

Cultural Theory and Music I
Mus 2621— Fall 2022
Wednesday 930-1150, 302 Music Bldg.

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This seminar investigates culture as a focal point for interdisciplinary scholarship in music studies in both the humanities and the social sciences. We will explore the ways that contemporary music scholars study culture as social practice by engaging literature in areas such as semiotics, cultural materialism, postcolonial studies, critical race theory, sound studies, and gender studies. Emphasis will be placed on foundational as well as emerging theoretical perspectives with the aim of developing critical models for understanding music, sound, and culture in a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape.

Books (any edition)

Bhaba, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. Routledge.

Foucault, Michel. *The Archeology of Knowledge*. Routledge.

Omi and Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s*. Routledge.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford.

Helpful Texts

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. 2001. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London and New York.

Clayton, Martin, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton, eds. 2011. *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, Routledge.

Grossberg, Lawrence; Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler, eds. 1992. *Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge.

Hall, Stuart, ed. 1997. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Sage.

Miller, Toby, ed. 2006. *A Companion to Cultural Studies*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Williams, Raymond. *Keywords*.

Topics, Readings, and Assignments

All readings are due on the date for which they are listed.

Schedule changes and additional recommended readings will be announced in class.

August

31: Introduction

Overview of the course; What is “theory” and what does it do? Social? Cultural? Critical? Criticism and critique; Anthropology and Cultural Studies; what about “music”?

September

7 Culture and ideology

Williams, Raymond. 1961. “The Analysis of Culture.” In *The Long Revolution*. New York: Columbia University Press, 41-71.

Williams, Raymond. 1990 (1977). “Base and Superstructure”; “Culture”; “Structures of Feeling”; In *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press [10 pages].

Hall, Stuart. 2001 (1993). “Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies” in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During, London: Routledge, 97-109.

How to Read a Book, v5.0

14 Hegemony (Gramsci)

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971 [1931-35]. “I. Problems of History and Culture” (pp. 3-43), and sections of “2. State and Civil Society” (pp. 229-240). In *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers.

Williams, Raymond. 1990 (1977). “Hegemony.” In *Marxism and Literature*, 108-114.

Laclau, Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe. 2001 (1985). “The Gramscian Watershed” (pp. 65-71) and “Facing the Consequences” (pp. 85-88). In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso Press.

21 The Archeology of Knowledge (Foucault)

Foucault, Michel. 1972 [1969]. *The Archeology of Knowledge*. [Part II, chapters 1-4, pp. 21-55 and Part IV, chapter 6, pp. 178-198].

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28 Habitus (Bourdieu)

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. "The Objective Limits of Objectivism" (pp. 1-29) and "Structures and the Habitus" (pp. 72-95). In *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice. London: Cambridge.

October

5 Book Review I

Taylor, Timothy. 2016. *Music and Capitalism*. Oxford University Press.

12 Semiotics and Representation (Hall)

Hall, Stuart. 1997. "Introduction" (pp. 1-12) and "The Work of Representation" (pp. 13-74). In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, edited by Stuart Hall.

Hall, Stuart. 1973. "Encoding/Decoding in the Television Discourse." University of Birmingham.

Hua Hsu. 2017. "Stuart Hall and the Rise of Cultural Studies."
<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/stuart-hall-and-the-rise-of-cultural-studies>

CR 2

19 Orientalism

Said, Edward. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books. [pp. 1-110]

26 Gender and Sexuality

Butler, Judith. 1990. "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire" (pp. 1-34). *Gender Trouble*. New York and London: Routledge.

Mulvey, Laura. 1975. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16(3):6-18.

hooks, bell. 1992. "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators." In *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press, pp. 115-31.

Halberstam, Judith [Jack]. 2003. "What's That Smell: Queer Temporalities and Subcultural Lives." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 6(3): 313-333.

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November

2 Race and Racial Formation

Brown, Danielle. (2020). "An Open Letter on Racism in Music Studies." My People Tell Stories. June 12. <https://www.mypeopletellstories.com/blog/open-letter>.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1: 139-167.

Harris, Cheryl I. 1993. "Whiteness as Property." *Harvard Law Review* 106 (8): 1707-1791.

Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York and London: Routledge.

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9 SEM (no class)

16 The Coloniality of Power: the Latin American Decolonial Turn" [guest lecture by Nicolas Aguia]

Quijano, Anibal. 2000. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America." In *Nepantla: Views from South* 1(3): 533-80.

Ranciere, Jacques. 2004 [2000]. "The Distribution of the Sensible." In *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, 12-19.

23 Thanksgiving (no class)

30 Book Review II

Robinson, Dylan. 2020. *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

December
7 Affect

Ahmed, Sara. 2014. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh University Press.

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14 Book Review III (BR 3)

Jones, Alisha Lola. 2020. *Flaming? The Peculiar Theopolitics of Fire and Desire in Black Male Gospel Performance*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mahon, Maureen. 2020. *Black Diamond Queens: African American Women and Rock and Roll*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to participate actively in class discussion, submit book reviews, and present oral presentations on selected articles. Students will be assigned to read core articles each week. Each student will also choose (or be assigned) selected articles from the lists to present in class. The presentations should relate the reading to themes discussed in class.

Critical Reflections (CR)

Once every few weeks, at the beginning of class, students will turn in a short paper (at least 2 pages, no more than 5) that responds to some issue in the readings. It does not need to cover all of the readings, though it must cover more than one reading or one chapter of a book. The paper can be about something you found powerful and persuasive or something that challenged your way of thinking. You can write about tensions or connections between readings for the week, and also connections and tensions between readings for the current week and previous weeks. The paper can also be about something you *didn't* understand in the reading. You're also welcome to bring in issues from class discussions, lectures, and etc., but please keep a focus on the readings.

In general, I am pretty open on questions of length, style and content. However, there are three kinds of papers I will actively discourage:

1) "Seek and destroy" papers that set out to trash an author's argument. Disagreement is fine, but for the papers I want you to make an effort at positive, constructive, and creative thought. Write about material that excites, interests, or inspires you.

2) Papers that are largely about something other than what was contained in one of the readings; for instance, pointing out that an author reminds you of something you read in

another class and then expounding on the text from the other class. The point of the paper is to have you reflect on the readings over a couple weeks.

3) Summaries of the readings. I read them too; I want a thoughtful reaction.

My comments on these papers will be brief, but you are of course welcome to meet with me about them at any time.

Book Reviews (BR)

Each student is required to write three short critical reviews--not to exceed five pages each (double-spaced, 12-point font)--on three books assigned for this class. The aim of this assignment is twofold: (1) to learn how to write a book review; and (2) to demonstrate your understanding of how a recently published book defines and pushes forward debates in music and cultural theory. The reports should be handed in at the beginning of the class on the day the book will be discussed.

Due Dates for Critical Reflections and Book Reviews (turn in one paper on each day):

Sept 21: CR 1

Oct 5: BR 1

Oct 12: CR 2

Oct 26: CR 3

Nov 2: CR 4

Nov 30: BR 2

Dec 7: CR 5

Dec 14: BR 3

Etiquette

1. Full and complete attendance, attention, participation, listening and reading. I expect the very best you can give.
2. Good faith and good humor toward your colleagues in the classroom and on the mailing list. Disagreements are expected and encouraged, but please keep nitpicking to a minimum; personal attacks are not acceptable under any circumstance. Follow the Golden Rule.

Grading

1. If your performance on any assignment is not satisfactory, I may ask you to do it again.
2. Late papers will not be accepted.

3. Activities for which you must be present (presentations, helping to lead discussion) cannot be made up. If you know you will be absent on a day for which you are obligated, trade with one of your colleagues.
4. Final grades may be reduced for unsatisfactory performance in any of the categories listed under “requirements.”
5. I will not give incompletes except in truly extraordinary personal circumstances that can be documented. Students may, however, elect to take an “F” for the course and have their grades for the course changed upon satisfactory completion of all course requirements.

Attendance, participation, in-class presentations (35%); critical reflections (7% each x 5 = 35%); book reviews (10% each x 3 = 30%).