

Honors Composition II: Border Crossing in Popular Music

ENC 1102h, sec. 0M13

Two 50 minute sessions plus the Fri “M” session

One of the more entrenched grand narratives of American popular music is the story of black creativity and white appropriation — what cultural historian Reebee Garofalo calls "black roots, white fruits." But this legacy (and the persistence) of innovative African-American styles and their white 'popularization' (or exploitation) — with Elvis Presley stealing the crown from Chuck Berry to become the putative king of rock'n'roll, itself the crowning example — fails to account for such reversals as the recent big hit by Puff Daddy, who used the Police's "Every Breath You Take" to pay tribute to a fallen Notorious B.I.G. Likewise, Africa Bambaataa's appropriation of Kraftwerk, as well as Run DMC's 1986 counter-intuitive 'cover' of Aerosmith's "Walk This Way." Indeed, we can understand the history of popular music, from jazz to soul, from disco to techno, not only as a one-way process of assimilation but also as a complex exchange of styles and expressions, a volatile intersection with social implications for a society still fearful of too much mixing.

This course's theme of "crossing over" will take up those moments in our cultural history when separatism and homogeneity gave way to integration and heterogeneity through cross-cultural hybridity. How have crossings in the past been imagined and achieved? What sort of challenges do they pose to audiences? Is our own time marked by a renewed segregationist culture or a daringly syncretic one? Course emphasis will be primarily on questions of race and ethnicity, where pop both confirms and confuses everyday social relations and identities. But we will also spend time on questions of gender and sexuality, where the transgressive crossing of riot grrrls and queercore has forged an unflinching assertion of difference.

While a consideration of musical styles and genres will come into play, this crossover framework will function more as a conceptual tool for exploring the disruption of static categories and the traversing of social and cultural borders. Hence, we will undertake crossings in terms of marketing and politics (Alternative Nation and its corporate mainstreaming), nationhood ("world music," global pop and cultural imperialism), and technology (plunderphonics, sampling and the law of 'property').

Requirements and grading

This course is subject to the Gordon Rule, which requires 6000 words of evaluated writing from each student. This translates to approximately 25 pages, the bulk of which will be dedicated to a research project, due on our last session (Monday, April 21). Assignments are due as listed on the syllabus. Late papers will not be accepted—no excuses. You will simply forfeit that portion of the grade, which in most cases will be fatal.

Attendance is essential and mandatory: two unexcused absences will lower your grade by a full point; three unexcused absences will lower your grade two points; four will result in a failing grade. To be excused from class you will need written permission (e.g., a note from your physician). Whining and bellyaching will be frowned upon. Classroom participation, which includes contributing to discussion as well as in-class writing, will also be factored into your grade. All work, except for in class writing, must be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, in MLA style.

Be advised: Some of the course material will contain mature subject matter.

Grading:	—response paper & bibliography	25%
	—research paper (draft)	25%
	—final research paper	25%
	—participation/online	25%

Note: This class will take advantage of the new plus/minus grading system.

Academic policy: Students must follow University standards for personal and academic conduct as outlined in the Golden Rule <<http://www.ucf.edu/goldenrule/>>. There is a zero tolerance policy in this class on academic dishonesty in any form. Plagiarism is cheating and will result in a failing grade, as well as likely suspension.

Classroom conduct:

- arrive on time and do not leave early
- no private conversations
- no cell phones, pagers, etc.

UCF Disability Policy: UCF is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, (407) 823-2371, TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Required texts: — course reading packet of articles on reserve at the library

Week 1: Introduction(s), course objectives, problematics

Mon, 1/6: syllabus and response paper guidelines

Wed, 1/8: film screening: *Hairspray* (John Waters, 1988)

Fri, 1/10: *Hairspray* and discussion

Week 2: Go Down Moses: from slave spirituals to gospel

Mon, 1/13: Christopher Small, "Rituals for Survival I: An Extatic Delight in Psalmody" and "On Cultures and Their Fusion"

Wed, 1/15: Simon Frith, "Music and Identity" and writing assignment

Fri, 1/17: online discussion

Week 3: The roots of rock'n'roll: from "race music" to rhythm and blues

Mon, 1/20: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (no class)

Wed, 1/22: William Barlow, "Cashing In: 1900-1939" and Reebee Garofalo, "Crossing Over: 1939-1989"

Fri, 1/24: online discussion: Martin & Segrave, "Combat the Menace" and "From the Waist Up"

Week 4: Assimilation blues: selling (out) black musics to white audiences

Mon, 1/27: Nelson George, "Crossover: The Death of Rhythm & Blues (1975-79)"
and "Assimilation Triumphs, Retronuevo Rises (1980-87)"

Wed, 1/29: library research class

Fri, 1/31: online discussion: research project proposal

Week 5: Rap and its discontents: black noise, white fear (and desire)

Mon, 2/3: Tricia Rose, "Prophets of Rage: Rap Music and the Politics of
Black Cultural Expression"

Due: 1 page research project proposal

Wed, 2/5: Ewan Allinson, "It's a Black Thing: Hearing How Whites Can't" and
Charles Aaron, "What the White Boy Means When He Says Yo"

Fri, 2/7: online discussion

Week 6: Border theory and aural utopias: house, techno and rave culture

Mon, 2/10: David Toop, "Hip-hop: Iron Needles of Death and a Piece of Wax" and
Mike Rubin, "Techno: Days of Future Past"

Wed, 2/12: Simon Reynolds, "A Tale of Three Cities"

Fri, 2/14: No class: prep for Monday!

Week 7: A woman's place?: crossing gender roles

Mon, 2/17: outline due and informal oral presentations

Wed, 2/19: Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie, "Rock and Sexuality" and
Norma Coates, "(R)Evolution Now? Rock and the Political Potential of Gender"

Fri, 2/21: online discussion

Week 8: Playing with a different sex: gay culture, riot grrrls and queercore

Mon, 2/24: Richard Dyer, "In Defense of Disco" and Peter Shapiro, "Disco"

Wed, 2/26: Joanne Gottlieb and Gayle Wald, "Smells Like Teen Spirit: Riot Grrrls,
Revolution and Women in Independent Rock" and Cynthia Fuchs,
"If I Had a Dick: Queers, Punks, and Alternative Acts"

Fri, 2/28: online discussion

Week 9: Crossing (into) the mainstream: indie rock and alternative culture

Mon, 3/3: Tony Kirschner, "The Lalapalooziation of American Youth"

Wed, 3/5: Tom Frank, "Alternative to What?" and Scott Turner,
"Maximizing Rock & Roll: An Interview with Tim Yohannon"

Fri, 3/7: No class: research day

Week 10: Crossing national borders: "world music" and cultural imperialism

Mon, 3/10: Timothy Taylor, "Popular Musics and Globalization"

Wed, 3/12: Andrew Goodwin & Joe Gore, "World Beat and the Cultural Imperialism Debate"
and Alex Seago, "'Where Hamburgers Sizzle on an Open Grill Night and Day' (?):
Global Pop Music and Americanization in the Year 2000"

Fri, 3/14: online discussion

<spring break>

due: annotated bibliography

Week 11: Beg, borrow and steal: sampling technology and music as 'property'
Mon, 3/24: Chris Cutler, "Plunderphonics" and Stephen Perkins,
"Plagiarism: An Interview with the Tape-beatles"
Wed, 3/26: John Oswald, "Creatigality" and Negativland, "Fair Use"
Fri, 3/28: online discussion

Week 12: Beg, borrow and steal: cont.
Mon, 3/31: due: first draft of research project
Screening: *Sonic Outlaws* (Craig Baldwin, 1995)
Wed, 4/2: *Sonic Outlaws* (cont.)
Fri, 4/4: online discussion

Week 13: The ethics of 'piracy'
Mon, 4/7: Sloop and Herman, "Negativland, Out-law Judgments, and
the Politics of Cyberspace"
Wed, 4/9: Charles Mann, "The Heavenly Jukebox": www.theatlantic.com/jukebox
Fri, 4/11: online discussion

Week 14: Show me what'cha got
Mon, 4/14: oral presentations
Wed, 4/16: oral presentations
Fri, 4/18: online discussion

Week 15: coda
Mon, 4/21: exam session (regular classroom): final projects due

Research project due dates:

Week 5: research project proposal
Week 7: outline and informal oral presentation
Week 10: annotated bibliography (approx. 2 pages: 5 citations)
Week 12: first draft (approx. 5 pages)
Week 14: oral presentations
Week 15: final research project (10-12 pages)