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Glam MUS 22200

Davidson College, Spring 2015

Instructor: Greg Weinstein (grweinstein@davidson.edu)

Description: The term “glam rock” has long been marginal to the standard narratives of pop music history. Most critics use this label in a very narrow way: it refers to a very short period of time and a small group of (primarily heterosexual male) performers, had little broad cultural importance, and is primarily understood as an index of the broader trend towards self-indulgence and excess that characterized post-1960s popular culture.

This course will aim to interrogate and redefine the notion of “glam.” We will take as our starting point Philip Auslander’s notion that Glam Rock helped to lead a radical redefining of the way American and British society conceived of gender and sexuality. However, Auslander also considers “glam” performatively, as a way of offering broad social critiques by playing with one’s public persona. Following his lead—as well as the incisive troubling of “normativity” by Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner—we will consider “glam” as a very broad set of ideas and methods for understanding the performance of personal identity—including, but not limited to, gender and sexuality. We will push the concept of “glam” in several directions: the so-called “glam” or “hair” metal of the 1980s; the performance of an “authentic” folk persona; the sexualized and racialized personas adopted by hip hop artists; and the gender identity questions posed by the operatic voice.

Although this course will focus on musical performers, and we will listen to a series of recordings, students need not have any musical background to enroll in the course. The course will encourage a broadly interdisciplinary perspective; what few musical concepts are needed will be developed collectively in class.

Texts:

The following texts are available at the college bookstore, or from several online retailers:

- Philip Auslander, *Performing Glam Rock: Gender & Theatricality in Popular Music* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006)
- Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 1979)
- Chuck Klosterman, *Fargo Rock City: A Heavy Metal Odyssey in Rural North Dakota* (New York: Scribner, 2001)

Additional readings will be posted to the course website as PDFs.

Listening:

Students are required to sign up for a free Spotify account, as this is where most listening assignments will be. Most classes will have a listening assignment in addition to readings;

like the readings, these are mandatory, and it is expected that students will be prepared to discuss the listening in as much depth as the texts. Listening assignments will be posted as links on the course webpage.

Grades:

Your course grade will be calculated based on the following criteria:

Participation:	25%
Website:	20%
In-class Presentation:	15%
Final Paper:	40%

Attendance

Attendance in seminar meetings is essential for you to gain the full benefit of the course. However, there are occasionally circumstances that necessitate being absent from class. You are permitted three (3) absences during the semester. Of course, it may happen that you need to miss an additional class for a legitimate reason (illness, etc.). In this case, you are bound by the Honor Code: you must inform me of the reason for your absence. If you misrepresent or lie about your absence, I will report this to the Honor Council for consideration. Any unexcused absences (i.e., absences for which you don't provide a timely explanation) beyond the permitted three will result in the lowering of your final course grade by a full mark (i.e., a "B" in the course becomes a "C"). When you are absent, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate and/or me to find out what you missed.

Course Websites

You can find materials for the course (PDFs of readings, links to Spotify) on the course Moodle page. However, you will also participate in the construction of a "glam archive" on a different course website (courses.gregoryweinstein.edu/glam). You are expected to actively participate in the construction of this archive throughout the semester, by posting pictures, recordings, links, etc., and providing critical commentary about how the concept of "glam" can be used to interpret some of these materials. The format for this website is entirely up to the class to collectively determine, and we will discuss this at more length during the second week of the semester; however, every student is expected to be an active participant in this project.

Final Project

During the second half of the course, you will develop a final project of your choosing. In this project, you will analyze a text/performance/culture/etc. through the lens of "glam" (broadly construed). You have full leeway to determine the topic and form of your analysis, and creative and/or ethnographic projects are strongly encouraged. You will present your preliminary research to the class in April, and your final paper (10–15 pages) will be due on May 13 (May 11 for graduating seniors).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences:

Davidson College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this class, complete the

course requirements, or benefit from the College's programs or services, contact the Dean of Students Office as soon as possible. To receive any academic accommodation, you must be appropriately recognized by the Dean of Students Office, which works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without their permission.

Class Schedule

13 January

Introduction of the course

15 January

Auslander, "Introduction"

Nigel Thrift, "The Material Practices of Glamour"

Unit 1—Lady Stardust: Gender Performance

20 January

Auslander, "Who Can I Be Now?" (pp. 106–149)

Watch: "Queen Bitch" and "Starman" performances

22 January

Michael Warner and Lauren Berlant, "Sex in Public"

24 January: Film Screening (Ziggy Stardust), 1:00–2:30, Location TBA

27 January

David Bowie, *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*

29 January

Simon Frith, "Performance"

Susan Sontag, "Notes on Camp"

3 February

Susan Fast, "Whole Lotta Love: Performing Gender"

Listen: Led Zeppelin, "Lemon Song"

Led Zeppelin, "Whole Lotta Love"

5 February

Auslander, "Suzi Quattro Wants to Be Your Man" (pp. 193–226)

Unit 2—Song for Bob Dylan: Glam Histories and Futures

10 February

Auslander, "Glamticipations" (pp. 9–38)

Listen: Jimi Hendrix, "All Along the Watchtower"

Alice Cooper, "Ballad of Dwight Fry"

Watch: Jimi Hendrix at Monterey (excerpt)

12 February

Benjamin Filene, "Performing the Folk: Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan"

Listen: Bob Dylan, “Song to Woody”
Bob Dylan, “Like a Rolling Stone”
David Bowie, “Song for Bob Dylan”

17 February

Ken McLeod, “Space Oddities: Aliens, Futurism and Meaning in Popular Music”
Watch: David Bowie, “Space Oddity” (both versions)
Listen: David Bowie, “Ashes to Ashes,” “Hallo Spaceboy”

19 February

Eric Lott, “‘The Seeming Counterfeit’: Early Blackface Acts, the Body, and Social Contradiction”
Listen: Stephen Foster songs

24 February

J. Griffith Rollefson, “The ‘Robot Voodoo Power’ Thesis: Afrofuturism and Anti-Anti-Essentialism from Sun Ra to Kool Keith”
Listen: Parliament, “P-Funk (Wants to Get Funked Up)”
Kool Keith, “Supergalactic Lover”

26 February

bell hooks, “Selling Hot Pussy: Representations of Black Female Sexuality in the Cultural Marketplace”
Listen: Lil’ Kim, *Hardcore* (selections)
Nicki Minaj, “Only” and “Anaconda”

3 and 5 March: No Class (Spring Break)

Unit 3—Unwashed and Somewhat Slightly Dazed: Subculture

10 March

Hebdige, “Introduction,” “One,” and “Two” (pp. 1–29)
Listen: Sex Pistols, “Anarchy in the U.K.”
Sex Pistols, “God Save the Queen”

12 March

Hebdige, “Six,” “Seven,” and “Eight” (pp. 90–127)
Watch: *The Filth and the Fury* (excerpt)

15 March: Final Project Précis Due

17 March

Auslander, “Glamography” (pp. 39–70)
Listen: Gary Glitter, “Rock and Roll (Part 2)”
Lou Reed, “Make Up”
Lou Reed, “Walk on the Wild Side”
T. Rex, “Hot Love”

19 March

José Esteban Muñoz, “Stages: Queers, Punks, and the Utopian Performative”

24 March

Sarah Thornton, “The Distinctions of Cultures without Distinctions” and “Exploring the Meaning of the Mainstream”

26 March

Alice Echols, “The Homo Superiors: Disco and the Rise of Gay Macho”

Watch: Village People, “Macho Man”

Sylvester, “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)”

31 March

Klosterman, *Fargo Rock City* (part 1)

Listen: Poison, “I Want Action”

Guns N’ Roses, “Sweet Child O’ Mine”

Warrant, “Cherry Pie”

Twisted Sister, “We’re Not Gonna Take It”

2 April

Klosterman, *Fargo Rock City* (part 2)

Watch: Poison, “Nothing But a Good Time”

Def Leppard, “Photograph”

7 April: No Class (Easter Break)

Unit 4—Fame: Stages and Celebrity

9 April

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception”

11 April: Film Screening (The Blue Angel), 1:00–2:30, Location TBA

14 April

Der Blaue Engel

Read: Peter Jelavich, “The Weimar Revue”

16 April

Roger Freitas, “The Eroticism of Emasculation: Confronting the Baroque Body of the Castrato”

Listen: Alessandro Moreschi, “Ave Maria”

21–23 April

Student Presentations

28 April

Katherine Meizel, "Facing the Music"

30 April

Elizabeth Kate Switaj, "Lady Gaga's Bodies: Buying and Selling *The Fame Monster*"

Craig N. Owens, "Celebrity without Organs"

5 May

TBA