Oral Tradition Musicianship focuses on two different yet similar cultures that encompass a plethora of percussion polyrhythmic forms and West African and Latin American folk music. The course material focus is structured on rhythms and music that is performed in Sub Saharan Africa and Latin America. These rhythms in addition to vocal and instrumental music make up the audio and visual (documentaries) components taught in Music 51. The course examines the cultural and historical links that exists between, Sub Saharan Africa and Latin America. Cultural Folklore and Oral Tradition Musicianship inform the literature and musical foundation for the mythological legends and epics presented in class.

Each weekly session, presents and describes the history of African and Latin People’s using a variety of audio and video recordings. Music 51 is comprised of a cross section of rhythms, music and cultural context resources pertaining to Sub Saharan Africa and Latin American. Students of Music 51 will be exposed to local, national and internationally known artists whose music or cultural heritages pertain to the course material being taught.

**Method and Procedure**

The teaching paradigm used within Oral Tradition Musicianship, comes under the structure of Scholarship and Participation. The student is given an introduction to percussion studies, hand percussion and stick drumming instructions. The value of practice and rehearsal is reinforced during the course. Secular and sacred chants are taught using the Nigerian Yoruba language, and Mandinka dialect of francophone West Africa. The Latin American section deals with the Afro Cuban dialect of “lucumi” which is a combination of West African dialects and Spanish. Percussion instruments are the primary resource and concentration. A variety of melodic instruments are discussed and encouraged for performances. The melodic aspect of the course presents a spectrum of music literature, contemporary music charts and scores.

The student is to establish a firm understanding of African and Latin American rhythms. The cultural function of each rhythm is thereby defined and taught. The time signatures involved along with the complexities of percussion ensemble arrangements are critical learning factors. A key point in the application of African and Latin American drumming is the fact that it is tonal in nature. Within the organized drumming ensemble work, it is important to note the multiple polyrhythmic structures. The over arching focus and objective of the practice sessions in Music 51 is to highlight the melodic tonal elements found in these rhythms.

West African and Latin American percussion groups are organized as an ensemble, either in small groups or large orchestras. The audio and video series will provide the cultural
context in which these musics and rhythms are preserved. As well as provide a visual model of the percussion ensembles and orchestras.

**Assigned films and audio recordings are to be viewed and listened to in preparation for listening and written midterm and final exams.**

**Objective:** To view and listen to the cultural ramifications encompassed in the practical application of Latin American and West African Music, Culture and Folklore.

Films (three part series) - Title, “The Routes of Rhythm”. These three films depict a historical perspective of Cuba; from the cities of Havana to Santiago. The musical genres and the manner in which the music and rhythms are structured are also featured.

Film Five – Title, “King of the Drum”. Manady Keita is a Djembe fola, (Master Drummer) from Guinea, West Africa. He presently lives a self-imposed exile in Belgium.

Film Six – Title, “Jobate”. This film features a large ensemble of Senegalese Wolof drummers. It highlights the perfuming conducting skills of composer and Master Drummer, Doudou N’Diaye Rose.

Film Seven – Repercussion Series of One – Title, “Drums of the Dagbon”. Details the music and function of Northern Ghanaian Traditional Music and dance. A Sub Saharan Muslim Culture.

Film Eight – Repercussion Series Two – A celebration of African American Music, Title, “Born Musicians”. A film of the transference of information from one generation to the next through the Oral Tradition. The first segment of the film talks about early gospel music, followed by West African Music of Legendary Sons and Ceremonies.

**Grading and Scoring**

- Attendance – 10%
- Participation – 20%
- Percussion Skills - 30%
- Listening Exams – 10%
- Journals – 10%
- Final projects – 20%

**Listening Assignments**

Listening assignments will consist of traditional West African Music from Nigeria, Mali and Senegal. Latin American Music will focus on the cultures of Cuba and its Afro Cuban Music genres and folklore.

Refer to CD’s on reserve in Paddock Library.

**Journals are to be type written upon submission at the end of the term.**
Students are required to maintain a journal of all class activities and related subjects in and out of the classroom structure. Areas of focus as they relate to the journals are rhythms in music and how rhythms impact upon our daily lives. The daily journal entries must include notes from the various films, live presentations, performances, and audio recordings. Interactions between class practice sessions, as well as the students’ relationship to the subject of practical and abstract rhythms. Students will be required to practice all African and Latin rhythms taught in class. Students are required to be prepared to perform all rhythms in both a cultural and creative context. Student will attend designated performances as a part of the participation grade score.

Films to Be Viewed – Eight Films (one is a three-part series).

**Note:** The information contained in these films will make up part of the Take Home Exam.

Oral Tradition Musicianship: Music 51
Weekly Overview.

First Section of Music 51 - focuses on West Africa, the Djembe Drum and instruments associated with the Mandinka and Malinke Cultures of Mali and Guinea, West Africa. This particular section will concentrate on the role of the “Griot” musician/historian as well as the drumming of the Malinke and Mandinka people of Francophone West Africa.

Second Section of Music 51 - will investigate technique and rhythm for Conga Drums and percussion bells and bass drums, Timbales, Shekere, etc., with a focus on musical genres in Cuba and Latin America.

First Week – Discussion and introduction to the world of Oral Tradition Musicianship, recreational and ceremonial music. An overview of films and recorded music samples of Latin American and African Musical Genres.

Second Week – Experiencing polyrhythm - This process involves rhythmic orientation of pulse and tempo. Class members are required to perform rhythm patterns, which comprise the foundation of recreational and ritual rhythms.


Fourth Week – West African Music and Contemporary Afro Pop. The rhythms of Lamba, Kakilambe (Kakilambe is considered the god of the forest and the god to end difficulty) and the rhythms of Mandjani.

Fifth Week – Music of the Americas – Introduction to Music of Latin America. Practice session of Rumba Guaguancó and Nanigo, combining and blending rhythmic
components. Including Clave, Congas, Shekere and stick patterns with syllabic vocalizing, singing Rumba and Nanigo rhythm patterns in tune and time. The focus is on placement of rhythm in a musical context, with relationship to Call and Response (an African form of verbal and musical expression).

Sixth Week –
Practice session of Rumba Guaguancó and Nanigo, combining and blending rhythm components, Clave, Congas, Shekere and sticks.
Continued syllabic vocalizing, singing Rumba and Nanigo, rhythm patterns of the song being sung while maintaining the proper timing.


Eighth Week – Performance of all previously studied rhythms, songs and selected compositions, in addition to full and partial group improvisation tunes. These performances are open to invited guest as well as other Dartmouth students and classes.

Ninth Week – Final individual cultural or family heritage project presentations.
Students identity and articulate their personal and family heritage in a presentation.

Tenth Week – Continue with project presentations.

Note: A small lab fee for instrument rentals will be assigned to your student account.