

Diverse Worlds of Music
The Cali School of Music, Montclair State University
Instructor Lucie Vágnerová

COURSE DESCRIPTION

How do we listen to and understand musics from diverse cultures and parts of the world? This course examines various traditions from Africa, Asia, South America, Europe and North America through the lens of multiple disciplines in and out of music studies (ethnomusicology, sound studies, American studies, anthropology, historical musicology, journalism, documentary film) and through the practice of critical listening. The course takes a broad view of musical cultures, addressing not only sounds and performers, but also listeners, audiences, rituals, politics, the music-industrial complex, dance, and issues like diaspora, race, gender and sexuality, improvisation, and ecology.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will develop a set of listening skills and a vocabulary for thinking, writing, and speaking about music. Weekly discussions of assigned texts and media will guide the study of music in context and aid students in developing their own writing style. Critical listening at home, in class, in local musical sites, and in collaborative online spaces will enable students to address musical cultures broadly conceived.

POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS

Abide by the MSU Academic Dishonesty Policy:

Academic dishonesty is any attempt by a student to submit 1) work completed by another person without proper citation or 2) to give improper aid to another student in the completion of an assignment, such as plagiarism. No student may intentionally or knowingly give or receive aid on any test or examination, or on any academic exercise, that requires independent work. This includes, but is not limited to using technology (i.e., instant messaging, text messaging, or using a camera phone) or any other unauthorized materials of any sort, or giving or receiving aid on a test or examination without the express permission of the instructor.

Disability Accommodation:

Montclair State University's Disability Resource Center will assist students who require accommodations and services necessary to equalize access to education. The DRC provides assistance to students with physical, sensory, learning, psychological, neurological, and chronic medical disabilities. Webster Hall Rm. 100. (973) 655-5431.

Laptops, iPads, phones: Please do not use laptops, phones, and tablets in class.

Deadlines: All assignments will be announced well ahead of time; therefore, deadlines are fairly strict. I do give extensions in cases of extenuating circumstances (e.g. extended illness, family emergency). If you anticipate a high workload in other courses (e.g. a cluster of deadlines in one week), let me know as soon as possible so we can discuss time management strategies.

Academic Support Services: You are invited to address anything (reading comprehension, listening strategies, writing tips, workload) in Office Hours with me. Equally, I highly encourage *all* students to take advantage of the Center for Writing Excellence located in Bohn Hall (entrance to the left of the main entrance). The CWE consults on every stage of the writing process.

GRADING

30% Class participation

An “A” for class participation will be earned by a student who...
... always arrives on time having done the assigned listening and reading
... asks questions, debates other students, enriches our collective understanding of musical material by making connections to material from other classes, spheres of life
...acts respectfully towards other students and the instructor at all times.*

*The course requires discussion of race, gender, class, sexuality, etc. Offensive comments or attacks will not be tolerated *and* will affect your grade.

If jumping into class discussion is difficult for you, show your commitment in other ways: you may volunteer to share your homework/in-class writing assignment, engage with a peer’s online post, or send me an email with an article/resource for the class. Depending on the liveliness of discussion, I may or may not call on students. Unannounced in-class writing assignments will also count towards the Class Participation grade.

15% Wikipedia Editing Assignment

You will edit a Wikipedia music entry and write a paragraph-long statement of intent for your edit.

15% Midterm Exam

20% Musical Site Essay

You will write an analytical essay about a musical site of your choice.

20% Final Exam

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

1) Introduction to the Course

2) Music Cultures

Christopher Small, “Music and Musicking,” in *Musicking* (1998)

Thomas Turino, “Introduction: Why Music Matters,” in *Music as Social Life* (2008)

Thomas Turino, “A Shona Mbira Performance in Zimbabwe,” *The Music of Sub-Saharan Africa*

Christine Sun Kim, The Enchanting Music of Sign Language (2015) – a TED talk on “sound etiquette”

3) Recording(s)

Alec Wilkinson, "A Voice from the Past," *New Yorker* (2014)

Michael Denning, "Decolonizing the Ear: The Cultural Revolution of Vernacular Phonograph Musics," in *Noise Uprising: The Audiopolitics of a World Musical Revolution* (2015)

Trinh Minh Ha, *Reassemblage: From the Firelight to the Screen* (1983) – documentary film excerpt

4) Dance

Tomie Hahn, "Revealing Lessons—Modes of Transmission: Visual, Tactile, Oral/Aural, & Media" in *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture through Japanese Dance* (2007)

Jan Fairley, "Dancing back to front: regeton, sexuality, gender and transnationalism in Cuba," *Popular Music* (2006)

5) Diaspora

George Lipsitz, "Merengue: The Hidden History of Dominican Migration" in *Footsteps in the Dark: The Hidden Histories of Popular Music* (2007)

Susan Asai, "Transformations of Tradition: Three Generations of Japanese American Music Making," (1995)

6) Liminal Voices

Jessica Schwartz, "A 'Voice to Sing': Rongelapese Musical Activism and the Production of Nuclear Knowledge," *Music & Politics* (2012)

Nina Sun Eidsheim, "Synthesizing Race: Towards an Analysis of the Performativity of Vocal Timbre," *TRANS* (2009)

Tyva Kyzy (a women's throat-singing group) video

7) MIDTERM EXAM

8) Technology

Tong Soon Lee, "Technology and the Production of Islamic Space: The Call to Prayer in Singapore," in *Ethnomusicology: A Contemporary Reader*, ed. Post (2006)

Casey Man Kong Lum, "Karaoke and the Construction of Identity," in *In Search of a Voice: Karaoke and the Construction of Identity in Chinese America* (1996)

9) Politics and the Popular

Thomas Turino, "Music and Political Movements," in *Music as Social Life* (2008)

Nicole Hammond, "Vuvuzelas, Pop Stars and Back-up Dancers: The Politics of Rhythm and Noise at the 2010 Soccer World Cup in South Africa," *SAMUS* (2012)

David Corn, Pete Seeger's FBI File Reveals How the Folk Legend First Became a Target of the Feds, *Mother Jones* (2015)

Fela Kuti, "Music is the Weapon" (1982) excerpt

Jim Brown, *Pete Seeger: The Power of Song* (2008) excerpt

10) Color Lines

Jennifer Lynn Stoeber, "'A Voice to Match All That': LeadBelly, Richard Wright, and Lynching's Soundtrack," *The Sonic Color Line: Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening* (2016).

David Locke, "The African Ensemble in America: Contradictions and Possibilities," in *Performing Ethnomusicology* (2004)

Wesley Morris and Jenna Worthman, "'Confederate,' 'Detroit' and Who Owns Stories about Blackness," *Still Processing* New York Times podcast

11) Rhythm

Kyra Gaunt, "Introduction," in *The Games Black Girls Play: Learning the Ropes from Double-dutch to Hip-hop* (2006)

Irene Chagall, *Let's Get The Rhythm* (2016) film excerpt

Kofi Agawu, "The Invention of African Rhythm" (1995)

Elif Batuman, "Talking Drums" (2012)

12) Improvisation

Steven Slawek, "Keeping it Going: Terms, Practices, and Processes of Improvisation in Hindustani Instrumental Music," in *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, ed. Bruno Nettl and Melinda Russell (1998)

Bruno Nettl, "Music of the Middle East," in *Excursions in World Music, Sixth Edition* (2015)

13) Religion

Ellen Koskoff, "Miriam Sings Her Song," in *Musicology and Difference Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth A. Solie (1993).

Jonathan H. Shannon, "Sultans of Spin: Syrian Sacred Music on the World Stage," in *Ethnomusicology: A Contemporary Reader*, ed. Jennifer C. Post (2006)

+ field trips: Rubin Museum of Art *SOUND* exhibition; Museum of Art and Design *SONIC ARCADE: Shaping Space with Sound* exhibition; Jordi Savall, "Routes of Slavery" concert at Lincoln Center