

EXPRESSIVE CULTURE: SOUNDS

Listening Globally

Professor: Dr. Christine Thu Nhi Dang

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Office Location: Department of Music, 24 Waverly Place, Room 266D

Office Hours: by appointment, usually Thursday afternoons

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Lecture: Monday and Wednesday, 3:00PM-4:45PM

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:

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 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 review of lecture topics, student presentations, writing and listening exercises, and preparation for exams and assignments—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:

<i>Participation</i>	20%
<i>Exam I</i>	20%
<i>Exam II</i>	20%
<i>Concert Review</i>	10%
<i>Formal Presentation in Recitation</i>	5%

<i>Final Project Prospectus</i>	5%
<i>Final Research Project</i>	20%

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 exams, or excessive absences during lectures and recitations 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, your final grade will decrease by 10% for each excessive absence.** It is also expected that you will arrive on time, abstain from conversations outside of class discussion, and refrain from using your cellphones 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.

EXAMS

Exam I (3/9) and Exam II (5/9) 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 3/4, when the review is due.

FORMAL PRESENTATION

At one point during the semester, you will give a formal presentation in recitation. Your teaching assistant will assign the date and topic of your presentation.

FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT

The final project provides you with an opportunity to explore a topic of personal interest in greater detail. The three 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, **4/8**. 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 Monday, **5/2**.

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

3/9 – Exam I in class

3/4 – Concert review due

4/1 – Final project prospectus due

5/2 – Final projects due

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

M, 1/25 – Introductions

W, 1/27 – Hearing Cultures

Reading

- Rommen, “Preface” and Nettl, “Studying the Music of the World’s Cultures”, in *Excursions in World Music*

F, 1/29 – Recitation

Week #2 – GLOBAL TRAVEL II: WORLD MUSIC

M, 2/1 – The Birth of World Music

Reading

- Malm, "Music on the Move: Traditions and Mass Media"
- Frith, "The Discourse of World Music"

W, 2/3 – A Lullaby's Travels

Reading

- Feld, "A Sweet Lullaby for World Music"

F, 2/5 – Recitation

Week #3 – GLOBAL TRAVEL III: ETHICAL EXCHANGE

M, 2/8 – Collaboration and Appropriation in *Graceland*

Reading

- Feld, "Notes on World Beat"; Meintjes, "Paul Simon's Graceland, South Africa, and the Mediation of Musical Meaning"

Viewing

- *Graceland: Recounting the Journey of a Legendary Music Recording*

W, 2/10 – Singing Against Apartheid in South Africa

Reading

- Michael Drewett, "Music in the Struggle to End Apartheid: South Africa"

Viewing

- *Amandla!: A Revolution in Four Part Harmony*

F, 2/12 – Recitation

Week #4 – VOICE AND MEANING I: MYTH

M, 2/15 – President’s Day, No Classes

W, 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”

F, 2/19 – Recitation

Week #5 – VOICE AND MEANING II: POLYPHONY

M, 2/22 – Voice as Timbre: Tuvan Throat-Singing

Reading

- Levin and Edgerton, “The Throat Singers of Tuva”;
- Levin, “The World is Alive with the Music of Sound,” in *Where Rivers and Mountains Sing: Sound, Music, and Nomadism in Tuva and Beyond*,

W, 2/24 – Voice as Community: Paghjella in Corsica

Reading

- Bithell, “Polyphonic Voices: National Identity, World Music, and the Recording of Traditional Music in Corsica”

F, 2/26 – Recitation

Week #6 – VOICE AND MEANING III: RELIGION

M, 2/29 – The Beautiful Voice in Religious Recitation

Reading

- Nelson, selections from *The Art of Reciting the Qur'an*

W, 3/2 – Umm Kulthum: The Voice of Egypt

Reading

- Danielson, selections from *The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century*

F, 3/4 – Recitation

- **Concert Review Due In Class**

Week #7 - REVIEW WEEK

M, 3/7 – Review

W, 3/9 – **Exam I In Class**

F, 3/11 – Recitation

[Spring Break March 14-March 20]

Week #8 – THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION I: DIFFERENCE

M, 3/21 – Research and Writing Workshop

Dr. Kent Underwood, Head Music Librarian; and Dr. Jennifer Cayer, Writing in the Disciplines Consultant

W, 3/23 – 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*

F, 3/25 – Recitation

Week #9 – THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION II: INDIGENEITY

M, 3/28 – Powwow Songs and Country Music on the Reservation

Reading

- Carlos, selections from *Intertribal Native American Music in the United States*
- Samuels, “Singing Indian Country”

W, 3/30 – Aboriginal Rock, Aboriginal Rights

Reading

- Gibson and Dunbar-Hill, “Nitmiluk: Place and Empowerment in Australian Aboriginal Popular Music”

F, 4/1 – Recitation

- **Final Project Prospectus Due In Class**

Week #10 - THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION III: RECIPROCITY

M, 4/4 – Musical Egalitarianism of BaAka Pygmies

Reading

- Kisliuk, “Performance and Modernity Among BaAka Pygmies: A Closer Look at the Mystique of Egalitarian Foragers in the Rainforest”

W, 4/6 – Pygmy Love Songs of Madonna, Herbie Hancock, and Francis Bebey

Reading

- Feld, “The Poetics and Politics of Pygmy Pop”

F, 4/8 – Recitation

Week #11 – SOUNDS OF PLACE I: ROOTS/ROUTES

M, 4/11 – Jazz Manouche

Reading

- TBA

W, 4/13 – Naming Soca

Reading

- Rommen, “Jehovah’s Music” in *Mek Some Noise*

F, 4/15 – Recitation

Week #12 – SOUNDS OF PLACE II: DIASPORA

M, 4/18 – The Rumba Between Havana, New York, and Paris

Reading

- Moore, “The Commercial Rumba: Afro-Cuban Arts as International Popular Culture”

W, 4/20 – Salsa in the Hood

Reading

- Flores, “Créolité in the Hood: Diaspora as Source and Challenge”

F, 4/22 – Recitation

Week #13 – SOUNDS OF PLACE III: DISPLACEMENT

M, 4/25 – The Routes of Hip Hop

Reading

- Lipsitz, “Diasporic Noise: History, Hip Hop, and the Post-colonial Politics of Sound”

W, 4/27 – 2pac in Sierra Leone

Reading

- Presholdt, “The afterlives of 2pac: Imagery and Alienation in Sierra Leone and Beyond”

F, 4/29 – Recitation

Week #14 - CONCLUSIONS

M, 5/2 – Discussion/Final Projects

- **Final Research Projects Due In Class**

W, 5/4 – Review

F, 5/6 – Recitation

Week #15 – Exam

M, 5/9 – **Exam II in Class**

Reading List

- Bithell, Caroline. "Polyphonic Voices: National Identity, World Music, and the Recording of Traditional Music in Corsica." *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 5, no.1 (1996): 39-65.
- Carlos, John Parea. *Intertribal Native American Music in the United States*. New York: Oxford, 2013.
- Danielson, Virginia. *The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Drewett, Michael. "Music in the Struggle to End Apartheid: South Africa." In *Policing Pop*, eds. Martin Cloonan and Reebee Garofalo, 153-165. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003.
- Feld, Steven. "The Poetics and Politics of Pygmy Pop." In *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, edited by Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, 254–279. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- . "A Sweet Lullaby for World Music." *Public Culture Bulletin* 12 (2000):145–171.
- . "Notes on World Beat." *Public Culture Bulletin* 1 (1998):31–37.
- . "Introduction" and "The Boy Who Became A Muni Bird." *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*, 1-43. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982.
- Flores, Juan Flores. "Créolité in the Hood: Diaspora as Source and Challenge." *Centro Journal* XVI, no. 2 (2004): 283-293.
- Frith, Simon. "The Discourse of World Music." In *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation*, edited by Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, 305–322. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Gibson, Chris and Peter Dunbar-Hill. "Nitmiluk: Place and Empowerment in Australian Aboriginal Popular Music." *Ethnomusicology* 44, no. 1 (2000): 39-64.
- Gorbman, Claudia. "Scoring the Indian: Music in the Liberal Western." In *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, Appropriation*, edited by Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh. 234–253. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Kisliuk, Michelle. "Performance and Modernity Among BaAka Pygmies: A Closer Look at the Mystique of Egalitarian Foragers in the Rainforest." In *Music and Gender*, edited by Pirikko Moisala and Beverly Diamond, 25-50. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000.
- Levin, Theodore C. *Where Rivers and Mountains Sing: Sound, Music, and Nomadism in Tuva and Beyond*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.
- Levin, Theodore C. and Michael E. Edgerton. "The Throat-Singers of Tuva." *Scientific American Magazine*. September 1999, 80-87.
- Lipstiz, George. "Diasporic Noise: History, Hip Hop, and the Post-colonial Politics of Sound." In *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism, and the Focus of Place*. New York: Verso, 1994.
- Malm, Krister. "Music on the Move: Traditions and Mass Media." *Ethnomusicology* 37, no. 3 (1993): 339-352.
- Meintjes, Louise. "Paul Simon's Graceland, South Africa, and the Mediation of Musical Meaning." *Ethnomusicology* 34, no.1 (1990): 37-73.
- Moore, Robin. "The Commercial Rumba: Afro-Cuban Arts as International Popular Culture." *Latin American Music Review* 16, no. 2 (1995): 165–98.
- Nelson, Kristina. *The Art of Reciting the Qur'an*. Cairo: University of Cairo Press, 2001.
- Presholdt, Jeremy. "The afterlives of 2pac: Imagery and Alienation in Sierra Leone and Beyond." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2 (2009): 197-218.

Rommen, Timothy, ed. *Excursions in World Music*. 6th Edition. Pearson: Boston, MA, 2012.

Rommen, Timothy. *Mek Some Noise: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007.

Samuels, David. "Singing Indian Country." In *Music of the First Nations: Tradition and Innovation in Native North America*, edited by Tara Bronder, 141-160. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009.