The London Music Scene

Instructor
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Course Summary
This course will contextualise London as a vibrant world centre of popular music innovation. To do this, the inter-cultural dialogue between Britain and America will be explored to examine the history of popular musical forms.

To understand the impact of genres such as Blues, Jazz and Rock ‘n’ Roll, concepts such as the Black Atlantic will emphasise music as a medium of cultural exchange, and the importance of investigating the wider political and social dimensions in which music is made.

Post-World War II revolutions in popular music made London and the UK a creative hub in global music culture because of the settlement of diasporic peoples. The course will therefore explain the cultural frameworks for the emergence of Pop, Punk, Ska, Reggae and Hip Hop. An examination of contemporary London’s dynamic musical effervescence will also be investigated.

This is an interdisciplinary course examining the historical, sociological, aesthetic, technological and commercial elements of contemporary (mainly North American and British) popular music. Therefore, the course deals specifically with the origins and development of USA and UK popular music, particularly in the post-1945 era, and focuses upon topics including the relationship between style, subculture and music, in addition to the impact of new technologies on music production and marketing. Audio–visual resources and a field trip are combined with lectures and in-class discussions.

Course Objectives
Students do not require a background in music or music studies. The course will enable students to understand the links between the sociological settings in which music is made and produced. Popular music will be considered as a medium of social change and renewal with the major focus being on music's political significance.

The aim of this interdisciplinary course is to trace the historical development of Anglo-American popular music in its social, economic and cultural contexts. Within a broad survey framework, the objective of the course is to help students develop a critical understanding and appreciation of the ways in which popular music in its various generic forms has reflected, commented upon and helped shape culture. Considering music as a cultural practice that provides not merely entertainment but a communal space for personal, social and political expression, the course links popular music to broader issues of power. Thus it asks – What is permitted or forbidden? Who is included or excluded? Who speaks and who is silent? And students will discover, some forms of popular music have functioned as vital expressive media for diverse, often politically and economically disadvantaged groups. The course also analyses music as a business – a crucial component of those “cultural industries” which are vitally important to the economic performance...
of post-industrial societies such as Britain and the United States. The course examines the development of the music industry since the late 1940s and focuses particularly upon recent challenges to the global hegemony of the multinational corporations which control the music industry.

**Teaching Methods**
A variety of instructional methods will be used. Lectures, seminars and presentations will focus on visual and audio experiential learning. A concert report enables students to link up class based learning with direct experience of the London music scene and the diverse venues to be found in the city. Emphasis is placed on exploring the alternative, outside the mainstream venues. Essay titles will be circulated relating to topics exploring the popular musical US/UK intercultural dialogue. Titles are provided but flexibility will be exercised to reflect students’ tastes and interests.

**Method of Evaluation (Grading)**

1. Class Participation  20 %
2. Concert Report       20 %
3. Term Essay           30 %
4. Final Exam           30%

**Class Outline FALL 2016**
This schedule is subject to change.

**Class 1:**

The concept of the POPULAR in Music. Etymology of the term and the debate in British Cultural Studies.  *"The Birth of the Blues."* Reading: *What is Blues? Elijah Wald*

**Class 2:**

High vs. Low Culture; Vertical vs. Horizontal Definitions of Culture; The 'Legitimisation' of the Popular. Blues Britannia.  *The Black Atlantic. Reading: Youth Culture and Popular Music. Andy Bennett*

**Class 3:**

The Popular and the Mass: The Problem of the “Culture Industry.”  *Blues and Jazz in the UK and their ambivalent receptions. Reading: London the New Chicago. Roberta Freund Schwartz*

**Class 4:**

Class 5:


Class 6:


Class 7:


Hand in Concert Report.

18/10/16: Mid-term break.

Class 9:


Class 10:


Class 11:

Post Punk, UK Indie and the Rise of Brit Pop. The London of Brit-Pop. The recycling of the 60s. Reading: Youth Culture and Style: Jo Croft

Class 12:

Class 14:


Class 14:


Class 15:

UK and USA. A special musical relationship? Revision and evaluation.

13/12/16 FINAL EXAM

Required Reading
Tara Brabazon, Popular Music (Sage 2011)
Janice Miller, Fashion and Music (Berg 2011)
Larry Starr, & Christopher Waterman, American Popular Music: The Rock Years (OUP 2005)

Recommended Reading List: Music and Popular Culture
Iain MacDonald, Revolution in the Head (Pimlico 1998).
Ruth Padel, I'm a Man. Sex, Gods and Rock 'n' Roll (Faber and Faber, 2000).
Paul Gorman, In their own Write, Adventures in the Music Press (Sanctuary, 2001.)
Richard Meltzer, A Whore just like the Rest (Da Capo Press, 2000).
Dave Thompson, The Dark Reign of Gothic Rock (Helter Skelter 2002).
Louis Barfe, Where Have All the Good Times Gone (Atlantic Books 2005).
Paul Gilroy, After Empire (Routledge 2004).
Gary Valentine, New York Rocker (Sidgewick and Jackson 2002).
Gary Valentine, Turn Off Your Mind (Sidgewick & Jackson 2001).
Christopher Cox, Audio Culture (Continuum 2004).
David Toop, Haunted Weather (Serpent's Tail 2004).
David Toop, Rap Attack (Serpent's Tail 2000, has just been reprinted and updated).
Pat Gilbert, Passion is a Fashion (Aurum 2005).

The Politics and Sociology of Pop
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D. Clarke. *The Rise & Fall of Popular Music*
A. De Curtis (ed). *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock ‘n’ Roll*
A. De Curtis. *Present Tense: Rock ‘n’ Roll & Culture*
R. Denselow. *When the Music's Over: The Story of Political Pop*
P. Ennis. *The Seventh Stream: The Emergence of Rock ‘n’ Roll in American Music*
P. Friedlander. *Rock and Roll: A Social History*
S. Frith. *Music for Pleasure: Essays in the Sociology of Pop*
S. Frith & A. Goodwin. *On Record: Rock, Pop & the Written Word*
S. Frith. *Performing Rites: The Value of Popular Music*
S. Frith. *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure & the Politics of Rock ‘n’ Roll*
G. Gaar. *She's A Rebel: The History of Women in Rock ‘n’ Roll*
R. Garofalo (ed). *Rockin’ the Boat: Mass Music and Mass Movements*
R. Garofalo & S. Chapple. *Rock ‘n’ Roll is Here to Pay: The History & Politics of the Music Industry*
P. Guralnick. *Feel Like Goin’ Home: Portraits in Blues & Rock ‘n’ Roll*
P. Guralnick. *Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley*
D. Hebdige. *Cut ‘n’ Mix: Culture, Identity & Caribbean Music*
D. Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*
D. Hesmondhalgh & K. Negus eds. *Popular Music Studies*
C. Heylin. *Dylan: Behind the Shades*
C. Heylin. *From the Velvets to the Voidoids: A Pre-Punk History for a Post-Punk World*
G. Lipsitz. *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism & the Poetics of Place*
B. Longhurst. *Popular Music & Society*
I. MacDonald. *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles Records & the Sixties*, ed
G. Marcus. *In the Fascist Bathroom: Writings on Punk, 1977-92*
G. Marcus. *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*
G. Melly. *Revolt into Style: The Pop Arts in Britain*, ed
K. Negus. *Music Genres & Corporate Cultures*
R. Palmer. *Dancing in the Street*
T. Polhemus. *Street Style: From Sidewalk to Cawalk*
Fountain, Dick & David Robbins *Cool Rules : The Anatomy of an Attitude*
J. Savage. *England’s Dreaming: The Sex Pistols & Punk Rock*
S. Sayres (ed). *The 60s Without Apology*
A. Seago. *Burning the Box of Beautiful Things*
C. Shaar Murray. *Crosstown Traffic: Jimi Hendrix & the Post War Rock ‘n’ Roll Revolution*
J. Shepherd & P. Wicke. *Music & Cultural Theory*
R. Shuker. *Understanding Popular Music*
J. Street. *Rebel Rock: The Politics of Popular Music*
D. Szatmary. *Rockin’ in Time: A Social History of Rock-and-Roll*
D. Toop. *The Rap Attack*
K. Verney. *African Americans & US Popular Culture*
B. Ward *Just My Soul Responding : Rhythm & Blues, Black Consciousness & Race Relations*
N. Whiteley. *Pop Design : From Modernism to Mod*
P. Wicke. *Rock Music: Culture, Aesthetics & Sociology*

**Concert Report Instructions:**
Write the name and artist or group you went to see, and the date of the show in bold. Staple the ticket stub to the back of the report.

**Questions To Consider And Answer When Writing Your Report:**
- In what musical genre(s) or styles would you place this music? What tradition does this music come from?
- Name the instrumentation & number of performers.
- Were the electric or acoustic instruments used, or a mix?
- Is this instrumentation characteristic of the genre? Why or why not?
- Describe the repertoire. Did you know some of the songs? (give examples)
- What was the function of the music? Was it for dancing, was it meant to be listened to attentively or was it background music, or?
- Describe the audience. Be observant but avoid judgements.
- Approximately how many people were at the show?
- Can you make any generalizations about the audience demographic?
- Was there a sense that this band was associated with a certain musical community or geographical ‘scene’?
- Describe the venue (intimate, smoky, crowded, seated audience, dance floor, lighting...).
- Was this venue appropriate for this performance? Why or why not?
- How was this music financed? Admission fee, sales or other?
- How did this music affect you?
- Other observations?

**JAZZ, ROCK AND POP MUSIC IN LONDON**

**Useful Venues:**
- Ain’t Nothing but The Blues Bar. 20 Kingly St Soho. Nr Oxford Circus Tube. Recommended.
- Jazz Cafe. 5 Parkway, Camden Town. Cutting edge Jazz and Fusion. A trendy, young venue. Many big name stars.
- 606 Club. Lots Road Chelsea. Jazz 7 Nights a week.
- Ronnie Scott’s. Frith Street Soho. The oldest Jazz Club in London. Traditional, excellent but very expensive.
- For club nights with a difference try Notting Hill Arts club. 21 Notting Hill Gate, London W11 3JQ, tube: Notting Hill Gate (2min). Wednesday night: A cutting edge club that features many new bands and recent signings.