

SYLLABUS

Course Description

In his book *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, French economist Jacques Attali asserts that “music is more than an object of study: it is a way of perceiving the world.” In this course, students will use music as a lens through which to view various cultures that produce it. Through reading music history, cultural theory, critical musicology, post-colonial theory, and most importantly, through listening, this course will introduce students to critical concepts used to examine the production and dissemination of music. Students will read across these disciplines while listening critically to relevant genres of music in order to gain a better understanding of music’s place in a variety of political/power structures.

The goal for the students is to gain exposure to a wide variety of styles and genres from western art music to Indian classical, numerous popular forms and other world musics, while developing a critical vocabulary in order to situate music's meaning to us in the present.

The course will be structured on case studies that aim to show flashpoints in the history of music and their relationship to cultural phenomenon and political movements. Some of the topics we will cover (not in a particular order):

- The Enlightenment and tempered tuning
- Musicology vs. Ethnomusicology: Western music and its other
- Composer/Hero: Beethoven and the beginnings of Romanticism
- The blues and jazz: Leroi Jones on black music
- Hip-Hop culture: selections from Tricia Rose’s *Black Noise* and Jeff Chang’s *Can’t Stop/Won’t Stop*
- Folk Traditions and American protest music – the view from coal country
- Musical and cultural appropriation: Greg Tate’s *Everything But the Burden*
- Poets and prophets -- Reggae and Dub’s blood and fire
- Béla Bartók and European nationalism in the early 20th Century

Students will be expected to complete weekly reading and listening assignments (from materials handed out or accessed electronically) and be prepared to discuss these in class. Students will be expected to attend at least one music performance of any genre and to write a short music review in the rhetorical style of the New York Times. Also they will write three short papers (2-3 pgs.) and will write several annotations based on weekly reading assignments.

Course Learning Goals:

1. Students will gain an understanding of music’s role as a carrier of cultural and political messages and meaning through reading and writing about music and through listening to music – from different eras and styles.
2. Students will begin to develop a critical vocabulary to describe how these messages are encoded in music and can be teased out of music through analysis of form and lyric.
3. Students will further develop writing skills through multiple writing assignments spanning the personal essay, critical review, and close analysis of music.

Required Text

There is no required text for this class. Students will access course material electronically.

Recommended Materials

The Elements of Style, by William Strunk, Jr. *Available free online at <http://bartleby.net/141/>.
A notebook for in-class writing and for note-taking.

Assignments and Grading

There are no exams for this course. Your grade for this class will be based on in-class participation, and writing assignments. **We may also do some assignments in-class and in-class work cannot be made up!** For each week an assignment is late, your grade will be dropped by one full letter (A- becomes B-, B+ becomes C+, etc.). **I will not accept papers by email. Additionally, no papers will be accepted after our final class meeting. Also, all assignments that are to be handed in for grading must be word-processed, double spaced in 12-point type. Handwritten assignments (unless otherwise specified) will NOT be accepted.**

Your grade will be based on the following criteria:

Class Participation (including attendance)	10%
Personal Essay (2-3 pages)	15%
Concert Review (2-3 pages)	15%
Listening Diagrams (5% each x5 -- 1 page)	25%
Reading Annotations (5% each x7 -- 1 page)	35%

Attendance

Attendance is crucial. According to CCNY's attendance policy, after two weeks' worth of unexcused absences (for a class that meets once per week, that equals two absences) you can be dropped from the class at the instructor's discretion. I will treat twice as many late arrivals the same way – two late arrivals equals one full absence.

Additional Questions or Concerns Not Covered in Class:

I can be available to meet with students before class by appointment. The best way to reach me during the week is via email. During the week I will normally respond within 24 hours. On the weekends you may expect a response on Monday.

Classroom Protocol:

I strongly discourage eating and drinking in class – please note that we will normally take a short break mid-class. Please consider this your time to refresh yourself.

Talking during class – Please be considerate of your fellow students. If you have a question or a comment, please raise your hand. I will address your concern.

Group work—We will occasionally divide into small groups or pairs to work together in forming our ideas about the topics at hand. You are encouraged to get to know your fellow students and to listen to one another.

Pluralism—A learning environment is one that has space for all points of view. We will make that space in our class, which means that we will sometimes agree to disagree.

Policy on Academic Integrity:

“Academic dishonesty is prohibited in the City University of New York and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion...”—From the CUNY policy on academic integrity. Please see this link for the full policy concerning the matters of cheating and plagiarism:

<http://www1.cuny.cuny.edu/upload/academicintegrity.pdf>

SCHEDULE
(content subject to change)

<p>Friday, August 28 -- Intro/Syllabus Review/How to Listen Assignment Read: Wolf; selections from “Envisioning Power” (access electronically) Assignment Listen: Bach, selections from <i>Well-Tempered Clavier</i> Assignment Write: Paper 1 (2-3 pages) “My Relationship to Music” Assignment Write: Annotation 1</p>	<p>Friday, October 23 -- The Blues and Jazz Due: Annotation 3 and Diagram 3 Reading/Listening Discussion Assignment Read: Selections from Rose and Chang, <i>Black Noise</i> and <i>Can't Stop/Won't Stop</i> Assignment Write: Annotation 4 and Diagram 4 Assignment Listen: Hip-Hop (as per instructor)</p>
<p>Friday, September 4 – Discourse and Power Annotation 1 Due Reading and Listening Discussion Practice Listening/Diagrams In-class work: Form diagram – pop music example Assignment Read: Isacoff, selections from <i>Temperament</i></p>	<p>Friday, October 30 – Hip Hop Due: Annotation 4 and Diagram 4 Reading/Listening Discussion Assignment Read: Selections from Tate’s <i>Everything But the Burden</i> and Dyson’s “Know What I Mean?:...” Assignment Write: Annotation 5 Assignment Listen: TBD</p>
<p>Friday, September 11 -- The Enlightenment, Science and Tempered Tuning Due: Paper 1 Reading Discussion: Isacoff Assignment Read: Selections from <i>Western Music and Its Other</i> Assignment Write: Paper 2 (2-3 pages) Concert Review Assignment Write: Annotation 2/Diagram 1</p>	<p>Friday, November 6 -- Everything But the Burden Due: Annotation 5 Reading/Listening Discussion Assignment Read: Selections from Hebdidge <i>Cut N’ Paste</i> Assignment Write: Annotation 6 Assignment Listen: Reggae (as per instructor)</p>
<p>Friday, September 18 NO CLASS – Rosh Hashanah Observed</p>	<p>Friday, November 13 -- Blood and Fire – Reggae’s Power to Transform Due: Annotation 6 Reading Discussion: Hebdidge Assignment Read: Selections from <i>Music of Coal</i> Assignment Listen: Selections from <i>Music of Coal</i></p>
<p>Friday, September 25 -- Western Music and Its Other Due: Annotation 2 and Diagram 2 Reading/Listening Discussion: <i>Western Music and Its Other</i> Assignment Read: Selections from <i>The New Grove Beethoven</i> Assignment Listen: Beethoven’s 5th Symphony First Movement Assignment Write: Diagram 2</p>	<p>Friday, November 20 -- Three Chords and the Truth: Bloody Harlan and Black Lung Reading and Listening Discussion Assignment Listen: Indian Classical Assignment Write: Diagram 5</p>
<p>Friday, October 2 -- Beethoven – The Hero and Romanticism Due: Diagram 2 Reading/Listening Discussion Assignment Read: Selections from <i>Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music</i> and other readings as per instructor Assignment Listen: Bartók</p>	<p>Friday, November 27 NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Holiday</p>
<p>Friday, October 9 -- Béla Bartók and Late 19th/Early 20th Century European Nationalism Reading and Listening Discussion Assignment Read: Leroi Jones Assignment Listen: Blues and Jazz (as per instructor)</p>	<p>Friday, December 4 -- Indian Classical Music and the Drone Due: Diagram 5 Reading/Listening Discussion Assignment Read: Selections from Bull and Back; <i>Auditory Culture Reader</i> Assignment Write: Annotation 7</p>
<p>Friday, October 16 -- The Blues and Jazz Paper 2 Due Reading/Listening Discussion Assignment Read: Leroi Jones Assignment Write: Annotation 3 and Diagram 3 Assignment Listen: Blues and Jazz (as per instructor)</p>	<p>Friday, December 11 -- Multiple Perspectives on Noise and Silence Due: Annotation 7 Reading Discussion: Bull and Back Assignment Listen: TBD</p>
	<p>Friday, December 18 FINAL CLASS MEETING Discuss final listening assignment + more in-class listening</p>

Other Important Dates:

Thursday, September 17 – Last day to drop a course

Friday, November 6 – Last day to withdraw to receive “W” grade

Friday, December 18 – Last day of classes

Some Other Important CCNY Informational Links:

<http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/> -- CCNY’s homepage and portal to all things CCNY (all links below accessible through this link.)

<http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/library/> -- Links to CUNY-wide library resources including library catalogs.

<https://pelican.admin.ccny.cuny.edu/wm/eml/login.html> -- CCNY’s email interface.

<http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/current/registrar/> -- Registrar’s homepage; includes links to academic calendars, transcripts, bills and other important student business.

<http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/current/registrar/calendar/Academic-Calendar-Fall-2009.cfm> -- a direct link to the 2009 Fall semester academic calendar

<http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/prospective/cwe/> -- CWE home page