

The University of Iowa  
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
**School of Music**

**MUS:2005:0001 Issues in Popular Music: Women Who Rock**

Fall 2015

MW, 3:30 – 4:45 pm, 205 PH

Some of the policies relating to this course (such as the drop deadline) are governed by its administrative home, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 120 Schaeffer Hall.

**Instructor: Donna S. Parsons**

Office location: 405 BHC

Office hours: TWTH 2:00 – 3:00 pm, and by appointment

Office phone: 335-3227

Email address: donna-parsons@uiowa.edu

Director of the School of Music: David Gier, 130 CSM5

Email policy: Please give me 72 hours (3 days) in which to respond to your email. Sometimes I need to consider your question in order to give you the best answer. Due to unforeseen computer glitches, there are occasions when I might not receive your note. If you have not heard from me after 5 days, please re-send your email. If you submit a written assignment via email, it is your responsibility to make sure that the attachment is viable and that the email has been received.

**Course Description**

The cultural narrative of popular women musicians offers a unique view from which to study American and British history and society. From Billie Holiday, Aretha Franklin, Janis Joplin, Chrissie Hynde and Patti Smith to Madonna, the Spice Girls, Alanis Morissette, Amy Winehouse, Lady Gaga, Pink, and Adele, female performers have challenged and redefined the manner in which the music industry and fans respond to issues of gender, sexuality, identity, authenticity, and artistry. In this course students examine the history of popular women musicians and the influence their lyrics, music and performances have had on American and British culture. Concurrently students explore the impact which civil rights, the British Invasion (i.e. the Beatles and the Rolling Stones), second wave feminism, the counterculture, social injustices, war, music education, rock festivals and charity concerts have had on women's music careers.

Our exploration cuts across cultures and ethnicity as we analyze the rise and fall of early girl groups such as the Shirelles, the Supremes, and the Ronettes, the dynamics of mixed gender groups including The Mamas and the Papas, Fleetwood Mac, Blondie, and Siouxsie Sioux and the Banshees, and the social lyricism of Joan Baez, Sinéad O'Connor, Suzanne Vega, and Tracy Chapman. Through the lens of female performers' unfamiliarity with their precursors, the construction of canon will be critiqued.

This course satisfies a general education requirement in Literary Visual & Performing Arts for those students admitted during Summer 2011 and after, and in Fine Arts for those students admitted before Summer 2011.

## Course Objectives and Goals

- to gain an in-depth knowledge of the history of popular women musicians
- to develop an a greater understanding of women musicians' impact on culture, society and politics
- to gain a greater sense of women's lives and the pervasive ways in which popular women musicians address societal issues
- to develop analytical skills in discussing elements of music and recognizing stylistic differences
- to develop and refine skills in critical reading, discussion and writing

## Texts (available at the University Book Store)

Lucy O'Brien, *SheBop: The Definitive History of Women in Popular Music*, rev. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.  
 Jacqueline Warwick, *Girl Groups, Girl Culture: Popular Music and Identity in the 1960s*  
 Sheila Whiteley, *Women and Popular Music: Sexuality, Identity and Subjectivity*

## Listening

In order to gain a better understanding of women's contributions to the development of popular music, you are expected to acquire a working knowledge of their singles and albums. The Music Library (2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Main Library) contains a plethora of recordings by female popular musicians. Weekly listening assignments can be accessed through the course ICON site.

## Grading System and the use of +/-

Plus and minus grading will be utilized. Grades are not curved or rounded up to the nearest decimal point. A+ grades are given only in extraordinary situations. If you are concerned about your work in this class, you need to talk with me no later than the week of October 19<sup>th</sup>. If you wait until the last week of class or during finals week, then it is too late to offer suggestions.

## Grading Scale

Percentage	Grade	Corresponding grade point
98-100	A+	4.33
93-97	A	4.00
90-92	A-	3.67
87-89	B+	3.33
83-86	B	3.00
80-82	B-	2.67
77-79	C+	2.33
73-76	C	2.00
70-72	C-	1.67
67-69	D+	1.33
63-66	D	1.00
60-62	D-	0.67
0-59	F	0.00

## A Note on Collaboration

Students may discuss their essay topics with each other, their peers, friends, and family members. Students are expected to present their own ideas in their essays and must clearly cite via parenthetical citation, footnote or endnote when they state another person's ideas. Essays need to be the sole authorship of students.

The midterm and final exams will be given in class. Students may study together, but the ideas presented in their exam essays must be their own. Exam essays need to be the sole authorship of students. If you have questions, it is your responsibility to ask them.

## Computation of Grades

Class participation/attendance	20%
Essay 1	10%
Essay 2	10%
Essay 3	20%
Exam 1	10%
Exam 2	10%
Exam 3	10%
Final exam	<u>10%</u>
	100%

## Important Dates

Essay 1:	September 14
Exam 1:	September 16
Essay 2:	October 7
Exam 2:	October 14
Exam 3:	November 11
Essay 3:	November 18
Final Exam:	TBD

## Date and Time of the Final Exam

The final examination date and time will be announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes. I will announce the final examination date and time for this course during class and on the course ICON site once it is known. Do not plan your end of the semester travel plans until the final exam schedule is made public. It is your responsibility to know the date, time, and place of the final exam.

## Course Requirements and Policies

**1. Class Participation and Attendance:** Even though this class meets twice a week, we cover the material at a very quick pace. Regular attendance and active class participation is necessary in order to facilitate thorough discussion of the texts. Your participation/attendance grade accounts for 20% of your final grade. Each session is worth 10 points. You will receive a score of 9.5 which translates as an (A) for each attendance and significant class participation. Scores are charted on the course ICON site and will drop accordingly per each unexcused absence. Please let me know in advance if you will be unable to attend a class session. If you only attend half of a class session, you will receive credit for the portion attended, and depending upon the circumstance the other half will be credited as excused or unexcused. Your participation / attendance grade will also drop if you are not actively participating in small and large group discussions, texting or surfing the internet during class sessions or if you are talking while directions are being given, other groups are presenting their ideas, or we are listening to music or watching film clips.

## 2. Essay 1: 'She's Got The Look:' Glamour and the Female Musician

Glamour, femininity, innocence and an array of beautiful dresses were assets female singers needed in order to be successful in the 1950s. While women musicians were frequently heard

singing with big bands and orchestras, bandleaders and conductors emphasized the importance of their vocalists wearing a beautiful dress. At times the dress overshadowed the musical artistry. Obviously, much has changed since the days of Doris Day, Peggy Lee, and Alma Cogan. Let's start with the definition of glamour. If a critic labels someone as "glamorous," what does this mean to you? How do **you** define glamour? What are its attributes? During the 1950s the actresses Grace Kelly and Audrey Hepburn epitomized glamour. Who epitomizes it today? In your opinion what image must a female musician project today in order to be successful and why? What role if any does glamour play in artists' music videos and concerts? Does the "dress" still overshadow the music?

Basically, I want to know what you think about glamour and its importance in a female musician's or musical group's career. I am not looking for the "right" answer but rather for a persuasive argument. You will need to include a thesis statement, develop your argument, provide examples to support the points you make, and draw your own conclusions. You need to cite in a footnote or endnote any source from which you paraphrase or quote. You can use parenthetical citations. If you consult any sources you will need to include a bibliography. Your essay should be typed, double-spaced, and 1-2 pages in length. Please bring a hard copy of your essay to submit in class. The essay will receive a letter grade. If you intend to submit a late essay, you need to let me know in advance or on the date the essay is due. Upon notification late essays will be accepted up to two weeks after the due date but will receive a deduction in letter grade.

### 3. Essay 2: The Legacy of the Girl Groups

With the release of compilation CDs such as *One Kiss Can Lead to Another: Girl Group Sounds: Lost and Found*, *The Girl Group Sound*, and *Where the Girls Are*, we are reminded that The Shirelles, The Chiffons, The Ronettes, The Shangri-Las and The Supremes were **not** the only girl groups to enjoy success. **Choose one girl group which we are discussing in class and then from the list below choose two lesser known girl groups to examine in detail.** Consider the following: Where were the girl groups based? Did their line-ups change? What were their hits? What was the theme of their lyrics? What do you think of their songs? Did they write their own lyrics? Did they play any instruments? With which labels did they record? How did their label/producer treat them in comparison with other girl groups who recorded on the same label? How were they treated in comparison to the male artists on the same label? Did they tour, and if so, with whom? Did they appear on any television shows or in any movies? Why do you think the songs resonated with young listeners? What has been written about your groups and their music? Can you find anything about your particular groups in pop/rock encyclopedias, popular magazines, and newspapers of the era? Why do you think one group was successful while the other two enjoyed limited success?

The Blossoms  
The Brightones  
The Butterflys  
The Cake  
The Cinderellas  
The Emeralds  
The Fabulettes  
The Flirtations

The Goodees  
Goodie & the Gingerbreads  
The Goodies  
The Honey Bees  
The Honeys  
The Ikettes  
The Jaynetts  
The Jewels

Reparta & the Delrons  
The Rev-Lons  
The Ribbons  
Ruby & the Romantics  
The Sapphires  
The Satisfactions  
The Starlets  
The Tammys

The Four J's	The Lovelites	The Toys
The Four Pennies	Luv'd Ones	The What Four
The Geminis	The Palisades	The Whyte Boots
The Fabulettes	Patty & the Emblems	The Young Generations

Basically, I want to know what you think about your chosen girl groups and their place in popular music history. I am not looking for the “right” answer but rather for a persuasive argument. You will need to include a thesis statement, develop your argument, provide examples to support the points you make, and draw your own conclusions. You need to cite in a footnote or endnote any source from which you paraphrase or quote. You can use parenthetical citations. You will also need to include a bibliography that contains a minimum of 8 sources. Your essay should be typed, double-spaced, and 4-5 pages in length. Please bring a hard copy of your essay to submit in class. The essay will receive a letter grade. If you intend to submit a late essay, you need to let me know in advance or on the date the essay is due. Upon notification late essays will be accepted up to two weeks after the due date but will receive a deduction in letter grade.

## Resources to Consult

### Course Texts:

O'Brien, Lucy. *SheBop II: The Definitive History of Women in Rock, Pop and Soul*  
 Warwick, Jacqueline. *Girl Groups, Girl Culture: Popular Music and Identity in the 1960s*

### Main Library Reserve:

Betrock, Alan. <i>Girl Groups: The Story of a Sound</i>	ML3534 B5 1982
<i>Billboard Illustrated Encyclopedia of Music</i>	ML100 B395 2003
Clarke, Donald, ed. <i>The Penguin Encyclopedia of Popular Music</i>	ML102 P66 P4 1998
DeCurtis, Anthony and James Henke, ed.. <i>The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock &amp; Roll</i>	Folio ML3534 R64 1992
Gaar, Gillian G. <i>She's A Rebel: The History of Women in Rock &amp; Roll</i>	ML394 G22 2002
Love, Darlene. <i>My Name is Love</i>	ML420 L885 A3 2013
O'Dair, Barbara, ed. <i>Trouble Girls: The Rolling Stone Book of Women in Rock</i>	ML394 T76 1997
Stras, Laurie, ed. <i>She's So Fine: Reflections on Whiteness, Femininity, Adolescence and Class in 1960s Music</i>	ML3470 S53 2010
<i>Virgin Encyclopedia of Fifties Music</i>	ML102 P66 V568 2002

### Main Library Reference:

Rees, Dafydd, <i>Q Rock Stars Encyclopedia</i>	ML102 R6 Q4 1999
Stambler, Irwin, <i>The Encyclopedia of Pop, Rock &amp; Soul</i>	ML102 P66 S8 1989

### Music Reference (found on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Main Library)

Stambler, Irwin. <i>The Encyclopedia of Pop, Rock &amp; Soul</i>	ML102 P66 S8 1989
Warner, Jay. <i>The Billboard Book of American Singing Groups: A History, 1940-1990</i>	ML106 U3 W2 1992
<i>Virgin Encyclopedia of Popular Music</i>	ML102 P66 V57 2002
<i>Virgin Encyclopedia of Sixties Music</i>	ML102 P66 V5684 2002

**Electronic Databases**

Rock's Backpage's Library

Entertainment Industry Magazine Archive (EIMA)

Biography Genealogy Master Index

Academic Search Elite

JSTOR

America: History and Life

The Sixties: Primary Documents and Personal Narratives 1960-1974

Historical Newspapers Online

**Websites:**

<http://www.spectropop.com> (click on girl groups)

<http://www.pophistorydig.com>

<http://www.girl-groups.com>

<http://www.history-of-rock.com/index.html> (click on girl groups)

**Recordings in the Music Library:**

*One Kiss Can Lead to Another: Girl Group Sounds, Lost and Found* 21804 CD + supplement

**4. Essay 3: Women Rockers and Their Stories**

The cultural and historical narrative of popular women musicians contains a vast trove of untold stories. Your goal is to unearth one of these stories and to contextualize it within contemporary music, society and culture (i.e. to discuss its relevance to the period in which it was produced). As you research your essay consider the following:

- What does your topic reveal about female musicians and their peers?
- How is your topic a product of its environment? (i.e. What were the cultural or societal influences?)
- What role does gender, sexuality, identity, authenticity or artistry play in your topic?
- Is your musician a solo artist or a member of a band? If she plays in a band, what are the intra-group dynamics? Is she the leader of the band? Is she the main songwriter?
- Does your musician play any instruments?
- What do you think of your musician's artistry?
- Do you consider your musician to be a musician, an entertainer, or both?
- Is your musician a songwriter? Does she perform covers of other artists? If so, what do you think of her version? Is it a literal or creative interpretation? What are the lyrical themes of her songs? Why do you think certain songs have resonated with listeners?
- Do you consider your musician's work to be political? If so, what is its goal? How do you define political?
- Does your musician support any causes & if so how active is your musician in that cause?
- Do your musician's lyrics critique particular social issues?
- What do you believe is innovative about your musician's work?
- How much control did your musician have in the production/promotion of her career? Did she start her own record label?
- Is your musician actively trying to reach a particular audience or demographic?
- How has your musician opened doors for other musicians?

- How does your topic help the reader understand the music scene?
- How have histories or encyclopedias of popular music treated your topic?
- Is there a difference between the way in which your topic was covered in its time period and how is it discussed today?

There are many questions to ask about your particular topic, and you are not limited to the ones listed above. On the same note, you are not expected to answer every question posed above. Basically, I want to know what you think about the story you have uncovered and why. I am not looking for the “right” answers but rather for a persuasive argument. You will need to include a thesis statement, develop your argument, provide examples to support the points you make and draw your own conclusions. You need to cite in a footnote or endnote any source from which you paraphrase or quote. You can use parenthetical citations instead of footnotes or endnotes. You will also need to include a bibliography that contains a minimum of 8 sources. 2 sources may come from the internet, 2 sources can also come from popular magazines and newspapers such as *Time*, *Life*, *Variety*, *Billboard*, *Rolling Stone*, *McCall's*, *Seventeen*, *New York Times*, *L.A. Times*, or *Chicago Tribune*. 4 sources must come from peer-reviewed scholarly articles and/or chapters from books. Your essay should be typed, double-spaced, and 5-6 pages in length. Please bring a hard copy of your essay to submit in class. The essay will receive a letter grade. If you intend to submit a late essay, you need to let me know in advance or on the date the essay is due. Upon notification late essays will be accepted until 5 pm on Friday, December 11, 2015, but will receive a deduction in letter grade.

**5. Exams:** The exams will be based on class discussions and assigned readings. They will include multiple choice, short identification, and small essay questions. The exams will receive a letter grade.

### **Calendar of Course Assignments:**

**August 24 and 26: Introduction: Authenticity and the Construction of a Canon**

**August 31 and September 2: Blue, Jazz, and Swing**

Mamie Smith, Gertrude Ma Rainey, Ida Cox, Alberta Hunter, Bessie Smith, Memphis Minnie, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald,

**Readings:** O'Brien, Chapter 1 (16-38)

**September 7: University Holiday – No Classes**

**September 9 and 14: Glamour Girls and the Rise of Rock 'n' Roll**

Gracie Fields, Vera Lynn, Ivy Benson, Doris Day, Peggy Lee, Alma Cogan, Willie Mae 'Big Mama' Thornton, Eartha Kitt, Dinah Washington, Nina Simone, Dusty Springfield

**Readings:** O'Brien, Chapter 2 (pp. 39-59)

**UI Library Presentation (September 9)**

**Glamour & the Female Musician Essay Due on September 14**

**September 16: Exam 1**

**September 21 and 23: Girl Groups and Solo Singers**

The Chordettes, The Bobbettes, The Chantals, The Shirelles, The Chiffons, The Crystals, The Angels, Leslie Gore, The Shangri-Las, Little Eva, The Exciters

**Readings:** Warwick, Chapters 1-5 (pp. 13-91)

**September 28 and 30: Girl Groups continued**

Motown, Mary Wells, The Marvelettes, The Supremes, Martha and the Vandellas, The Velvelettes, Gladys Knight & the Pips, The Dixie Cups, Phil Spector, Darlene Love, The Ronettes

**Readings:** Warwick, Chapters 9-14 (pp. 141-218)

**October 5, 7, & 12: Solo Female Artists from the 1940s – 1960s and the British Invasion**

Ruth Brown, LaVern Baker, Georgia Gibbs, Etta James, Wanda Jackson, Janis Martin, Brenda Lee, The British Invasion, Aretha Franklin, Dionne Warwick, Cilla Black, Marianne Faithfull

**Readings:** O'Brien, Chapter 3 (pp. 60-85)

Whiteley, Chapter 1 (pp. 22-31)

**The Legacy of the Girl Groups Essay Due on October 7****October 14: Exam 2****October 19 and 21: Janis Joplin and Women Rockers**

Janis Joplin, Grace Slick, Stevie Nicks, Maureen Tucker, Nico, Patti Smith, Suzi Quatro, Joan Jett, Pat Benetar, Tina Turner, Cher, Bonnie Raitt

**Readings:** O'Brien, Chapter 4 (pp. 86-109)

Whiteley, Chapter 4 (pp. 51-71)

**October 26 and 28: Modes of Expression**

Blondie, The Go-Go's, Chrissie Hynde/The Pretenders, The B-52s, Laurie Anderson, Yoko Ono, Siouxsie Sioux, Riot Grrrl, Bratmobile, Huggy Bear, Bikini Kill, Courtney Love

**Readings:** O'Brien, Chapter 5 (pp. 110-143)

Whiteley, Chapter 7 (pp. 95-118)

**November 2 and 4: Songwriters**

Joni Mitchell, Carole King, Carly Simon, Joan Armatrading, Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton, Kate Bush, Bjork, Tracy Chapman, Tori Amos, Amy Winehouse, Adele

**Readings:** O'Brien, Chapter 6 (pp. 144-166)

Whiteley, Chapters 5-6 (pp. 72-94)

Warwick, Chapter 7 (pp. 109-119)

**November 9: Madonna, Androgyny & the Female Body**

The Mamas and the Papas, Karen Carpenter, Madonna, Cyndi Lauper, Grace Jones, Annie Lennox

**Readings:** O'Brien, Chapter 7 (pp. 167-195)

Whiteley, Chapter 8 (pp. 119-135)

**November 11: Exam 3**

### **November 16 and 18: The Disco Diva Legacy, Rap, and Reggae Artists**

Donna Summer, The Pointer Sisters, Sister Sledge, Whitney Houston, Sade, Janet Jackson, Lauryn Hill, Erykah Badu, Destiny's Child, Shante, Salt 'N' Pepa, Queen Latifah, Missy Elliott, Marcia Griffiths

**Readings:** O'Brien, Chapters 9-10 (pp. 220-250, 251-279)

**Women Rockers and Their Stories Essay Due on November 18**

### **November 23 and 25: Thanksgiving Break**

### **November 30 and December 2: Lyrics and Social Issues**

Peggy Seeger, Joan Baez, Suzanne Vega, Tracy Chapman, Odetta, Ani DiFranco, Sinéad O'Connor, PJ Harvey, Tori Amos, MIA

**Readings:** O'Brien, Chapter 12 (pp. 305-329)

Whiteley, Chapters 11-12 (171-213)

### **December 7 and 9: Girlpower**

The Spice Girls, Alanis Morissette, Sarah McLachlan, Lilith Fair, Mariah Carey, Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera, Beyoncé, Rihanna, Lady Gaga, Pink, Florence and the Machine

**Readings:** O'Brien, Chapters 14-15 (pp. 369-388, 389-405)

Whiteley, Chapter 13 (pp. 214-29)

## **The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: Important Policies and Procedures**

### **Administrative Home**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook at <http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook>.

### **Electronic Communication**

University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondence (Operations Manual, III.15.2, k.11).

### **Accommodations for Disabilities**

A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet with the course instructor privately in the instructor's office to make particular arrangements. See <http://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu> for more information.

### **Academic Honesty**

All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to

the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS [Academic Policies Handbook](#)).

### **CLAS Final Examination Policies**

The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. **No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes.** All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

### **Making a Suggestion or a Complaint**

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. (CLAS [Academic Policies Handbook](#)).

### **Understanding Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the [UI Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator](#) for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

### **Reacting Safely to Severe Weather**

In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the [Department of Public Safety website](#).

### **Disclaimer**

Depending how the class progresses throughout the semester, I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus.

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