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Course Synopsis  
This course explores musical communities in early Cold War New York (1947-1965), with a special focus on music's role in protest, cultural diplomacy, technical experimentation, and the imagination of alternate social realities. In the wake of World War II, the United States enjoyed heightened cultural prestige, and New York City became a mecca for innovation in concert, jazz, folk, and electronic music. At the same time, the early Cold War was a time of acute cultural restriction in the US, bound up with homogenizing notions of American identity that served as a bulwark against perceived threats abroad and within. Against this backdrop of rapid transformation, we will consider musical developments in relation to the following conditions: the Red Scare, the expansion and globalization of advertising culture and commercial networks, decolonization, nuclear armament, the aftermath of the Holocaust, mass migrations, and the civil rights struggles of the era. Focusing on a wide range of sounds and aesthetics, we will consider how musical thinkers participated in debates about freedom, democracy, violence, and totalitarianism. Musical dialogues with the visual arts and literature will receive special attention. This course will also take advantage of the resources of the city, involving attendance of and participation in musical concerts and happenings.

Course Procedures  
Class sessions will be devoted to discussing issues raised in the weekly reading and listening assignments. Reading and listening assignments are due on the day they are listed. It is important that you complete the assignments on time in order to participate adequately. You are also welcome to bring any materials or examples that will enhance our discussions by illustrating a point you may want to make.

There is no single course book for this course. All readings will be provided as electronic pdf files on our NYU Classes course website, unless they are provided online, in which case we will provide a link to the resource. Listening examples will be provided either through streaming or website links on NYU Classes.

Assignments  
Your written work during the semester will include the following:  
a) Four critical essays of short length (4-5 pages).  
b) Other weekly assignments and occasional quizzes in lab sections.
c) An essay-based in-class mid-term.
d) An essay-based take-home final exam.

The due dates for written assignments are not flexible. Half a letter grade will be deducted for each day any given assignment is late.

In addition to written work, you will complete a number of creative music assignments that involve composition and performance. These assignments will be graded on a pass/fail basis and will be counted as “other weekly assignments.”

**Grading Distribution**

Attendance and participation 20%
Short essays 30%
Weekly assignments and quizzes 20%
Midterm 15%
Final 15%

**Class policies**

1) You may discuss your work and assignment with classmates, but you must develop your own research projects and writing assignments independently. All of the work you turn in must be your own. If you have questions about academic dishonesty, please consult the “Academic Integrity” section of the Morse Academic Program website: [http://map.cas.nyu.edu/docs/CP/4321/MAPAcademicIntegrity2012.pdf](http://map.cas.nyu.edu/docs/CP/4321/MAPAcademicIntegrity2012.pdf).

2) There will be no use of electronic devices in this course, with one exception. Students may use laptops to take notes if and only if they sit in the first five rows of class. In this case, students may not use their computers to do anything other than taking notes. Breaking this rule will result in a lower attendance and participation grade.

3) I encourage you to consult with me during office hours or to email me if you have any questions about the course, or if there is any way I can help you.

4) Regular attendance and participation in class and recitation section meetings is absolutely imperative for success in this course. You need to attend class and to arrive on time. You will be responsible for a great deal of material presented in class that is not available in the readings. It is also vital to have the opportunity to discuss critical arguments in the course with your fellow students—a circumstance that would be impossible without good attendance. Attendance will regularly be recorded through sign-in sheets. Students who miss more than three lectures or recitation meetings will lose three points on their final average grade per additional meeting missed.

**NOTE:** This syllabus is a working document and subject to revision, especially in the event of unforeseen scheduling disruptions.
Syllabus

Tu Sept. 3 Introduction and Course Guidelines

Th Sept. 5 Cold War Cultural Politics
Readings: Congressman George A. Dondero, speech given in the U. S. House of Representatives, 16 August 1949.
Excerpts from Art Since 1900.
In class: Short assignment due.

Tu Sept. 10 The Downtown Art and Music Scene
Reading: Jackson Pollock, “Answers to a questionnaire, 1944” and “Statement, 1947.” Excerpts from Michael Leja, “Reframing Abstract Expressionism.”
Edgard Varèse, Octandre (1923).

Th Sept. 12 Avant-Garde and Kitsch
Viewing: Hans Namuth, “Jackson Pollock.”

Tu Sept. 17 Cage and Indeterminacy

Th Sept. 19 Indeterminacy, More Visual-Sonic Translations

Tu Sept. 24 Black Mountain College
In class: WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE.

Th Sept. 26 Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center
Reading: TBA.
In section: discuss how to compose an indeterminate composition.

Tu Oct. 1 Who Cares if you Listen?
Listening: Milton Babbitt, Philomel (1964).
Thu Oct. 3 Cold War Musical Theater
Reading: TBA.
Viewing: *West Side Story*
**In section:** INDETERMINATE COMPOSITION DUE.

Tu Oct. 8 Happening No. 1
*In-Class Performance involving group compositions developed in section*
*In section: discussion of indeterminate group compositions*

Th Oct. 10 Lincoln Center, Urban Regeneration, and Global Prestige

Tu Oct. 15 No Class (Fall Recess)

Th Oct. 17 Cultural Diplomacy: The USAID and the CIA

**In class:** WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE.

Tu Oct. 22 Ethics of Patronage: Elliott Carter—Cold War Genius?

Th Oct. 24 MID-TERM

Tu Oct. 29 Bebop’s Politics of Style
Excerpt from Dizzy Gillespie, *To Be, or Not . . . To Bop* (1979).
Listening: Parker and Gillespie, “Hot House” (1952) and “Ko-Ko” (1945).
Viewing: Live performances of “Hot House” and “Evidence.”

Th Oct. 31 Hipsters, Race, and Gender

Tu Nov. 5 Post-Bop: Cool Jazz and Beyond
Th Nov. 7 Jazz and Cultural Diplomacy
Listening: Louis Armstrong, “Black and Blue.”
In class: WRITING ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE.

Tu Nov. 12 Free Jazz and Atonality
Readings: Album cover notes and interviews with Ornette Coleman.

Th Nov. 14 Jazz Transnationalism and the Civil Rights Movement

Tu Nov. 19 Washington Square Troubadours
Reading: Excerpts from Billboard and Sing Out! Magazines

Th Nov. 21 Folk revival, continued

Tu Nov. 26 The News from Newport
Viewing: “Don’t Look Back” (1967) and “No Direction Home” (2005).
In class: WRITING ASSIGNMENT 4 DUE.

Th Nov. 28 No class (Thanksgiving)

Tu Dec. 3 Yoko Ono and Fluxus
Readings: Excerpts from Yoko Ono, Grapefruit (1964), interviews with Yoko Ono, and Munroe, Yes Yoko Ono (2002).

Th Dec. 5 More “Happenings”
Reading: Interviews with Yoko Ono. More excerpts from Munroe, Yes Yoko Ono.
Listening: Yoko Ono/Plastic Ono Band and Ornette Coleman, AOS. The Beatles, Revolution Number 9.

Tu Dec. 10 Happening No. 2

Th Dec. 12 Final Thoughts

Tu December 17 FINAL EXAM DUE