



The Musician's Performing Body MUGT 475-001, Winter 2025, 3 credits

General Information

Course schedule Fridays, 11:35-14:25
Room Library seminar room A-412

Instructor's Information

Name and Title Isabelle Cossette, Associate Professor (She/Her/Elle)
E-mail isabelle.cossette1@mcgill.ca
Office hours Office A-640 - In-person or online appointments on demand by email. I'm on campus most every Mondays and Fridays and many Thursdays.

Communication plan

For general questions regarding course content and assessment, please use the designated General Q & A on myCourses. Please allow 24h during weekdays for a response on email. For time management and wellbeing reasons, communications outside working hours (9.00-18.00) and during weekends may be limited. Important notifications will be sent both via email and posted as announcements on myCourses. I recommend turning on notifications on myCourses.

Overview

Musicians are expected to use their body in an optimal and efficient way so they may reach their full potential. Yet, though they master their performances, many musicians are often unaware of the basic foundations of anatomy and physiology as related to music performance. Furthermore, many popular beliefs are based on non-verified facts, and how best to use the body during performance, how much to practice and what to teach are controversial topics.

This class is intended for music students interested in developing an informed understanding of the role of the main anatomical bodily systems (e.g., nervous, musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory, endocrine, nutrition, stress, energy expenditure, and hearing, etc.) and associated physiological concepts essential to the act of performing.

Students will assess the validity and reliability of various beliefs shared through community and academic channels as related to physical issues of practice, performance, injuries, and healthy day-to-day life habits. They will identify, plan and implement skills tailored to their individual needs to develop a sustainable and healthy career.

Learning Outcomes

Students will learn to:

1. **Compare** knowledge-based notions with common approaches, values and (mis)conceptions around the core body systems & basic functions, common injuries/health issues in music practices;
2. **Create** an individual program to improve own health based on self-assessment, **evaluate** its impact and **recommend** next steps for sustainability;
3. **Synthesize and present** a set of existing empirical knowledge on a topic associated with individual needs.

Commented [SL1]: The verbs here are more cognitive, but the way you use them here creates a nice balance of cognitive, affective and psychomotor learning outcomes.

Approach and Values

A whole-person approach to education is:

“one that seeks to cultivate in the learner the integrated development of the powers of mind, heart and will, so that the person can manifest a growing consistency between what they know and understand, what they care about and love, and the daily choices they make.” (Podger, D. M., et al., 2010).

Sustainability Values

Based on sustainability principles, competencies and pedagogies, this course fosters:

- Empowering & Action-oriented Activities,
- Experiential & Participatory Learning and
- Collaborative and transdisciplinary knowledge co-creation.

It also fosters *social sustainability* by improving education, gender equality, and collaborations, and *economic sustainability* by bringing evidence-based knowledge about musicians’ health and wellbeing.

Similarly to McGill’s definition of sustainable development, it seeks to *“meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”* (Brundtland Report, 1987). In practice this means: Knowing how to use and develop your own pool of resources and skills is essential in reaching and maintaining a healthy and sustainable career.

Commented [SL2]: This is a nice way of summarizing the sustainability values, competencies, and pedagogies.

This is your own journey!

To benefit from this class, you need:

An open mind and curiosity to enquire what your needs are in terms of wellbeing, performance and practice enhancement; a genuine enthusiasm exploring new knowledge and strategies to optimize your own practice, performances and everyday life. **The more engaged you are, the more you will benefit from it!**

Commented [SL3]: This is a really nice graphic! Did you create it?

Concept Map



Course Materials – CHECK MyCourses weekly & more !

All required material (synchronous and asynchronous information - readings, videos, announcements, surveys, assessments, etc.) will be posted and updated on MyCourses under weekly activities. **Please set the notifications on myCourses or download Pulse Mobile App.** Please submit assignments on MyCourses. [McGill IT Knowledge - FAQs for students using myCourses \(service-now.com\)](#)

All material will be available on myCourses. The main readings (below) offer essential content for successful completion of the course.

- o Watson, A. H. D. (2009). *The biology of musical performance and performance-related injury*. Scarecrow Press. Retrieved September 4, 2023, from <https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/647874058>

- Anatomy.tv interactive resource: [Anatomy.tv titles](#)

Instructional Methods

- In-person sessions might include introductory lectures to topics, database searches, individual and small group tasks with presentations and discussions.
- Asynchronous activities might include self-directed and individual preparatory work as well as group activities including reading, critical analysis, writing, participation in survey and screening activities.
- Polling (Slido) might occasionally be used in this course to enhance engagement, increase interactivity, and provide overall community response overview for discussion; It won't be used for assessment. Further guidelines about Polling below.
- You will also be asked to use **Perusall** for interactive but asynchronous discussion through the week. Guidelines will be provided.
- In-class technology (computer, tablet, phone, etc.) might be used for specific learning activities. Please mutual respect is expected – when someone is presenting, all should listen and engage to co-create knowledge.

Preliminary schedule

Content may be adapted to the students' needs and interests. Changes will be updated on myCourses.

Class	Date	Description	Assignments and/or Readings Due
1	Jan. 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction ● Myths - Opinion/facts – Critical analysis ● Perusall introduction 	
2	Jan. 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Body Plan and organization ● Internet and reference evaluation ● Science and Music Databases 	<i>Perusall Discussion 1</i>
3	Jan. 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Musculoskeletal system ● Portfolio guidelines 	<i>Perusall Discussion 2</i>
4	Jan. 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nervous system ● Health literacy surveys 	<i>Perusall Discussion 3</i> <i>Journalling</i>
5	Feb. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Respiratory System 	<i>Perusall Discussion 4</i> <i>Journalling</i>
TBC	Week of Feb. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical screenings 	
6	Feb 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hearing system 	<i>Perusall Discussion 5</i> <i>Journalling</i>
7	Feb. 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stress theories & biological path ● Endocrine system Respiratory System 	<i>Perusall Discussion 6</i> <i>Journalling</i>
8	Feb. 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Poster assignment guidelines ● Nutrition 	<i>Perusall Discussion 7</i> <i>Portfolio Section A Submission</i>
	Mars 3-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Break! 	

9	Mars 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women's health in performance 	<i>Perusall Discussion 8</i> <i>Portfolio section B Submission</i>
10	Mars 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poster workshop – peer-feedback 	<i>Poster draft</i>
11	Mars 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy expenditure and other topics 	<i>Repository completion</i>
12	April 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poster Presentation and Discussion group 1 	<i>Poster presentation</i>
13	April 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poster Presentation and Discussion group 2 	<i>Poster Presentation</i> <i>Poster Reflection group 1</i>
	April 18		<i>Poster Reflection group 2</i> <i>Portfolio Section C Submission</i>

Evaluation

Collaborative work (What we know) on Perusall - 30% - weekly discussions and individual small assignments.

- Engaging in collaborative work to compare, debate and evaluate evidence-based existing resources and common knowledge and associated solutions to the needs and challenges of a music performer.

Assessment and Action Portfolio 45%

- A- Needs assessment – data acquisition (screening, health literacy survey, journaling), reflection (20%) – Feb 28
- B- Action plan (10%) - goal setting and timeline based on needs – March 14
- C- Strategy implementation, assessment, reflection (15%) – April 18

Knowledge sharing 25%

- A- Repository of evidence-based resources on Perusall (15%) – through the term – final March 28
- B- Poster presentation (10%) – Draft – March 21; Presentation April 4 & 11

Late submissions without prior arrangement will be penalized. Extensions may be requested for assignments but not for the weekly discussion work on Perusall. Those discussions are preparatory work so timely submission are expected, along with attendance. Perusall late submissions without prior arrangement or with more than three absences may be penalized up to 50% of the allocated points. For other late submissions 0.5% per day of delay will be subtracted.

Assessment Criteria & Scale

Engagement & Critical thinking - Evidence of engagement with course materials including the use of critical thinking skills (analysis, relevant questioning, attention to details, innovative reflection).

Reflection on practice - Evidence of reflection on the application of learning to practice and performance (links between course material and experience, identification of challenges and potential solutions, exploration of new development & approaches).

Communication skills- Clarity and coherence in written and oral work, capacity of synthesis and linking ideas (careful attention to spelling, grammar, and text and language structure; clarity in the points being made and strong links between ideas).

Referencing - Inclusion of full bibliographic details of all sources being referenced, using APA style.

Collaboration skills - Evidence of engagement in group discussions and work (giving and receiving feedback in a constructive and supportive manner, respect of other participants' contributions, uplifting and purposeful contributions).

Scale.

No answer (0), Weak (1), Developing (2), Competent (3), Outstanding (4).

Full rubrics will be provided with guidelines for each assignment on myCourses.

Participation guidelines

- Health and wellness are topics that draw heavily upon individual experiences and therefore, engaging weekly in reflective thinking, experiential learning and participating actively in group discussions and work will make the learning more enjoyable and meaningful, and will help you prepare better for assessment. **Interactive peer-learning and experiential activities are key to your learning! Attendance is expected.**
- Please note that the guidelines for planning learning activities state that one credit equals about 45 hours of student work. Thus, for this three-credit course it is expected that students engage with about 180 hours of work including contact time.

Instructor Message Regarding Safe and Inclusive Learning Environment

As the instructor of this course, I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and/or [Student Accessibility & Achievement - McGill University](#). I see that the diversity that students bring to this class is a resource, strength and benefit. I am very easily reachable and open to listening and helping you navigate this course, the various systems and challenges in your respective programs. Please do not hesitate to reach out. "The University is committed to maintaining teaching and learning spaces that are respectful and inclusive for all. To this end, offensive, violent, or harmful language arising in contexts such as the following may be cause for disciplinary action: Zoom sessions, including Username (use only your legal or preferred name), virtual backgrounds, "chat" boxes, whiteboard annotations, breakout rooms myCourses discussion fora".

Land Acknowledgement:

McGill University is located on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. McGill honours, recognizes and respects these nations as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we meet today. [McGill Land Acknowledgement 2021 \(youtube.com\)](#)

Wellness

- All students are invited to voice their ideas freely, and to take the courage to explore the intellectual, emotional, and experiential situations that may emerge in this course with openness and compassion. To ensure an environment of respectful and open participation, interaction, and communication, participation rules will be discussed and agreed between instructor and students in the first class of the course (group norms).
- Students with individual circumstances that prevent them in taking part to the learning and assessment tasks should contact the instructor to discuss alternative participation options at the earliest convenience: it is possible to let the instructor know that you'd like to **opt out** of in-person discussions on specific days.
- Many students may face mental health challenges that can impact not only their academic success but also their ability to thrive in our campus community. Please reach out for support when (or before) you need it; wellness resources are available on campus, off campus, and online: [Wellness Hub](#). Also, please know that you can reach out for support from [Student Services](#), the Schulich School of Music [Local Wellness Advisor](#), if you are feeling overwhelmed by your academic work and/or would like to further develop your time and workload management skills, you can find some useful tips [here](#).

Language of Submission:

"In accord with McGill University's [Charter of Students' Rights](#), students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives."

« Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue). »

Polling information

- During a class with polling questions, you will be asked to respond to questions from the instructor from a personal device (smartphone, tablet, or laptop).
- Students should come to class with their devices charged and [connected to the Internet](#).
- If you do not have a phone, tablet, or laptop to use to respond to polling questions, please contact the instructor immediately in order for appropriate arrangements to be made.
- Guidelines for polling are available through www.mcgill.ca/polling.
- To participate in a Polling session, you will be provided with a QR code that can be scanned or a Slido code that can be entered [here](#). If you are asked to Login with SSO (Single Sign-On), enter your McGill credentials and follow any Two-Factor Authentication prompts.
- For any technical problems with polling, please contact the [IT Service Desk](#).
- To maintain a safe and respectful classroom environment, please ensure that any polling and Q & A responses you submit are appropriate and relevant to the question asked. Please note that unless the poll is labelled as anonymous, your responses are identifiable to everyone. Please see the [Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#).

Academic Integrity:

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures” (see [McGill’s guide to academic honesty](#) for more information). (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students' Rights (see the [Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)).

Artificial Intelligence: is now omnipresent in multiple aspects of our lives. Although not fully aware of the limitations and benefits, we might use it to populate case studies and develop critical thinking skills.

Copyright

© Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

The [Policy on assessment of student learning](#) exists to ensure fair and equitable academic assessment for all students and to protect students from excessive workloads. All students and instructors are encouraged to review this Policy, which addresses multiple aspects and methods of student assessment, e.g. the timing of evaluation due dates and weighting of final examinations.

“[End-of-course evaluations](#) are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.”

“In the event of **extraordinary circumstances** beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.”

Some useful references

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[Introduction - Musicians' health and wellness - Guides at McGill Library](#)