Arrival Day; Welcome Dinner

### **Week One (June 22-27):**

Orientations: safety, research, and city

Ethnographic methods: research questions; observation and participant observation; fieldwork notes; data logging

Workshop: Audio and video recording, and photography

Workshop: Audio, video, and photography editing

Workshop: sound mapping

Workshops: son jarocho and son huasteco

1<sup>st</sup> ethnographic exercise due

*Field trips: Moist forest; Botanical Garden Francisco Javier Clavijero in Xalapa, Veracruz*  
(Bull 2019; Ekwueme 1974; Emerson 2011; Figueroa-Hernández 2016; Moguel 2001)

**Sunday, June 28:** Free day

### **Week Two (June 29-July 4)**

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

2<sup>nd</sup> 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*

(Schafer 1977; Schensul 1999; Shelemay 2011)

**Sunday, July 5:** Free Day

**Week Three (July 6-11):**

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

3<sup>rd</sup> ethnographic exercise due

*Field trip: Fandango/Huapango, rural town in Veracruz*

(Manuel 2016; Stanford 1972)

**Sunday, July 12:** Free day

**Week Four (July 13-July 17)**

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

4<sup>th</sup> ethnographic exercise due

Final Report due

Final Presentations

*Field trip: Field trip: Fandango/Huapango, rural town in Veracruz*

(LeCompte 1999)

**Saturday, July 18:** 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**

Bull, Michael. 2016. "Sounding Out the City: An Auditory Epistemology of Urban Experience." In *The Auditory Culture Reader*, edited by Michael Bull and Les Back, 73-86. London, New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

- Ekwueme, Lazarus E. N. 1974. "African-Music Retentions in the New World." *The Black Perspective in Music* 2 (2): 128-144.
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda I. Shaw. 2011. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (selected chapters).
- Figueroa-Hernández, Rafael. 2016. "Yo No Soy Marinero, Soy Capitán: Contemporary Sociopolitical Uses of Fandango and Son Jarocho." In *The Global Reach of the Fandango in Music, Song and Dance: Spaniards, Indians, Africans and Gypsies*, edited by K. Meira Goldberg and Antoni Piza, 203-216. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- LeCompte, Margaret D., and Jean J. Schensul. 1999. *Analyzing and Interpreting Ethnographic Data: The Ethnographers' Toolkit. Vol. Five*. Walnut Creek: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. (selected chapters).
- Manuel, Peter. 2016. "Chapter One: The Fandango Complex in the Spanish Atlantic: A Panoramic View." In *The Global Reach of the Fandango in Music, Song and Dance: Spaniards, Indians, Africans, and Gypsies*, edited by K. Meira Goldberg and Antoni Piza, 2-11. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Moguel, Patricia and Victor M. Toledo. 2001. "Biodiversity Conservation in Traditional Coffee Systems of Mexico." *Conservation Biology* 13 (1): 11-21.
- Schafer, Murray. 1977, 1994. "From Town to City." In *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, by Murray Schafer, 53-70. Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books.
- Schensul, Stephen L., Jean J. Schensul, and Margaret D. LeCompte. 1999. *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews, and Questionnaires: Ethnographer's Toolkit. Vol. Two*. Walnut Creek: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. (selected chapters).
- Shelemay, Kay Kaufman. 2011. "Musical Communities: Rethinking the Collective in Music." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 64(2): 349-390.
- Stanford, Thomas E. 1972. "The Mexican Son." *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* 4, 25th Anniversary Issue: 66-86.
- RECOMMENDED READINGS**
- Kun, Josh. 2017. "Introduction: The Tide Was Always High." In *The Tide Was Always High: The Music of Latin America in Los Angeles*, edited by Josh Kun, 1-45. Oakland, California.
- McLaren, Peter. 1995. "White Terror and Oppositional Agency: Towards a Critical Multiculturalism." In *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture: Oppositional Politics in a Postmodern Era*, by Peter McLaren, 117-144. New York: Routledge .
- Shelemay, Kay Kaufman. 2001 . "Appendix: Classifying Musical Instruments." In *Soundscapes: Exploring Music in a Changing World*, 345-349. New York: Norton.