MEETINGS
Music Building 240, Wednesdays, 4:15-6:50

INSTRUCTOR:
Dr. Tim Sterner Miller
Office: Music Building 239
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1-2, or by appointment
Email: timsm@uwm.edu
Course Website: Canvas

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
This seminar will explore the scholarly discourses surrounding popular music, primarily in the United States in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Each week’s meeting will center on readings relating to a particular theme, regional style, or repertory. Weekly course work will encompass reading, listening, short writing assignments, and in-class activities ranging from playing music to scholarly presentations. Over the course of the semester, each student will, in consultation with the instructor, conduct individual research on a topic of their choosing, leading to a final paper and presentation.

REQUIRED READINGS:
All readings will be available either electronically via Canvas, freely available online, or on reserve at the Music Library; see the course outline below for complete bibliographical listings. Some of the readings are drawn from books that are readily and cheaply available, if students are interested in purchasing hard copy. If readings are printed out, please try to limit our collective consumption of resources by printing double-sided with multiple pages per sheet whenever possible.

Students are expected to have completed the assigned reading and writing assignments before the class under which it is listed. The class will revolve around discussion of the readings and issues related to the week’s reading so it is crucial that reading be completed. I understand that sometimes it is not possible for students to be as prepared as one might like. I encourage you to let me know if other pressures in your lives make it impossible, on occasion, to attend class or to be adequately prepared. I also encourage students to e-mail me with questions they might have, or to see me during office hours. It is also possible to make appointments to meet outside of office hours.

TIME COMMITMENT: Student will need to commit to three hours weekly for the seminar meetings and should allot around 6-8 hours each week (i.e., 148 hours over the course of the semester) for reading, research, and writing. This, of course, is an estimate and will vary from week to week.

COURSE LOGISTICS AND ASSIGNMENTS:
The core components of this course are our weekly meetings and your individual research. Each weekly meeting will center on reading and listening assignments as scheduled below. We will also engage in an ongoing discussion about research methods and writing, and other activities.

Prior to each week’s seminar meeting, each student will complete the following activities:

- Read each assigned source and write a response guided by a prompt provided on Canvas. Responses are due by 12:00PM on the day of the relevant class meeting and will be graded based on engagement with the material and thoughtfulness, on a scale of 0-4, with a score of 4 being an outstanding level of engagement and thoughtfulness and a 0 being a total lack of the same. If you are unable to complete all of the assigned readings, you should submit what you have. Late responses will be accepted for one week following the seminar.
• Listen to the week’s playlist, participate in a listening-based discussion forum on the course Canvas site. The purpose of this discussion forum is twofold: first, to engage with musical examples relating to the topic of each week’s readings, and second, to prepare students for the listening and score identification portions of the comprehensive exams. Each student will be responsible for one post answering the weekly prompt, and responses to two of your classmates.

• In conjunction with the listening discussion, you will choose one song from the playlist for a “Song of the Week” analysis. These analyses can take any form you choose, and should ideally be chosen to highlight a particular aspect of your chosen song. Examples might include: a textual or graphic form analysis/road map, a discussion of the song’s lyrical/poetical/narrative elements, etc. Your choice of format should flow from the “needs of the song,” just as a performer might make interpretative choices. Use your creativity, but prioritize communication!

Each week’s discussions will be led by students, as determined one or two weeks in advance. Over the course of the semester, each student will lead discussion on 2-4 readings (accounting for differing lengths and complexities). Discussion leaders will coordinate the conversation, and be prepared to make a brief (5-10 minute) presentation summarizing the goals, methods, and findings of each reading. Discussion leadership will be graded based on demonstrated engagement with the material and preparation, on a scale of 0-4, with a score of 4 being an outstanding level of engagement and preparation and a 0 being a total lack of the same.

Discussion leaders should include the following information in their introduction to the source (these are questions that all readers should ideally bring to any/every source; we are just having the discussion leaders articulate them up front):

• A brief biography of the author – Who are they? What is their discipline (most will be musicologists, but not all)? Where do/did they teach or work (most will be academics, but not all)? What else have they written?

• A brief description of the source – What kind of source is it (chapter from a book, article in a journal, etc.)? Is there anything notable about its structure?

• A brief description of the source’s context – What discipline or sub-discipline does it come from? What would you need to know in order to understand it fully? What (if any) efforts does the author make to accommodate readers outside of their discipline?

• A statement of its main argument and evidence – What is the author’s thesis? (Sometimes this is found explicitly written out, but other times you may need to extrapolate one.) What “problem” are they trying to solve? What types of evidence do they draw on? (e.g., documents, ethnography, recordings, etc.)

• Questions for discussion – These should focus on the text itself, in the vein of how the author’s argument is structured, how sources are used, assumptions they make, etc. NB: There is often a tendency in seminar discussion to take issue with some aspect of a text. This is absolutely fine but should be framed in the context of a full understanding of the author’s argument and method. This in no way requires “agreement” or “disagreement” with the author, although we can certainly talk about that, too!

• The “next step” – what strategies would you employ if you were going to pursue the topic of the reading further?

On class discussions: Two important things to remember. First, class participation is a skill, or more accurately, a set of skills that you develop: citing evidence, clarifying points, synthesizing points of view, asking better questions, speaking concisely and eloquently. These skills correspond directly to your growth as a thinker and writer here at UWM. Second, class participation doesn’t just mean talking a lot. It involves listening and reflecting, cooperating and engaging with peers.

Below is a list of criteria that signal strength in class participation. While there’s no strict numerical process, an “A” in participation means consistently achieving many of the criteria below, as well as demonstrated growth in self-reflection.

Aspects of how you speak include:

• Be prepared for class, and ready to cite passages in the reading when discussing (in support of both yourself and to help peers as needed).
• Be ready to define terms and give examples, and willing to ask peers to do the same when you aren’t sure about something.
• Take risks and trying out ideas that get people to think in new ways.
• Pose effective questions that generate conversation.
• Build connections between ideas, and think about both similarities and differences.
• Be open and honest. When something doesn’t make sense, be specific and help everyone help you (e.g. “I’m not sure what the author means by X. I think they meant _______?” or “On page 84 is where I started getting lost. Up to that point, I think the author was saying _______.”)
• Help break down big questions into smaller, more manageable questions, then lead back to the bigger question.

Aspects of how you interact with peers include:
• Be prepared to listen and take notes. Demonstrate this with body language and eye contact to show you’re engaged and open to what they’re saying.
• Build off of others’ comments.
• Draw students into conversations, especially when you recall something they said that is worth restating at that moment. (e.g. “This reminds me of something you said last week…”)
• Be willing to strengthen others student’s comments respectfully and constructively. Help them by asking them to consider a counterexample or asking follow-up questions that help them think through ideas.
• Take time to reflect before responding sometimes. Let other voices have a chance to weigh in. Don’t always feel a need to have the last word or dominate a conversation.
• Be generous and fair when summarizing another’s point. Check to make sure you understand them.

RESEARCH PROJECT
Throughout the semester, each student will cultivate a final project in consultation with Dr. Sterner Miller. These projects will take the form of a scholarly research paper of approximately 3,000-4,000 words, along with an in-class presentation or a video essay based on their paper, to be shared during our final two meetings. Your goal is to identify a musical or cultural issue relating to a topic/object of study relevant to the seminar topic, gather information about it (drawing on primary and secondary sources), and to synthesize your findings into a coherent and convincing scholarly statement. You will submit materials to me for evaluation throughout the process of working on the paper. Please see Canvas for due dates and further details and rubrics.

• Stage 1: A prospectus including a title, a brief description of the topic (including the issues to be explored and the approach you plan to take), and a preliminary bibliography.
• Stage 2: An outline of your paper, along with a selective annotated bibliography.
• A complete draft of your paper.
• A revised draft of your paper addressing feedback from the first.

In between these stages, you will complete at least four (4) research check-ins. These can take the form of in-person meetings, email conversations, documents, or pretty much any other format (subject to approval) that shows concrete progress toward your project.

For all assignments: Late work can be submitted for partial credit no later than one week after the due date.

GRADING

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<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prospectus:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outline and Annotated Bibliography</td>
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<td>Rough draft:</td>
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<td>Final draft:</td>
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<td>Video essay/Presentation</td>
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<td>Weekly reading responses</td>
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<td>Discussion forum participation:</td>
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<td>Song of the week analyses</td>
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<td>Discussion leadership:</td>
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Course Grading Scale:
A 93-100
A 90-92.9
B+ 87-89.9          C- 70-72.9
B  83-86.9          D+ 67-69.9
B- 80-82.9          D  63-66.9
C+  77-79.9         D-  60-62.9
C  73-76.9          F  0-59.9

**COURSE OUTLINE**

(Subject to revision – see Canvas each week)

9/4 – Class 1: Course Introduction

9/11 – Class 2: Big Ideas (Some Essential Concepts and Frameworks for Music)

9/18 – Class 3: Technologies of Production, Consumption, and Distribution (1): Instruments

9/25 – Class 4: Technologies of Production, Consumption, and Distribution (2): Recording and Listening

TBD: MP3

10/2 – Class 5: Dead Cuts: Pop music in Renaissance and Early Modern Europe
TBD: L’homme armé

10/9 – Class 6: Pop Music and Race
TBD: Minstrelsy

10/16 – Class 7: Authorship and Ownership: The Case of Blurred Lines


10/23 – Class 8: The Politics of Pop


TBD: Music of political campaigns

10/30 – Class 9: Improvisation in Pop (With Special Guests Argopelter)


11/6 – Class 10: “Neurologically Divergent from Music”: Hip-hop


11/13 – Class 11: Pop Music and Gender


+TBD

11/20 – Class 12: Global Pop

11/27 – No Class (Thanksgiving)

12/4 – Student Presentations/Video Essay Screenings

12/11 – Student Presentations/Video Essay Screenings

THE FINE PRINT

STUDENT RESOURCES: A wide range of resources supporting students in a variety of circumstances is available through UWM. If you are in need of assistance of any kind, please check out the list at: https://uwm.edu/cetl/resources/student-resources/

UNIVERSITY POLICIES: The University’s policies regarding students with disabilities, religious observances, students called to active military duty, incompletes, discriminatory conduct, academic misconduct, complaint procedures, grade appeal procedures and final exam requirements are documented at: https://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2016/12/Syllabus-Links.pdf

PLAGIARISM: Please note that plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Students using work completed by others, whether found on the web, in a book, or written by other students, will at the very least fail the assignment. For serious cases I will initiate an academic disciplinary procedure. For a description of what this entails see: http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm If you are unsure of what plagiarism entails, please see the resources available here: http://www4.uwm.edu/writingcenter/faculty-resources.cfm and/or here: http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/plagiarism/

ONE LAST THING: TAKE CARE OF YOUR EARS! If you’ve never given any thought to the health of your ears, now is the time. As musicians, your hearing is one of your most important assets, and you should be proactive in terms of protecting it. Start by reading this: http://www4.uwm.edu/psoa/music/upload/NASM_PAMA-Student-Hearing-Protection_Guide.pdf