

Popular Music Studies

(FIA 571)

Instructor: Theo Cateforis, Assistant Professor
Music History and Cultures, Syracuse University

Course Description: This is a research seminar in the critical study of popular music. A relatively recent area of academic interest, “popular music studies,” is marked most of all by its interdisciplinary scope. In this course we will encounter readings from a variety of viewpoints, including sociology, media studies, feminist theory, semiotics, and cultural studies as well as musicology, ethnomusicology and music theory. From scholarly analyses of MTV, punk subcultures, and ABBA to musings on obsessive record collectors and the meaning of mass culture, we will examine popular music’s diverse histories and significance.

Course Materials:

There is only one required text for this course: *On Record: Rock, Pop and the Written Word*, edited by Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (New York: Routledge, 2000). There are a number of additional readings, all of which are available either through Blackboard Course Reserve or as Electronic Journal articles on the Syracuse University Library page. All listening examples that accompany the readings are accessible through the course’s Blackboard page.

Expectations:

The focus in this seminar will be on intensive reading, research projects, and class discussions. It is expected that you have a basic background in music theory, as some of the readings and assignments will draw specifically on this body of knowledge. This is *not* a lecture class. As such, you must come to class ready to participate. If you know ahead of time that you will have to miss a class, please notify me. All absences should be explained via an e-mail or phone message as soon as you realize that you will not be able to attend class, otherwise they will be considered as un-excused absences and they will affect the attendance/participation portion of your grade. I will hand out instructions for all the assignments in class. There will be no quizzes or exams in this course. **Late assignments will not be accepted without an accompanying doctor’s note.**

Academic Integrity Policy

The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. It is expected that you are familiar with the University Policy, and that you will provide proper citations of sources in all your written work. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>

Students with Disabilities

Students who may need academic accommodations due to a disability are encouraged to discuss their needs with the instructor at the beginning of the semester. In order to obtain authorized accommodations, students should be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) and have an updated accommodation letter for the instructor. Accommodations and related support services such as exam administration are not provided retroactively and must be requested in advance. For more information about services and policy, please visit the Office of Disability Services <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/>

Grading and Requirements:

- 1. (10%) Attendance/Participation
- 2. (30%) Response/Critique Assignments
- 3. (20%) Analysis Paper
- 4. (40%) Term Paper/Class Presentation

- Please note: This class is open to both upper level undergraduate and graduate students. Graduate students will be required to produce a substantially longer term paper than the undergraduate students.

Grading Scale

A	=	94-100	B-	=	80-83	D+	=	67-69
A-	=	90-93	C+	=	77-79	D	=	64-66
B+	=	87-89	C	=	74-76	D-	=	60-63
B	=	84-86	C-	=	70-73	F	=	00-59

FIA 571 -WEEKLY PLANNER

Week One – Introduction: The Study of Popular Music

Thursday, August 28

Electronic Journal:

1. Brooks, William (1982). "On Being Tasteless." *Popular Music 2* (1982): 9-18.

Course Reserve:

1. Hamm, Charles (1981). "Some Thoughts on the Measurement of Popularity in Music." In *Putting Popular Music in Its Place*, 116-130. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Week Two – Popular Music and Value

Tuesday, September 2

On Record:

1. Adorno, Theodor (1941). "On Popular Music," 301-314.

Course Reserve:

1. Benjamin, Walter (1936). "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Mass Communication and Society*, edited by James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woollacott, 384-408. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1979.

 Exploratory Prospectus Due

Thursday, September 4

On Record:

1. Barthes, Roland (1977). "The Grain of the Voice," 293-300.

Electronic Journal:

1. Quirk, Tim and Jason Toynbee (2005). "Going Through the Motions: Popular Music Performance in Journalism and in Academic Discourse." *Popular Music 24*, no. 3 (2005): 399-413.

Week Three – Authenticities and Writing about Rock

Tuesday, September 9

Electronic Journal:

1. Frith, Simon (1981). “‘The Magic That Can Set You Free’: The Ideology of Folk and the Myth of the Rock Community.” *Popular Music* 1 (1981): 159-168.
2. McLeod, Kembrew. “‘*1/2’: A Critique of Rock Criticism in North America.” *Popular Music* 20, no. 1 (2001): 47-60.

Thursday, September 11

Photocopy:

1. Dettmar, Kevin (2006). “The Brief Life and Protracted Death of Rock & Roll.” Chapter One of *Is Rock Dead?*, 1-35. New York: Routledge Press, 2006.

☞ **Response/Critique Due on Readings of Weeks 1, 2 & 3**

Week Four – Popular Music and its Audiences, Pt. I

Tuesday, September 16

On Record:

1. “Groundworks,” 1-3
2. Riesman, David (1950). “Listening to Popular Music,” 5-13.
3. Horton, Donald (1957). “The Dialogue of Courtship in Popular Song,” 14-26.
4. Hall, Stuart and Paddy Whannel (1964). “The Young Audience,” 27-37.

Thursday, September 18

On Record:

1. “From Subcultural Studies to Cultural Studies,” 39-42.
2. Willis, Paul (1978). “The Golden Age,” 43-55.
3. Hebdige, Dick (1979). “Style as Homology and Signifying Practice,” 56-65.

Week Five – Popular Music and its Audiences, Pt. II

Tuesday, September 23

On Record:

1. McRobbie, Angela (1980). “Settling Accounts with Subcultures: *A Feminist Critique*,” 66-80.

Course Reserve:

1. Lowe, Melanie (2004). “‘Tween’ Scene: Resistance within the Mainstream.” In *Music Scenes: Local, Translocal, and Virtual*, edited by Andy Bennett and Richard A. Peterson, 80-95. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004.

☞ **Critique of a Scholarly Popular Music Article Due**

Thursday, September 25

Course Reserve:

1. Straw, Will (1997). “Sizing Up Record Collections: Gender and Connoisseurship in Record Collections.” In *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender*, edited by Sheila Whiteley, 3-16. New York: Routledge Press, 1997.

2. Cavicchi, Daniel (1998). "Touched by the Music: Defining Fandom," Chapter Two of *Tramps Like Us: Music & Meaning among Springsteen Fans*, 38-59. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Week Six – The Analysis of Popular Music

Tuesday, September 30

No Classes – Eid Ul Fitr

Thursday, October 2

Electronic Journal:

1. Tagg, Philip (1982). "Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method, and Practice." *Popular Music* 2 (1982): 37-67.

On Record:

2. McClary, Susan and Robert Walser (1988). "Start Making Sense! Musicology Wrestles with Rock," 277-292.

Week Seven – The Analysis of Popular Music, Pt. II

Tuesday, October 7

On Record:

1. Bradby, Barbara (1988). "Do-Talk and Don't-Talk: The Division of the Subject in Girl-Group Music," 341-368.

📖 Response/Critique Due on Readings of Weeks 4, 5, 6 & 7

Thursday, October 9

No Classes – Yom Kippur

Week Eight – The Analysis of Popular Music, Pt. III

Tuesday, October 14

Electronic Journal:

1. Moore, Allan (1992). "Patterns of Harmony." *Popular Music* 11, no. 1 (1992): 73-106.

Tuesday, October 16

Course Reserve:

1. Hisama, Ellie M. (2000). "From *L'Étranger* to 'Killing an Arab': Representing the Other in a Cure Song." In *Expression in Pop-Rock Music: A Collection of Critical and Analytical Essays*, edited by Walter Everett, 59-74. New York: Garland Publishing, 2000.

Electronic Journal:

2. Nicholls, David (2007). "Narrative Theory as an Analytical Tool in the Study of Popular Music Texts." *Music & Letters* 88, no. 2 (2007): 297-315.

Week Nine – The Business of Popular Music

Tuesday, October 21

On Record:

1. “The Organization of the Music Business,” 125-126.
2. Hirsch, Paul M. (1972). “Processing Fads and Fashions: An Organization-Set Analysis of Cultural Industry Systems,” 127-139.
3. Peterson, Richard A. and David G. Berger (1975). “Cycles in Symbol Production: The Case of Popular Music,” 141-159.

📖 **Analysis Paper Due**

Thursday, October 23

On Record:

1. Wallis, Roger and Krister Malm (1984). “Patterns of Change,” 160-180.

Electronic Journal:

2. Leyshon, Andrew, Peter Webb, Shaun French, Nigel Thrift, Louise Crewe (2005). “On the Reproduction of the Musical Economy after the Internet.” *Media, Culture & Society* 27, no. 2 (March 2005): 177-209.

Week Ten – The Creative Process

Tuesday, October 28

On Record:

1. Hennion, Antoine (1982). “The Production of Success: An Antimusicology of the Pop Song,” 185-206.
2. Bennett, H. Stith (1980). “The Realities of Practice,” 221-237.

Term Paper Prospectus Due

Thursday, October 30

On Record:

1. Bayton, Mavis (1988). “How Women Become Musicians,” 238-257.
2. Goodwin, Andrew (1988). “Sample and Hold: Pop Music in the Digital Age of Reproduction,” 258-273.

📖 **Response/Critique Due on Readings of Weeks 8, 9 & 10**

Week Eleven – Gender and Sexuality

Tuesday, November 4

Electronic Journal:

1. Keightley, Keir (1996). “‘Turn it Down!’” She Shrieked: Gender, Domestic Space, and High Fidelity, 1948-59.” *Popular Music* 15, no. 2 (1996): 149-177.

Course Reserve:

1. Nanes, Susan (1997). “Maturity and Masculinity: Frank Sinatra in the 1950s.” In *America Under Construction: Boundaries and Identities in Popular Culture*, edited by Kristi S. Long and Matthew Nadelhaft, 19-40. New York: Garland Publishing, 1997.

Thursday, November 6

No Class

Week Twelve – Gender and Sexuality, Pt. II

Tuesday, November 11

On Record:

1. Frith, Simon and Angela McRobbie (1978). "Rock and Sexuality," 371-389.

Course Reserve:

2. Coates, Norma (1998). "Moms Don't Rock: The Demonization of Courtney Love." In *"Bad" Mothers: The Politics of Blame in Twentieth-Century America*, edited by Molly Ladd-Taylor and Lauri Umansky, 319-333. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

Thursday, November 13

Guest Visitor – Vincent Stephens, Syracuse University Faculty Fellow in Humanities

Electronic Journal:

1. Stephens, Vincent (2005). "Pop Goes the Rapper: A Close Reading of Eminem's Genderphobia." *Popular Music* 24, no. 1 (2005): 21-36.

Course Reserve:

2. Hawkins, Stan (2006). "On Male Queering in Mainstream Pop." In *Queering the Popular Pitch*, edited by Sheila Whiteley and Jennifer Rycenga, 279-294. New York: Routledge, 2007.

☰ **Response/Critique Due on Readings of Weeks 11 & 12**

Week Thirteen – Class Presentations

Tuesday, November 18

Class Presentations Begin

☰ **Rough Draft of Term Papers Due**

Thursday, November 20

Class Presentations Continue

Week Fourteen – Class Presentations

Tuesday, November 25

Class Presentations Continue

Thursday, November 27

No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Week Fifteen – Class Presentations

Tuesday, December 2

Class Presentations Continue

Thursday, December 4

Class Presentations Finish – End of Class!

Tuesday, December 9

 Term Papers Due