

International Centre for Music Studies, Newcastle University
Pre-Registration reading task for new undergraduate students

Please read the following short text:

Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1-18

The text can be downloaded here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/40tvt5br2yumtlv/Nicholas%20Cook%20-%20Chapter%201.pdf?dl=0>

Write a short essay (600-800 words), identifying the key concepts in the text, and summarising the argument the author makes to support them. Briefly discuss how the concepts and arguments of the text might be applied to a track or piece of music you know well.

Deadline for submission of task: **1pm Monday 30th September in hard copy to the School Office (3rd Floor Armstrong Building)**

Please try to bear the following in mind when completing this task:

1. An essay is best constructed around a *logical argument*. Try to think carefully about how your argument works structurally – how does the argument flow from one paragraph to another?
2. Try to read this text as ‘openly’ as possible: just because it doesn’t reference the kind(s) of music you are interested in *specifically*, this doesn't mean that the text can’t be used as a way of thinking about *your* music(s) and where they fit into the bigger picture.
3. When expressing your view(s) in the essay, please make sure you back up your ideas with evidence from the text and, where appropriate, from elsewhere. Don’t just leave your opinions ‘raw’ or unsubstantiated.
4. Try to write in a way that is persuasive rather than belligerent: there is nothing wrong with having strong views, but you are more likely to persuade your readers if you keep backing up your ideas with evidence.
5. The purpose of this task is to help you to start making connections between ideas and practices and to help you develop your thinking about the things you care about: make this something you can build on; spend time on it; use this as a way of making a great start for your degree

Throughout the text, you may come across unfamiliar terms and ideas. Use a dictionary and/or other online resources to help you with this and don’t be discouraged: you don’t have to understand every twist and turn of the argument, just the general principles.

You will have opportunities to discuss the text with your tutor in and Dr Ian Biddle will also be giving a short lecture on the text in Induction Week.