

CAT 124 - “Erm-BYAH!-O O O”: Singing Through Life

Instructor: Jasper Sussman

Summer Session I 2021

course group page: <https://kmit.ucsd.edu/groups/singing-through-life/>

course website: <https://kmit.ucsd.edu/singingthroughlife/>

T/Th 12:00-1:50 [synchronous seminars]

Zoom Location: See Canvas Course Site

for Office Hours: <https://ucsd.zoom.us/my/jaspersussman>

Jasper Sussman

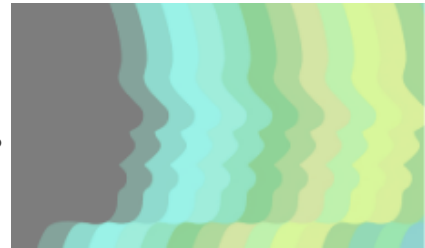
dsussman@ucsd.edu (please allow 24 hours for a response, longer on weekends)

(she/her/hers)

Office Hours: 3:30-4:30PM PDT, and by appointment

Course Description:

Song and dance have been essential to the fabric of human societies since our very beginnings. We sing to celebrate unions, accomplishments, and times of year; mothers rock and soothe their babies to sleep, and children learn their "ABCs" to the captivating sounds of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" and its companions across the globe. In this course, students are provided with an opportunity to consider the role that singing plays in their lives, both personally and interpersonally. How does vocal activity contribute to productive social subsistence, preservation, and change? What is the impact of singing, both in groups and individually, on aspects of health, identity formation, and one's sense of self-efficacy? By engaging in diverse vocal performance and observation practices, students will grapple with these central questions. Course activities are focused around real-world applications and reflections as opposed to purely theoretical learning modalities. Practicum elements will include singing with and for others, conducting ethnographic fieldwork (such as conducting interviews and logging experiences), and leading interactive vocal activities with members of the greater community. No prior musical or vocal performance experience is necessary for success in this course—bring your voice, just the way it is!



Learning Objectives:

This course will guide students to:

- Recognize and identify diverse forms of musical engagement,
- Assess, for themselves, the role that singing (and the voice more broadly) plays in their lives,
 - by way of self-reflective and critical ethnographic engagement and data gathering,
 - exposure to diverse perspectives and contexts,
 - and thorough comprehension of central texts,
 - understanding that each student will come to their own unique conclusions.
- Consider the broader impact of music-making on human societies, and
- Create and curate multi-modal ethnographies for public audiences around their findings.

Community Partners:

Engagement with our partners at [Songs by Heart](#) and [Voices of Our City](#) is a central aspect of this course. Although we are meeting remotely this summer, members from both of these communities will be joining us in class to share their experiences, lead interactive vocal activities, and answer your questions. Please be prepared to welcome them, and to learn from their diverse experiences.

Additional engagement in Songs by Heart programming **has been scheduled** into our course structure, and participation is expected, as it will also be hosted over Zoom just before our regularly scheduled lecture on **Thursday, July 15**.

For students living in San Diego, CA over the duration of the course, Voices of Our City has graciously invited us to their in-person choir rehearsals, taking place at **Quartyard from 11:30am-1pm on Mondays**. [More details forthcoming.] **Participation is highly encouraged**.

Lastly, students are encouraged to join and participate in weekly sing-a-longs with the [Sofa Singers](#), an online global community of regular people sharing in the experience of singing twice a week. This, along with all community and course experiences, will inform your understanding of course themes and materials, and will enrich your available data for course projects.

The practicum conditions of the CAT 124 curriculum require roughly **20 hours of experiential learning per week** outside of class-time. Participation in the community activities listed here, along with the subsequent ethnographic logging of each experience (including in-class experiences and assignment related data acquisition), the evaluation of these logs, and the development of present themes into multi-modal ethnographic blog posts will fulfill this demand. *I've found it takes approximately 2-3x longer to adequately write about an experience than it takes for it to occur: plan accordingly.*

Course Requirements and Expectations:

Please Note: Success in this course will require effective time management.

It is you, the student, who are responsible for meeting course deadlines.

Work *Early*, and Work *Often*.

Major assignments (Project #1, Project #2, and the Final Reflection Blog) are developed overtime; due to the accelerated nature of Summer Session, final deadlines will be enforced and extension requests received close to deadlines will likely be denied. Plan accordingly, and give yourself time to saturate for maximal growth and enjoyment!

Assignments may only receive full credit if received by their published Due Date or by an agreed upon extended Due Date. Each day following the original Due Date, the assignment will lose 1/3 or a letter grade. No late assignments will be accepted after a week's time.

Assignments & Grading

In-Class Work / Participation	30%
Readings (with <i>students'</i> comments)	10%
Project #1 - Lullaby Podcast + Blog	30%
Project #2 - Solo Singing and Autoethnography (w/ Video)	30%
Final Reflection - Singing and Humanity Blog	[up to 5% extra credit]

- **In-Class Work / Participation (30%)**

- For each of our 10 ten class periods, students will be awarded up to 2.5 pts (or 3% of their overall grade) for their in-class work and participation.
 - 2.5 pts will be awarded to students who are *fully engaged*, with their *cameras on at all times*, who are *present for the entire duration of the session*, and who *actively and fully participate in class activities and assignments*.
 - 2 pts will be awarded to students who are *mostly engaged in class*, who have their *cameras on at all times*, who are *present for the entire duration of the class*, and who are *mostly active and participating in class activities and assignments*.
 - Students who turn their *cameras off at times*, are *partially engaged*, and *arrive late or leave before the end of class* will receive **1 pt** for the day.
 - Those who *do not turn on their cameras*, who are *not participating*, and/or who *are not present* will receive a **0**.
- Lectures will be interactive and include hands-on learning experiences that are vital to course goals. **Please let Jasper know in advance if you will miss a class meeting.**
- This course asks students to engage in activities that are likely unfamiliar and perhaps uncomfortable (i.e. singing in front of other people, leading group singing activities, and practicing reflexive writing). That's okay! It is through *doing* that understanding and growth will occur. **Students are expected to lean into their discomfort and put consistent time and attention into coursework, even and especially when questions of significance and methodology arise.** There is no one perfect method for ethnographic engagement, it is instead an individual process of discovery. Students are expected to stretch themselves, come prepared to discuss readings and ethnographic experiences each class period, and dive into class activities with abandon.

- **Readings, with students' comments (10%)**

- Readings must be completed *before* the class period they are associated with to frame in-class discussions and activities.
- Links to readings are posted on our course websites, and on this syllabus in the "Weekly Schedule" section below. They are designated as either *Required* or *Suggested*, and **those that require your written engagement are marked thusly**. Directions for engagement are also included.
 - Points for readings are awarded based on your written engagement with 5 designated texts. Students will be awarded up to 2 pts (or 2% of their overall grade) for their engagement with each text.
 - Possible credit to be awarded: 2, 1.5, 1, or 0 pts.
 - 2 pts - awarded for excellent written work; complete, thoughtful, free of errors, demonstrates thorough engagement
 - 1.5 pts - awarded for adequate written work; nearly complete, underdeveloped, mostly error-free, demonstrates adequate engagement

- 1 pt - awarded for inadequate written work; incomplete, inadequate development, noticeable errors, and fails to demonstrate engagement

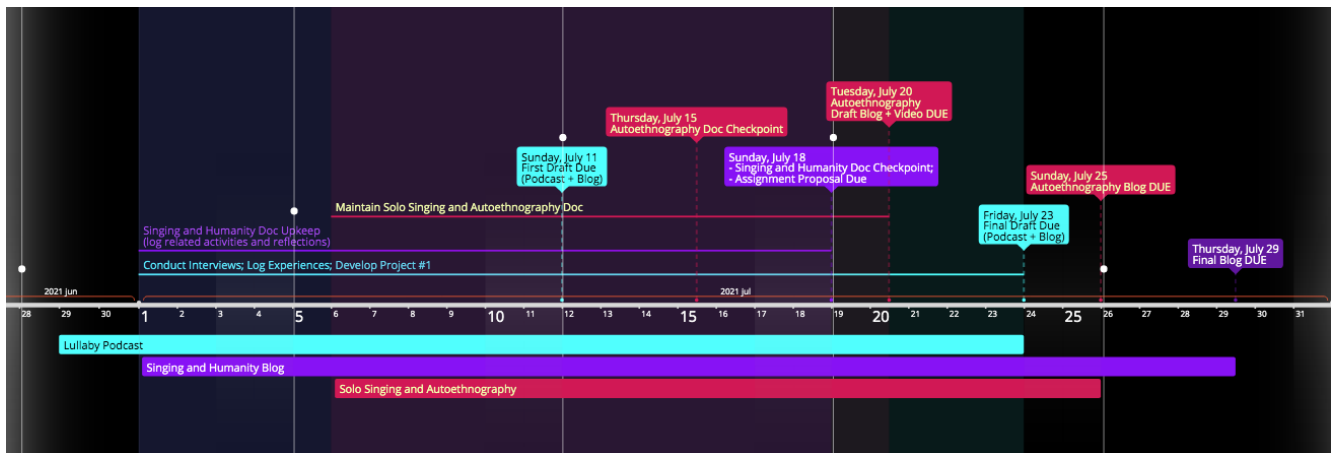
- **Project #1 - Lullaby Podcast + Blog (30%)**
 - In assigned pairs or groups of 3, students will co-produce a podcast episode and accompanying blog post for publication via our [course website](#). The episode will center around the subject of “lullabies,” and provides students with the opportunity to evaluate how this intimate human activity reveals both our cultural differences, on the one hand, and species-wide similarities, on the other. As the subjects interviewed will ideally be the students’ own family members, it also presents a unique opportunity for students to acknowledge the role that singing has played in their own lives since infancy.
 - Episodes are to be approximately 35 minutes in length, and must include contributions from each team member. Accompanying blog reports are to be between 1,000 - 2,000 words.

 - **This assignment is scaffolded, with three major components:**
 - **From the start of the term**, students will maintain a **Project #1 Doc (6%)**, co-developed with their group mates and hosted on our course group site, <https://knit.ucsd.edu/groups/singing-through-life/docs/>. The upkeep of this document includes the development of interview questions, field notes, and the ethnographic evaluation of the interview and podcast-creation experience.
 - Project #1 Docs will be awarded 5, 4, 3, or 0 pts.
 - 5 - Complete, thoughtful and developed work, updated consistently
 - 4 - Complete, thoughtful but underdeveloped ideas (*could have more*)
 - 3 - Incomplete, some thought, underdeveloped
 - **First drafts (9%)** of the episode and accompanying blog post are due on **Sunday, July 11 by 11:59pm**. Students will receive feedback within a week’s time.
 - Drafts will be awarded 7.5, 5, 2.5, or 0 pts.
 - 7.5 - meets length requirements (*possibly a bit longer*); materials edited with thought and effectiveness
 - 5 - under length requirements; underdeveloped, unedited or sloppily edited materials
 - 2.5 - missing components; little to no effort to edit and develop audio and blog materials
 - **Final drafts (15%)** are due on **Friday, July 23 by 11:59pm**.
 - Final drafts will be awarded a letter grade. For [assignment rubric](#) and full details (i.e. how-to resources on podcast creation, conducting interviews, and assignment submission), see our Canvas course site.

- **Project #2 - Solo Singing and Autoethnography (w/ Video) (30%)**

- Throughout the course, students will be guided to explore their voices and selves through mastering a song of their choosing. The experiences involved, documented in a field journal, will culminate in a reflexive piece of writing to be published as a blog post on our [course website](#), alongside a video produced by each student of their performance of their song. *This project centers each individuals' personal journey- it does not aim to reward "skillful" performances over "unskilled" performances, as such conceptions are rigid and unhelpful to us in this course. That said, this project does require students to embrace vulnerability and share their voices.*
 - Songs are to be no more than 3 minutes in length (*it is acceptable to learn a segment of a larger work*), and performance videos must demonstrate thought behind their presentation elements (i.e. lighting, sound, location, performance persona). Accompanying blog posts are to be between 1,000 - 2,000 words.
- **This assignment is scaffolded, with three major components:**
 - From the start of the term, students will maintain a **Project #2 Doc (6%)**, hosted on our course group site, <https://knit.ucsd.edu/groups/singing-through-life/docs/>. The upkeep of this document includes the development of autoethnographic writing around the significance of singing specific songs, and the evaluation of the learning, sharing, and video-creation experience of solo singing.
 - Project #1 Docs will be awarded 5, 4, 3, or 0 pts.
 - 5 - Complete, thoughtful and developed work, updated consistently
 - 4 - Complete, thoughtful but underdeveloped ideas (*could have more*)
 - 3 - Incomplete, some thought, underdeveloped
 - **First drafts (9%)** of the blog post and accompanying video are due on **Tuesday, July 20 by 11:59am**. Students will receive Peer Review feedback in class.
 - Drafts will be awarded 7.5, 5, 2.5, or 0 pts.
 - 7.5 - meets length requirements (*possibly a bit longer*); materials edited with thought and effectiveness
 - 5 - under length requirements; underdeveloped, unedited or sloppily edited materials
 - 2.5 - missing components; little to no effort to edit and develop audio and blog materials
 - **Final drafts (15%)** are due on **Sunday, July 25 by 11:59pm**.
 - Final drafts will be awarded a letter grade. For [assignment rubric](#) and full details (i.e. how-to resources on performance video creation, music learning, and assignment submission), see our Canvas course site.

- **[EXTRA CREDIT] Final Reflection - Singing and Humanity Blog (up to 5%)**
 - The final large assignment for the course is a self-reflective ethnographic essay in the form of a 750-1,500 word blog post, to be published publicly to our KNIT course website. The content and theme of the blog, though personal to each student, is to be about *the role of the voice in human life*. Students are expected to draw upon course readings, engagement with course community partners, in-class student and public activities, and their reflexive writing on such subjects in developing their essays.
 - **This assignment is scaffolded.** A living document holding students' observations, an assignment proposal, and the completed blog post are the primary components of this assignment.
 - **From Week 1 onwards**, students will maintain a **Singing and Humanity Doc**, hosted on our group site, <https://knit.ucsd.edu/groups/singing-through-life/>. Topics to be discussed are in-class conversations with community partners, musical interactions with community partners (in *their* domains, as possible), in-class student and public activities, course materials, related life experiences, and beyond [*everything* is potential data]. There is a Doc Checkpoint on **Sunday, July 18 at 11:59pm**, and students should be prepared to share their writing without notice in lecture throughout the term.
 - Singing and Humanity Docs will be awarded 4.5, 3.6, 2.7, or 0 pts.
 - 4.5 - Complete, thoughtful, developed work, updated consistently
 - 3.6 - Complete, thoughtful, underdeveloped ideas (*could have more*)
 - 2.7 - Incomplete, some thought, underdeveloped
 - The **Assignment Proposal** for the Final Reflection Blog is due on **Sunday, July 18 by 11:59pm**. It is to be approximately 250 words, and should concisely summarize the intended content of the blog. Students should take care to articulate a primary focus or theme for their post, draft out a thesis (it can be observational in nature, or inquisitive), and list the representative experiences they plan to expand upon in their final writing. Proposals will be discussed with Jasper during individual meetings on **Thursday, July 22**.
 - Assignment Proposals will be awarded 3, 2, 1, or 0 pts.
 - 3 - meets length and content requirements, written with thought and effectiveness, proof-read for errors
 - 2 - under length requirements though has required contents, underdeveloped and lacking refinement, noticeable errors
 - 1 - missing components, little to no effort to edit and develop ideas
 - The **Final Reflection** is due by our final class meeting, at **11:59am** Thursday, July 29, and will be accepted until the end of the day Friday July 30.
 - The assignment will be awarded up to 5% in extra credit. For [assignment rubric](#) and submission details, see our Canvas course website.



Timeline of 3 major assignments, with affiliated work periods and important dates.

Accessing KNIT:

1. Log into KNIT using your Active Directory credentials at <https://knit.ucsd.edu/>. Please note that your login name is not your entire UCSD email address, but only the first part: “**YourLogin@ucsd.edu.**”
2. Navigate to our group page, <https://knit.ucsd.edu/groups/singing-through-life/>.
3. Click the button “request to join”. When I approve your request, you will have access to post to the KNIT group or site. Please note that sites have a different URL than groups: “<https://knit.ucsd.edu/singthroughlife/>.”

Important Policies:

- It is the responsibility of all students to familiarize themselves with [UCSD’s academic integrity policy](#). Violations of academic integrity in this course will not be tolerated and can result in an automatic F as well as university sanctions.
- Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), which is located in University Center 202.
- Students are expected to adhere to the [UCSD Principles of Community](#), especially during lecture and when writing public blog posts.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Please Note: This syllabus is a living document, and will continue to evolve throughout the quarter. I reserve the right to alter this schedule as the course progresses and in response to class dialogues.

All homework is due at the start of the class period following its inclusion, except when otherwise specified.
All readings and associated comments are due by the start of class time on the date listed.

WEEK 1: *Ethnomusicology and the Voice; Course Foundations*

Objectives:

Understand course expectations;

Develop skills in and awareness of ethnographic data collection practices;

Recognize ethnomusicological stance on ubiquitous nature of music-making in human life

Tuesday, June 29—*To be human is to be musical; life is data*

- **Read:**
 - **Required**
 - **(w/ Written Engagement)** - [Christopher Small](#) - “Prelude,” *Musicking*, 1-18.
 - [Timothy Rice](#) - “Chapter 1: Defining Ethnomusicology,” *Ethnomusicology, a Very Short Introduction*, 1-10.
 - **Suggested**
 - [Samuel A. Mehr, et. al.](#) - “Form and Function in Human Song,” *Current Biology* 28, 356-368. **TO SKIM.** *pertains to in-class activity*
 - [Gary Tomlinson](#) - “Some First Principles,” *A Million Years of Music: The Emergence of Human Modernity.* 23-26 **[READ]**, 27-50 **[SKIM]**.
- **In Class (and beyond):** Create and begin populating Project #1 Doc, with partner(s). Create and begin populating Singing and Humanity Doc individually. Full details and related activities to be discussed in class.
- **Homework:** With Project #1 partner(s), solidify interview plans and questions, and update shared Doc to reflect all details.

Thursday, July 1—*The power of singing, personally and interpersonally*

GUESTS: [Steph Johson](#) and friends (TBD) from [Voices of Our City](#).

- **Read:**
 - **Required**
 - **(w/ Written Engagement)** - [Michelle Kisliuk](#) - “(Un)doing Fieldwork: Sharing Songs, Sharing Lives,” *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, 183-205.
 - **(w/ Written Engagement)** - [Amanda Weidman](#) - “voice,” *Keywords in Sound*, 232-245.
 - **Suggested**
 - [Elena Passarello](#) - “The Wilhelm Scream,” *Let Me Clear My Throat, Essays*, 11-24.

- **In Class:** Update Singing and Humanity Doc with reflections on course events (i.e. interactions with Voices of Our City community members).
- **Homework:** Conduct and record interviews; upload unedited audio to Project #1 folder on group site; update Project #1 Doc with field notes and transcriptions (copied from Zoom).

Friday, July 2—*Sofa Singers: 3am PDT; 11am BST (recommended for students tuning in internationally)*

WEEK 2: Music, Memory, and Connection

Objectives:

Discover the various layers of meaning in vocal activity;

Deepen understanding of reflexive field note-taking;

Practice translating data into ethnography

Tuesday, July 6—*Exploring Song, Exploring Self*

- **Read/Listen**
 - **Required**
 - **(w/ Written Engagement)** - [Diana Van Lancker Sidtis - “Ancient of Days The Vocal Pattern as Primordial Big Bang of Communication,” *The Oxford Handbook of Voice Perception*, 1-29.](#)
 - [Lisa Sokolov - \[excerpts\] *Embodied VoiceWork: Beyond Singing*, 3-6, 26, 28, 30-31, 46-50, 152-161. \[When you come to the “PLAY” sections on p. 28, 49-50, give them a go! Then document the experience in a new DOC following the Project #2 Guide Doc directions. SKIM pp. 152-161.\]](#)
 - **Suggested**
 - [PODCAST] [James Sills - “Richard Huntington on finding focus and flow through singing,” *This is Why We Sing*. NOTE: Produced by the founder of the Sofa Singers.](#)
 - *I’d recommend listening for both the content and the structure- take notes for YOUR podcasts!*
 - **For examples of podcasts with strong transitions and claims, see The Choral Commons podcasts:** <https://www.thechoralcommons.com/engender>
- **In Class:** Create and begin populating Project #2 Doc. [Full details given in class.]
 - Come prepared with a song you know well, that feels comfortable in your voice, and that you’d like to explore as a solo singer (think karaoke). The song should be no longer than 3 minutes.
 - Additionally, be prepared to share your Project #1 progress.
- **Homework:** Begin molding your Project #1 interviews into audience-friendly podcast episodes or minisodes. Also, start to develop your Project #1 field notes into ethnographic reports.

Thursday, July 8—*How do we learn music?*

- **Read/Watch:**
 - **Required**
 - **(w/ Written Engagement)** - [FILM] [Mister Rogers: It’s You I Like - A Retrospective of Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood. PBS.](#) (see Canvas for engagement details)

- [Graham Welch and Adam Ockelford - “The importance of music in supporting the development of children with learning disabilities,” *IJBPE*, vol 2, issue 3, 21-23.](#) *pertains to in-class activity*
- [Markku Kaikkonen - “Music for All: Everyone has the Potential to Learn Music.” *Exceptional music pedagogy for children with exceptionalities: international perspectives*, 10-11.](#) *pertains to in-class activity*
- **Suggested**
 - [PODCAST] Carvell Wallace - “A Genius of Empathy,” *Finding Fred*.
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/a-genius-of-empathy/id1477279443?i=1000454448482>. *Fantastically produced (more scripting than you’ll have on your Project #1).*
- **In Class:** In pairs, develop a 5-8 minute lesson plan that aims to teach a diverse audience a small section of one person’s solo song from Project #2, or a segment of a lullaby learned during the Project #1 interviews. The lesson should include as many layers of connection with the song's essence as is reasonable, allowing for holistic engagement with its contents. [Lessons will be test run next class, and shared publicly next Thursday.]
- **Homework:**
 - **Due Sunday, July 11 by 11:59pm - Project #1 First Draft.** *Submit to Canvas.*
 - Additionally, update any and all field note Docs with observations from the week. This should include your Project #2 Doc, informed by individual practice of your chosen song.
 - [If unsure of how to practice, or interested in singing tips, sign up and attend Office Hours with Jasper! And don’t forget to write about it in your field notes.]

Friday, July 9—*Sofa Singers: 3am PDT; 11am BST (recommended for students tuning in internationally)*

WEEK 3: Participant Observation, and Navigating Shifting Roles

Objectives:

Practice observational engagement (a.k.a. participant observation) while singing in, with, and for communities;
Critically assess and articulate the potential significance of observed occurrences;
Experience and reflect upon the act of singing solo for a public audience, and how this act compares to other singing contexts

Monday, July 12—*Voices of Our City Choir Rehearsal. 11:30am-1pm PDT, at Quartyard: 1301 Market St., San Diego, CA 92101. (highly encouraged)*

- *To sign-up and coordinate rides, see our KNIT group site Forum.*

Tuesday, July 13—*Lessons informed by community (the WHO, the WHY, and the HOW)*

GUESTS: *Katie Hickey and friends (TBD) from [Songs by Heart](#).*

- **Read:**
 - **Required**
 - Madeleine Fernando, “Nonprofit seeks to improve quality of life through music for people with dementia,” *The Daily Northwestern*:

<https://dailynorthwestern.com/2017/10/25/ae/nonprofit-seeks-improve-quality-life-music-people-dementia/>.

- **In Class:** Test run, and potentially alter, lesson plans developed last week with a neuro-diverse community in mind.
- **Homework:**
 - Prepare, with your partner, to lead a public audience (including our friends from Songs by Heart, and anyone **you** invite) in learning your chosen song segment for next class period. Each student pair will have up to 8 minutes.
 - Additionally, prepare to sing your solo piece (from Project #2) for the class.
 - (As always, update your field note Docs.)

Thursday, July 15—Songs by Heart Session: 11:00-11:45am (attendance expected) | see Canvas for Zoom Location

Thursday, July 15—Teaching, Sharing, Singing!

- **In Class:** Lead prepared lesson plans before an audience of invited guests. Then, karaoke; everyone will share their Project #2 songs! [The solo singing will take place *after* our guests have left.]
- **Homework:**
 - **Due Sunday, July 18 by 11:59pm - Final Reflection Assignment Proposal. Submit to Canvas.**
 - **Due Tuesday, July 20 by 11:59am - Project #2 First Draft. Submit to Canvas and affiliated Docs folder on group site.**

Friday, July 16—Sofa Singers: 3am PDT; 11am BST (recommended for students tuning in internationally)

WEEK 4: Refining Understanding Through Writing

Objectives:

Assess and refine thinking around and articulation of field observations;

Develop ethnographic materials for a public audience

Monday, July 19—Voices of Our City Choir Rehearsal. 11:30am-1pm PDT, at Quartyard: 1301 Market St., San Diego, CA 92101. (highly encouraged)

- *To sign-up and coordinate rides, see our KNIT group site Forum.*

Tuesday, July 20—Peer Review

- **In Class:** Ethnographic writing deep dive. Time for feedback provided. *Singing master class if time.*
- **Homework:**
 - **Due Thursday, July 22 by 11:59am - Project #2 Draft. Submit to Canvas.**

Thursday, July 22—Individual Meetings with Jasper

- **In Class:** Peer Reviews of Project #2 Draft materials. Make sure your video and draft blog post are in the appropriate group site Docs folder, and visible to your classmates before class-time. The second half of class is dedicated to one-on-one sessions with Jasper and collective work-time on projects.

WEEK 5: Past, Present, Future - Our Vocal Lives**Objectives:**

Effectively host a music-centered public event;

Reflect on newly acquired understandings of singing and human life;

Imagine future possibilities to enable continued related work

Monday, July 26—*Voices of Our City Choir Rehearsal. 11:30am-1pm PDT, at Quartyard: 1301 Market St., San Diego, CA 92101. (highly encouraged)*

- *To sign-up and coordinate rides, see our KNIT group site Forum.*

Tuesday, July 27—*Singing with friends and family*

- **In Class:** In-class work time on Projects #1 and #2; individual meetings with Jasper.
- **Homework:** Due Thursday, July 29 by **11:59am** - Project #1 & Project #2 [optionally Singing and Humanity Blog]. Submit to Canvas and publish to course website.

Thursday, July 29—*Final Reflections*

- **In Class:** Student performances and full-group sing-a-longs (full details TBD). **Invite your friends and family!** Followed by a time to debrief, share final reflections and ideas, and submit CAPE Evaluations.

All work must be submitted by 11:59pm Friday July 30 to receive a grade.