

Video Game Music

Dartmouth College ◀ Music 7 ▶ First-Year Seminar
Winter 2017

Instructor: Professor William Cheng

Email address: william.cheng@dartmouth.edu

Course hours: T & Th, 10:10am–12:00pm (x period: W 3:30–4:20pm)

Office hours: By appointment

Office location: 64 Hopkins

Office phone: 603-646-3310

Illustration by Ronald Kurniawan

Course description and objectives

This course offers an introduction to the craft and culture of video game audio. We will lend our ears to the imaginative ways in which music, sound, noise, and voice are employed and experienced in virtual gameworlds. Besides perusing scholarly literature on games and music, we will participate in gaming sessions and attend concerts. We will listen thoughtfully to diverse game music, from iconic 8-bit classics to more recent orchestral repertoire.



Assignments include mini-essays, a concert review, in-class speed-writing exercises, an oral presentation, and a final paper. Proofreading and revision are important components of this course. You will have opportunities to experiment with and synthesize various writing styles: expository and creative; casual and formal; personal and critical; and more. The course is organized thematically. Instead of aiming to attain an encyclopedic knowledge of video games and their music, we will think deeply about several key issues surrounding music and games (virtuality, virtuosity, nostalgia, and canonicity, among others). A key goal will be to interrogate the roles of playfulness, boundaries, and innovation in gaming and writing alike.