New York University | Spring 2015 | CORE-UA 730

**EXPRESSIVE CULTURE: SOUNDS**

*Listening Globally*

Professor: Christine Thu Nhi Dang  
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Office Location: 24 Waverly Place, Rm. 265A  
Office Hours: by appointment (usually Thursday afternoons)  
Teaching Assistants: Kai Finlayson (kaifinlayson@gmail.com) and Alysse Padilla  
(email: alysse.gabrielle@nyu.edu)  
Lecture: Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00AM-12:15PM  
Recitation: Section 2 and 4, Friday, 9:30AM-10:45AM  
Section 3 and 5, Friday, 11:00AM-12:15 AM

**Course Description:**  
This course aims to cultivate the art of listening through close study of musical performances from a wide range of cultures and places, from Kaluli song to Corsican polyphony, from Cuban rumba to Aboriginal rock. With each case study, we explore the sensory details of musical sounds, the cultural and historical encounters informing those sounds, and their contemporary circulation in the global marketplace. Through our varied musical excursions, we raise questions about homelands, heritage, and belonging; about the diverse genres of music-making, from mimicry of nature to multi-track remixes, song, dance, and drumming; about music’s role in articulating the individual’s relationship to society, the environment, and the metaphysical world; about language, authenticity, and hybridity; and finally, about the complicated politics of global exchange that influence musical production and consumption.

In navigating between different music cultures, this course is guided by four thematic units: travel, meaning, representation, and place. The course’s primary sources include traditional, religious, and popular musics from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas, and Australia—interpreting the word “music” broadly to encompass many modes of sonic production. These musical sources were chosen because they broaden our capacities as listeners, because they expand our understanding of what music means for ourselves and for others, and because, when listened to together, they form a compelling collection of human music-making.

**Course Materials:**  
The required materials for this course include scholarly articles, book chapters, audio recordings, video clips, and films. All readings, recordings, and video clips will be available on the course website through NYU Classes. Films screened in class will be on reserve at the Avery Fisher Center in Bobst Library.

**Class Format:**  
Lecture classes and recitation sessions are collaborative, dialogue-based, and highly participative. To better connect aurally to unfamiliar traditions of sounds, lectures usually begin
with exercises in deep listening or with active musical participation through group singing, humming, clapping, and movement. After these musical exercises, I will provide a presentation on the topics of the day, after which I will lead you in focused discussions of the various questions raised by the assigned readings and recordings. Lectures move quickly, and assume that you have studied the relevant material beforehand. Recitations vary in format and can include the study of materials not presented in lectures, analysis of difficult topics, review for exams, writing exercises—activities all crucial to your learning. You are required to complete the assigned reading and study the appropriate audio and video recordings before each class. In order to facilitate active and collaborative learning, I do not allow the use of laptops, tablets, cellphones, or other electronic devices in class. Finally, audio or video recording of classes is prohibited, unless you obtain my written consent.

**Grades:**
The final grade in this course depends on several components—class participation, two non-cumulative exams, a concert review, a formal presentation in your recitation section, the prospectus for your final project, and a final project. Weight for these components will likely follow this distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam I</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam II</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concert Review</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project Prospectus</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NO late assignments will be accepted for credit and no extra dates will be offered for exams. If you have a problem with a date for assignments or exams, notify your teaching assistant within the first two weeks of class. **All components of your final grade must be completed in order to pass this class.** Failure to turn in all written assignments, absence at either exam, or a consistent lack of attendance during lectures and recitations (absence or tardiness on more than 3 occasions) will result in a failing grade.

**Participation**
The participation component will be calculated based on two factors:

1) Attendance, punctuality, and class etiquette. Attendance in lecture classes and recitation sessions is mandatory. If you exceed three absences, you will receive a failing grade—unless both you and your academic advisor notify me of legitimate reasons for excessive absences. It is also expected that you will arrive on time, stay seated during classes, abstain from conversations outside of class discussion, and turn your cellphones off and store them out of sight for the duration of class.

2) Active participation in class. The class participation grade reflects your contribution to discussions in both lectures and recitations, as well as the quality of writing and listening exercises you complete in recitations. The Class Participation Guidelines attached to this syllabus outlines the expectations for this course.

Participation will be assessed twice during the semester, once before spring break and again during finals week. Your final participation grade will be an average of the two.
**Exams**
Exam I (3/12) and Exam II (5/8) can cover any information presented in lectures, class discussions, and recitations, in addition to all recordings, readings, and other materials on the course website. Exams consist of style identifications, musical analysis, short responses, and short essay questions. Exam II is not cumulative.

**Concert Review**
During the course of the semester, you will attend one concert of music that addresses the issues we discuss in class—a concert, for example, that raises questions about world music, indigeneity, political representation, ethnicity, language, etc. You will write an essay of **4 to 5 pages double-spaced** in which you describe your experience at the concert along with any connections that you feel you can make between our classroom discussions and the concert itself. New York City offers numerous opportunities to attend concerts relevant to this course, and your teaching assistants and I will notify you of interesting performances throughout the semester. You will need to plan ahead to get to a concert before 4/10, when the review is due.

**Formal Presentation**
At one point during the semester, you will give a formal presentation on a relevant topic to your recitation session. Your teaching assistant will assign the topic and date of your presentation, and will work closely with you in preparation.

**Final Research Project**
The final project provides you with an opportunity to explore a topic of personal interest in greater detail. The four general types of projects are:

1) **Fieldwork or ethnographic**: This type of project is built around research in which you use tools of ethnographic scholarship to observe and write about a particular event. Papers could develop in any number of directions—for example, writing about performances of world music, visiting a festival, or observing ritual experience at religious services.

2) **Analytical or theoretical**: You may choose to explore an issue we have discussed this semester (such as appropriation, representation, authenticity, etc.) as it relates to a particular music culture. An examination of the relation between politics and music or between diasporic communities and their musics is also a possibility.

3) **Historical or area study**: Some of you may choose to investigate a particular genre of music from an historical perspective, or consider how constructions of the past may influence modern understandings of indigenous musics. Others of you might wish to come to a better understanding of a particular area of the world and the ways in which music addresses cultural, societal, and political issues within that area.

You should begin formulating your project idea during the first few weeks of the semester. A formal prospectus outlining the project is due by Friday, 3/6. Your prospectus must include a **topic statement of 250 words** and an **annotated bibliography of at least five scholarly sources** you intend to draw on in order to complete your project. In researching and writing the final project and prospectus, you are expected to follow the instructions provided on the course website.

**Approval of your project is required.** If you choose to write a paper that has not been approved either by me or by your teaching assistant, you will receive a failing grade for that portion of the class. Final papers should be between **7 and 9 pages double-spaced**. The final project is due by Friday, 5/1.
**Academic Integrity:**
Plagiarism, exam misconduct, and other forms of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade and official sanctions will be applied. Please refer to the Statement on Academic Integrity attached to the end of this syllabus.

**Teaching Assistants**
The teaching assistants for this course are knowledgeable doctoral students and talented scholars who will become professors in the near future. The recitation sessions that they lead are critical to your success in this course. The bulk of your grade depends on their assessment of your exams, written work, and class participation. More importantly, your teaching assistants are passionate about helping you expand your capacities as listeners, thinkers, and writers. I trust that you will work closely with them and extend them your respect.

**Important Dates**
TBA – Formal presentation in recitation  
3/6 – Final project prospectus due  
3/12 – Exam I in class  
4/10 – Concert review due  
5/1 – Final projects due  
5/8 – Exam II in class
Class Schedule:
*Readings and dates of assignments are subject to change. Listening assignments will be determined on a weekly basis. On average, we will listen to the equivalent of 1-2 full-length CDs each week.

Week #1 – Global Travel: Music and Culture
T, 1/27 – Introductions
Th, 1/29 – Hearing Cultures
Reading
• Titon, “The Music-Culture as a World of Music”
F, 1/30 – Recitation

Week #2 – Global Travel II: World Music
T, 2/3 – The Birth of World Music
Reading
• Frith, “The Discourse of World Music”
• Taylor, “Popular Musics and Globalization”
Th, 2/5 – Sweet Lullaby and Visit by Dr. Kent Underwood, Music Librarian
Reading
• Feld, “A Sweet Lullaby for World Music”
• Guidelines for Final Project and Prospectus on NYU Classes
F, 2/6 – Recitation

Week #3 – Global Travel III: Ethical Exchange
T, 2/10 – Collaboration and Appropriation in Graceland
Reading
Viewing
• Graceland: Recounting the Journey of a Legendary Music Recording
Th, 2/12 – Singing Against Apartheid in South Africa
Reading
• Michael Drewett, “Music in the Struggle to End Apartheid: South Africa”
Viewing
• Rhythm of Resistance: Black South African Music
F, 2/13 – Recitation
Week #4 – Voice and Meaning I: Nature

T, 2/17 – Voice as Sentiment: The Kaluli of Papua New Guinea
Reading
• Feld, Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression, “Introduction” and “The Boy Who Became a Muni Bird”

Th, 2/19 – Voice as Timbre: Tuvan Throat-Singing
Reading
• Levin and Edgerton, “The Throat Singers of Tuva”;
• Levin, Where Rivers and Mountains Sing: Sound, Music, and Nomadism in Tuva and Beyond, “Interlude” and “Postlude”
Viewing
• Genghis Blues

F, 2/20 – Recitation

Week #5 – Voice and Meaning II: Community

T, 2/24 – Paghjella in Corsica
Reading

Th, 2/26 – Bulgarian Polyphonies
*Live Performance and Guest Lecture by Maria Stankova
Reading
• TBA

F, 2/27 – Recitation

Week #6 – Voice and Meaning III: Nation

T, 3/3 – The Beautiful Voice in Religious Recitation
Reading
• Nelson, The Art of Reciting the Qur’an, “The Sama Polemic”

Th, 3/5 – Umm Kulthum: The Voice of Egypt
Reading
• Danielson, The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century

F, 3/6 – Recitation
• Final Project Prospectus Due In Class
Week #7 - Review Week

T, 3/10 – Review

Th, 3/12 – Exam II In Class

F, 3/13 – Recitation

Spring Break March 16-March 22

Week #8 – The Politics of Representation I: Indigeneity

T, 3/24 – Native American Identity in Film
Reading
• Gorbman, “Scoring the Indian: Music in the Liberal Western”
Viewing
• Stagecoach
• Broken Arrow
• A Man Called Horse
• Dances With Wolves

Th, 3/26 – Country Music on the Reservation
Reading
• Browner, "Making and Singing Pow-Wow Songs: Text, Form, and the Significance of Culture-Based Analysis"
• Samuels, “Singing Indian Country”

F, 3/27 – Recitation
• Review Midterm Exam

Week #9 – The Politics of Representation II: Homelands

T, 3/31 – Aboriginal Rock, Aboriginal Rights
Reading
• Gibson and Dunbar-Hill, “Nitmiluk: Place and Empowerment in Australian Aboriginal Popular Music”

Th, 4/2 – Saami and Joik in Scandinavia
Reading
• Jones-Bamman, “From ‘I’m a Lapp’ to ‘I’m a Saami’: Popular Music and Changing Images of Indigenous Ethnicity in Scandinavia”

F, 4/3 – Recitation
Week #10 - The Politics of Representation III: Reciprocity

T, 4/7 – Musical Egalitarianism of BaAka Pygmies
Reading
  • Turnbull, The Forest People, selections
  • Kisliuk, “Performance and Modernity Among BaAka Pygmies: A Closer Look at the Mystique of Egalitarian Foragers in the Rainforest”

Th, 4/9 – Pygmy Love Songs of Madonna, Herbie Hancock, and Francis Bebey
Reading
  • Feld, “The Poetics and Politics of Pygmy Pop”

F, 4/10 – Recitation
  • Concert Review Due In Class

Week #11 – Sounds of Place I: Roots/Routes

T, 4/14 – Samba Consciousness
Reading
  • Crook, “Black Consciousness, Samba Reggae, and the Re-Africanization of Bahian Carnival Music in Brazil”
  • McGowan and Pessanha, “Samba: The Heartbeat of Rio”

Th, 4/16 – The Rumba Between Havanna, New York, and Paris
Reading
  • Moore, “The Commercial Rumba: Afro-Cuban Arts as International Popular Culture”

F, 4/17 – Recitation

Week #12 – Sounds of Place II: Diaspora

T, 4/21 – The Geography of Southern Blues
Reading
  • McClary, “Thinking Blues”

T, 4/23 – The Routes of Hip Hop
Reading
  • Lipsitz, “Diasporic Noise: History, Hip Hop, and the Post-colonial Politics of Sound”
  • Shipley, “The Birth of Ghanaian Hiplife: Urban Style, Black Thought, Proverbial Speech”

F, 4/24 – Recitation
Week #13 – Sounds of Place III: Displacement

T, 4/28 – Hindi Songs in a Tibetan Refugee Camp
Reading
  • Diehl, *Echoes from Dharamsala: Music in the Life of a Tibetan Refugee Community*, selections

Th, 4/30 – Tibetan Blues, Rock, and Reggae
Reading
  • Diehl, *Echoes from Dharamsala: Music in the Life of a Tibetan Refugee Community*, selections

F, 5/1 – Recitation
  • Final Research Projects Due In Class

Week #14 – Conclusions

T, 5/5 – Performance and Discussion

Th, 5/7 – Discussion: From Kaluli Song to Tibetan Reggae

F, 5/8 – Recitation
  • Exam II In Class
Reading List


Class Participation Guidelines

As a student in the College Core Curriculum, you will get the most from your Core courses if you attend class consistently, come to class thoughtfully prepared and ready to participate, engage actively in classroom activities, and contribute to making the best educational experience you can for yourself and your classmates.

The following guidelines have been articulated to help you understand the expectations of faculty and recitation instructors for the assessment of students' class participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Could Improve</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Failing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>Frequently on time, regular participation in classroom</td>
<td>Occasionally on time, participate in classroom activities</td>
<td>Frequently late or absent, rare participation in classroom activities</td>
<td>Frequently absent, does not participate in classroom activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Generally prepared but sometimes unable to contribute to discussion due to unpreparedness for class or lack of meaningful participation</td>
<td>Frequently unprepared and unable to participate in discussion</td>
<td>Regularly unprepared and unable to participate in discussion</td>
<td>Frequently unprepared and unable to participate in discussion even when prompted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Actively and appropriately takes part in class discussion, demonstrates strong command of course material and ability for critical engagement</td>
<td>Regularly takes part in class discussion, comments are generally relevant but demonstrate incomplete command of course material or lack of critical engagement</td>
<td>Seldom takes part in discussion without being prompted and frequently demonstrates little engagement with course material, comments are frequently superficial or irrelevant</td>
<td>Typically does not take part in class discussion, even when prompted, or hinders discussion by making superficial or irrelevant comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution</td>
<td>The class is made better by the student’s contributions</td>
<td>The student contributes to the good of the class</td>
<td>The student’s contributions do not advance the good of the class</td>
<td>The student’s presence adversely impacts the educational experience of others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student arrives punctually, engaged with course and classroom activities, and prepared to participate in meaningful ways. The student contributes to the educational experience of others.

Student arrives inconsistently, unprepared and unable to participate in class discussion. The student’s presence hinders educational experience of others.

Student arrives late or absent, frequently unprepared and unable to participate in class discussion. The student’s contributions do not advance the good of the class.

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