

MUSIC 9531
RESEARCH IN MUSIC EDUCATION
FALL 2025

Instructor Information

Instructor: Stephanie Horsley

Email: stephanie.horsley@uwo.ca

Office hours: By Request over Zoom

Course Description

The life of a music educator is full of decisions. We choose and manage resources within a limited budget, select appropriate pedagogies, and operate effectively within our chosen education system (public or private). As professionals, we are expected to be responsible for our own decisions about what to do and how to do it.

But on what knowledge do we base these decisions? Knowledge is a slippery thing. How do we know what is true? What is reliable information? Educators are often asked to make dramatic changes to their practice based on research evidence, but how do we evaluate the quality of that evidence? Researchers suggest that knowledge that is obtained through careful, systematic inquiry is likely to be the most reliable basis for our decisions. As we add to this fund of knowledge, we develop the field of music education as a discipline. Practitioner research is also an important part of the development of our field.

This course will provide you with an introduction to the principles of quantitative and qualitative research in music education. As you learn more about how research evidence is produced, you will develop the skills and understanding necessary to become critical consumers of research evidence in our field and informed producers of such evidence. You will begin the process of research, in part by identifying an area of research that is of interest to you, creating researchable questions to, and situating them within existing bodies of research.

Course Materials

There are no required texts to purchase in this course. All course material will be available through our OWL site or on public websites.

Method of Evaluation

Evaluation Component	Brief Description	% of Grade
Professional Research Growth (Self-Assessment with instructor discretion)	Outline your personal and professional research goals for the course. Select and implement concrete actions you can take to support attaining your goals and reflect on your success throughout the term.	20%
Small Group and Individual Participation and Learning (Self-Assessment with instructor discretion)	Select, share, lead, and respond to discussions on readings and ideas that support our course outcomes and research goals	30%
Individual Article Critique (Written Paper)	Apply your knowledge of research methodologies to write a maximum 5-page paper critiquing a research study of your choice	20%
Individual Research Framework (Written Paper)	Create and situate defensible research problems and questions within the research literature and suggest evidence-based methodological choices for gathering and analyzing data that will address your questions (maximum 6 pages)	30%

Course Timeline and Format

This course is a fully online, asynchronous course, which means there are no “real time” meetings. The advantage of this for you is that you can work away at course materials at your own pace so long as you meet the course deadlines. You may even find that, after a series of face-to-face courses, teaching, and social outings that the chance to have one class that is asynchronous is a nice change of pace! If you find it helpful to independently schedule synchronous, “live” co-working time with group members on certain projects, please feel free to do so as long as they are also willing to meet in real time.

Graduate Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Identify several goals you wish to accomplish as a learner in the course, develop a plan for achieving them, and self-assess your progress
2. Work cooperatively with peers to co-discover and -apply course ideas as well as provide feedback on classmates’ ideas
3. Identify quantitative and qualitative research paradigms in music education and list their strengths and weaknesses

4. Apply your knowledge of research methodologies, including research ethics, to critically evaluate existing research
5. Select and define an issue for investigation related to your own professional practice and the wider educational context and express it in terms of a research problem and research questions or hypothesis/es
6. Critically evaluate the literature related to your chosen identified topic
7. Use the literature to frame and defend your research problem and questions
8. Discuss and peer-critique possible methodologies for undertaking systematic research of your chosen research problem and questions
9. Communicate your ideas clearly and appropriately in writing

Enrolment Restrictions

Enrolment in this course is restricted to graduate students in Music.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf Note especially that plagiarism is a major scholastic offence. Students are expected to write all assignments in their own words. If you take an idea from another author, you must acknowledge this by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing.

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Health and Wellness Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health Support at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Accessible Education Western (AEW)

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Unless otherwise noted in the instructions for the course activities and ***if you choose, you may use Chat GPT or other Generative AI and/or grammar/spelling checker tools such as Grammarly for forums activities.*** Since the goal is not to post a perfect post (and these tools will *not* give you a perfect piece of content) but to critique and learn, I expect that, if you choose to use them, you will critically assess and refine the answers as necessary, just as you will when you are responding to your peer's discussions throughout the term.

If you choose to use a Generative AI tool for your discussion forums, you must:

- Share which tool(s) you used
- Share which prompts you used as the initial prompt as well as any prompts you used to refine the tool's generated content
- Outline any additional changes you made to the final content generated by the AI
- Explain the decision behind why you refined (if at all) any of the Gen AI content, and why you felt comfortable with the final content post.

You may not use Generative AI tools for hypothesis assignments. These tools will likely cause you more frustration than not in the hypothesis assignment as they do not have the ability to critically read and give detailed responses to individual research articles.

If you choose to use Grammarly or other spelling/grammar tools: These tools can be helpful for individuals wishing to improve grammar and spelling. You are welcome to use them for our discussion and hypothesis posts only. If you choose to use them beyond a simple spell or grammar check in tools like Microsoft Word, that is, you are using them as an essential part of your writing process rather than a final check on what you believe to be polished work, then you should:

1. Let me know in a private email which tool you used and
2. Share how using the tool helped you to improve your writing

My goal here is that, by reflecting on how the tools are improving your spelling and grammar that you will eventually stop needing to use them altogether. These tools are not allowed on your written papers.