Semester: Fall 2016  
Discipline: Ethnomusicology  
Course Number and Title: MU 230 Music of Black Americans  
Course Level: Lower  
Faculty Name: David Borgo, Ph.D.  
Semester Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: none

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Explores the persistence and flowering of African-derived music cultures in the New World, with emphasis on Afro-Cuban, Afro-Brazilian, Afro-Peruvian, and African-American traditions. Highlights musical practices from the blues to zydeco, from slave songs and spirituals to samba and salsa, and artists from Susana Baca to the Buena Vista Social Club.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- gain greater knowledge of the history of the African Diaspora through an in-depth look at musical and cultural practices
- introduce a variety of Black American musical forms and increase our ability to hear differences among performances and styles and to interpret the meanings of such differences.
- learn to appreciate how social, political, and economic factors affect and are affected by musical activities
- recognize music as a site of celebration and struggle over relationships and ideals.
- situate Black American music within a broader investigation of the politics of race, class, and gender, and of the institutional arrangements that have shaped and continue to shape contemporary music making.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: John Storm Roberts  
TITLE: Black Music of Two Worlds (BMTW)  
PUBLISHER: Shirmer Books  
ISBN 13: 9780028649290  
DATE/EDITION: 1998/2nd ed.

Audio and liner notes from the 2CD collection Black Music of Two Worlds (Smithsonian Folkways FW04602 / FE 4602), along with other materials for reading and listening assignments will be available on the ship’s intranet.
TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

[NOTE: all reading, listening, and viewing assignments should be done prior to the class session for which they are listed. Reading Engagement Assignments involve looking over the prompts for each class session as you do the assigned readings and answering them in short answer format (no more than a few paragraphs total) in advance of that class session]

Depart Hamburg—September 10

A1—September 12: Course Introduction and Overview

A2—September 14: Africa, Europe, and Islam

What are some common misperceptions about Africa and African music? What historical links did Africa have with Europe and the Middle East? How have scholars tended to divide the African continent geographically and culturally? Despite the immense diversity of musical practices found in Africa, what are some deep-seated principles that inform much traditional African music-making? How are these deep-seated principles both similar to and different from those found in European music? How does North African Islamic music differ from the music of the Middle East?

READ: Foreword, Prefaces, and Introduction (BMTW)

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #1

No Classes—September 16

A3—September 17: Traditions Preserved

What does Roberts mean by “neo-African” musics? From and to which cultural regions were most Africans brought during the slave trade? How did the ethnic makeup of the various slave populations, in tandem with the differing views of slaveholders, affect how musical practices were variously retained or transformed in the “New World”? What do musical instruments and playing styles have to tell us about the notion of African musical and cultural retentions? What are cabildos, “nations,” and “secret societies,” and how do their related Afro-American religious-musical practices correspond with, and often differ from, African ones?

READ: Chapter 1 (BMTW)

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #2

Piraeus—September 19-23

A4—September 24: Cultural Blending

How did the process of musical acculturation occur in—and vary across—the “New World,” and in what ways was it a two-way street? What musical and cultural influences, especially in South and
Central America, were important in this process in addition to the black-white ones? Which instruments and musical and religious practices appeared in the Afro-American context that were simultaneously beholden to, and different from, African inspirations? How is the African concept of the “total art form”—music, dance, costume, and visual art—reflected in various contemporary practices? In what ways have “Africanisms” been thoroughly assimilated into the general culture of many regions of the Americas? In what ways are Afro-American styles highly individual?

READ: Chapter 2 (BMTW)

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #3

Civitavecchia - September 26-28

Livorno – September 29-30

A5—October 1: North American Strains: Folk Forms

Where might we expect to find the most African-sounding music in the United States? What African qualities may have survived in work songs? Hollers? Children’s games? Ballads? How did these traditions develop and transform during slavery, Reconstruction, and in the post-Reconstruction periods?

READ: Chapter 5 pp. 157-174 (BMTW)

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #4

FILM: The Land Where the Blues Began by Alan Lomax

Barcelona—October 3-7

A6—October 8: North American Strains: Spirituals, Gospel, and Soul Music

What do we know about the early history of the black spiritual tradition? What song types are common? How where white spiritual materials transformed? What is a ring shout? Who were the Fisk Jubilee Singers and how did their performances present and spread these traditions? How are gospel and soul music related to, and extensions of, the spiritual tradition? Who are some important artists in these traditions?

READ: Chapter 5 pp. 174-193 (BMTW)

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #5

FILM: Rejoice and Shout

Casablanca—October 10-14
A7—October 15: North American Strains: The Blues to Rap

What do we know about the development of the blues? What are some of its characteristic features? Are there any parallels between African musical customs, especially from the savanna-belt or Senegambia regions, and blues techniques? What is the distinction often made between “folk,” “classic,” and “urban” blues? Who are some important artists? Is rap music an extension of the African American traditions of blending music, poetry, and spoken word? How and why has the music market tended to obscure the interrelatedness of African American vocal styles?

READ: Chapter 5 pp. 193-211 (BMTW)

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #6

A8—October 17: The African Blues Roots

What is a Griot? What is their traditional role in their communities and which musical instruments do they favor? What are some musical and cultural similarities and differences between West African Griot traditions and the blues? Are there Arabic influences on both traditions? What are some problems associated with looking for the “roots” of the blues?


BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #7


A9—October 19: Urban Music in Africa and Senegal

What are some of the best-known contemporary urban/popular African styles, and from where do they emanate? What traits, influences, and/or historical developments do they share? What are some contrasting features, especially across West, East, Central, and South Africa? Why was the guitar adopted throughout the continent and what are some local variations in how this occurred? Who are some important African Pop innovators and with what styles and regions are they most associated? How did popular music develop in Senegal in particular?

READ: Chapter 8 (BMTW)

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #8

FILM: “Reassemblage” Trinh T Minh ha 1983

Dakar—October 21-24

A10—October 25: Afro-Brazilian Musics

What are some “Africanisms” in Brazilian music? What is the relationship between Brazilian and Portuguese music? What is candomblé? How did samba develop in Brazil? What are some of the urban popular styles that have been influenced by and developed alongside the samba?

READ: Chapter 3 pp. 73-85 (BMTW)

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #9

A11—October 27: Bahia

What is capoeira? What is the musical and social history of Carnival in Bahia? How was the formation of blocos afros related to a renewal of black consciousness in Salvador? Who are some important Bahian popular artists? What seems to define the baiano musical approach?

READ: “Bahia of All the Saints” (Chp. 6) in The Brazilian Sound: Samba, Bossa Nova, and the Popular Music of Brazil by Chris McGowan and Ricardo Pessanha (Temple University Press, 2009, revised and expanded edition)

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #10

No Classes—October 28

A12—October 30: Carnival

How does Charters describe the Carnival and the Trios Elétricos in particular? Why does he argue that Brazil offers the most richly varied musical culture of African heritage, and that Bahia, in particular, offers an unparalleled depth of African survivals? What is the Line of Tordesillas? What occurred in Portugal during Napoleonic times? What impact did both of these have on the development of Brazil? What are the modinha and lundu? What distinctions can be made between the older and newer Carnival in Salvador? Which Bahian celebrity does Charters encounter at the end of his journey?

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #11
Salvador—November 1-6

A13—November 7: Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic

How did cultural blending in the Caribbean differ from that which occurred in South America and in much of the United States? What were some historical and social developments that shaped the music of Cuba? What are some important Cuban styles that developed in the 19th and 20th centuries? What historical and social conditions in Cuba allowed for its particular musical syncretism or transculturations? What is Santería? What do its rituals involve, and to what else is it related? What are the musical components of traditional rumba, and how is the word often misapplied? What musical forms are associated with Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic? In what ways are they related and how do they differ?

READ: Chapter 4 pp. 102-118 (BMTW)
BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #12

A14—November 9: Jamaica

What factors tend to complicate our understandings of the music and culture of the English-speaking Caribbean? What are the major ingredients and most notable features of Jamaican music? of digging songs? of ring plays? of ska, rocksteady, and reggae? dub?

READ: Chapter 4 pp. 118-119, 132-146 (BMTW)
BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #13

A15—November 11: Trinidad

What is calypso music? When and where did it likely originate, and from what elements? What instruments are traditionally used? How are the lyrics often organized? What social roles did it likely perform? What is soca? When and how did it appear on the scene? What is its relationship to Indo-Trinidadian society? What is rapso? Who popularized it and when? What is the steel pan and how did it develop?

READ: Chapter 4 pp. 119-132 (BMTW)
BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #14

RECOMMENDED: “The Steel Band Movement and Music” by Shannon Dudley

Port of Spain—November 13-14

A16—November 15: Cuba: Son and Modern styles
What dance-music genres emerged in twentieth-century Cuba? How did they synthesize European and Afro-Cuban elements? What role did they play in forging a national Cuban identity? What is the basic form of the Cuban son, how did it develop, and who were some influential musicians? What is clave? How does its use differ in son and in more modern mambo and salsa styles? How did the United States and Cuba relate during the various decades of the twentieth century? What effect did the Cuban Revolution have on musical practices and international relationships? What is nueva trova and who were some important artists? What is the “special period” in Cuban history and what were some of its effects?

READ: “Cuba” (pp. 43-63) in Caribbean Currents by Peter Manuel (2006 Temple University Press, 2006, revised and expanded edition)

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #15

A17—November 17: Cuba: Buena Vista Social Club and After

What is timba and why do younger Cubans often prefer the term to salsa? What is the backstory to the film Buena Vista Social Club, who are some of the featured musicians in the film, and what debates have circulated around its release and success? Who are some innovative Cuban artists and groups from recent decades?


FILM: Buena Vista Social Club

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #16

No Classes—November 18

A18—November 20: MIDTERM EXAM

A19—November 27: South and Central America

What ties might there be between Spanish music and the music of Spanish South America? Differences? What is the unofficial “national” music of Colombia? Of Venezuela? Of Panama? Of Argentina? Which African instruments are in common use in this region? How have African and Amerindian traditions in general exchanged musical ideas and instruments? Which portable “keyboard” instrument shifted from the salon to the street, as it found favor in many “lower class” musics?

READ: Chapter 3 pp. 86-100 (BMTW)
A20—November 29: The Afro-Peruvian Revival and The Black Pacific

What is meant by the term “Black Pacific”? Approximately how many people of African descent were brought to Peru? What is meant by criollo culture? How are race and ethnicity perceived in the Peruvian context? What are jaranas? the landó? Briefly describe the Afro-Peruvian revival. In what ways was this music remembered? In what ways was it recently invented?


A21—December 5: The Lomaxes and Leadbelly

Who was Leadbelly and why was he famous? What role did the Lomaxes play in “discovering” him? What issues plagued their relationship with Leadbelly? How might searching for America’s musical “roots” change those roots in the process? Did early recording technology effect the ways that we experience music? How might the same technologies that empower the voiceless also lead to their marginalization?

READ: “Aluminum Cowboys” (Chapter 3) from Perfecting Sound Forever by Greg Milner (Faber & Faber, 2009)

A22—December 7: Jazz

Which two instruments, now most associated with “country” music, were common among black performers in the nineteenth century? How did ragtime music differ from, yet still connect to, other black musical forms in the late 19th century? What Cuban influences can be heard in ragtime? Which two “widely diverging” styles of black piano playing emerged around World War I? How is it that the “results [of jazz] may be a long way from Africa, even when the procedures
are similar” (227)? Give a few examples. To what does Roberts attribute the shift in jazz from “people’s” music to “art” or “classical” music? Do you agree with him?

READ: Chapter 6 (BMTW)

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #20

Puntarenas—December 9-13

A23—December 14: Fusions

When and how has jazz fused with various Cuban and Brazilian musical traditions? What are some of the challenges Robert’s identifies in these fusings? What motivated attempts at fusing jazz with African music in the 1950s? Give a few examples of “fusions” that Robert’s finds to be especially successful, and briefly explain some potential reasons for less than successful attempts.

READ: Chapter 7 (BMTW)

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #21

A24—December 16: Dangerous Crossroads

What does the notion of “world music” entail, how was it conceived, and what are the politics, economics, and ethics that surround its use as a marketing category? What are the challenges of intercultural communication in general and with regards to global popular music styles in particular?

READ: “Popular Musics and Globalization” by Timothy Taylor in Global Pop (Routledge, 1997, Chp. 1)

READ: “It’s All Wrong, but It’s All Right’: Creative Misunderstanding in Intercultural Communication” by George Lipsitz in Dangerous Crossroads (Verso Books, 1994, Chp. 8)

BRING: Reading Engagement Assignment #22

Study Day—December 18

A25—December 19; A Day Finals

San Diego—December 22

FIELD WORK

Paying attention to music you encounter in each of the ports we visit is an important aspect of this course. Whenever possible, try to seek out opportunities in the ports that involve music, especially musical activities that might be related to the African Diaspora in some way. Attend live musical events whenever possible, but also pay special attention to where and how recorded music is utilized in daily activities. How does the music you are hearing seem to relate to the people, the place,
and/or the other activities going on? How is music marketed and consumed (i.e., purchased, engaged, or understood) in the places you visit? By whom? Why? To what effect? Try speaking with participants, listeners, and musicians whenever possible.

You are welcome to make “field recordings” of small portions of the music you encounter, if this seems appropriate to the context of the event or performance. [NOTE: Before you record, do your best to make certain that making a recording at the event or performance is acceptable. If you can, try to get approval from the involved parties. If you have any lingering concerns, then don’t record.] Most importantly, you should make a habit of recording your observations, reflections, and information that you collect about music and culture in a dedicated “field notebook” or journal. We will set aside time during the class session immediately following our time in port to share and discuss student observations.

FIELD CLASS AND ASSIGNMENT

Field Class attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field class. Field Classes constitute at least 20% of the contact hours for each course, and will be developed and led by the instructor.

Port of Spain, Trinidad – Field Class for Music of Black Americans – November 13, 2016

The Field Class will involve a visit to the Arima borough of Trinidad, where the calypsonian Lord Kitchener lived. The visit will involve a presentation on the construction of the steel pan by an Arima Pan tuner, presentations from local officials, a workshop in which students will learn to perform a piece of music on the steel pan. The day will be capped by a performance from the steel pan ensemble The Melodians.

On the final day of the semester you are expected to hand in your final FIELD ASSIGNMENT. This will take the form of an original essay of a minimum of five pages, typed and double-spaced.

Your writing should demonstrate a sophisticated and ongoing engagement with all of the course materials, and it should draw upon your experiences and reflections from our field class and from at least two additional ports of call. It should contain detailed ethnographic observations, critical reflection, some limited musical analysis, and some basic interview materials.

Your writing should demonstrate a familiarity and ease with new analytical musical vocabulary introduced in the course, and it should make connections between the musics you encounter and their cultural and social context. The bulk of your report can focus on our field class activities in Trinidad, including what you learned about steel pan construction, history, and performance practice, but you should also make some references to musical activities that you have witnessed in different ports.

Your essay should have a controlling idea and make insightful and nuanced observations about the music, places, and people you engaged, as well as demonstrate an ability to discuss and analyze music with terminology we learn in the course. You are welcome to submit a field recording or two in
tandem with your final paper, especially if those recordings are analyzed in the text, but this is not required.

For your FIELD ASSIGNMENT to be judged excellent, it should contain error-free articulate prose, varied sentence construction, and be organized into sections and paragraphs that effectively enhance the development of ideas.

INDEPENDENT FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

As previously mentioned, paying attention to music you encounter in each of the ports we visit is an important aspect of this course. Each student should be prepared at some point to share observations about a musical event they attended in port with the class.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING SCALE

The following Grading Scale is utilized for student evaluation. Pass/Fail is not an option for Semester at Sea coursework. Note that C-, D+ and D- grades are also not assigned on Semester at Sea in accordance with the grading system at Colorado State University (the SAS partner institution).

Pluses and minuses are awarded as follows on a 100% scale:

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<th>Excellent</th>
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<th>Satisfactory/Poor</th>
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READING ENGAGEMENT ASSIGNMENTS - 40% (2% ea. - possibility to earn 44%)

MIDTERM EXAM - 25%

FINAL EXAM - 15%

FIELD CLASS AND ASSIGNMENT - 20%

* Exams will focus on listening identification, written reflection on what you are hearing, and short answer responses to prompts or terms based on course themes, lectures, and readings. The final exam is NOT cumulative.

* Reading Engagement Assignments involve looking over the prompts for each class session as you do the assigned readings and answering them in short answer format (no more than a few paragraphs total) in advance of that class session

ATTENDANCE/ENGAGEMENT IN THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Attendance in all Semester at Sea classes is mandatory. I expect students to be on-time and prepared for each class session. Each unexcused missed class will lower the the student’s final
grade by 3% points. Tardiness will lower the the student’s final grade by 1% point. Missing more than three classes without an excuse (or 6 days arriving tardy) can be grounds for failing the course.

Students must inform their instructors prior to any unanticipated absence and take the initiative to make up missed work in a timely fashion. Instructors must make reasonable efforts to enable students to make up work which must be accomplished under the instructor’s supervision (e.g., examinations, laboratories). In the event of a conflict in regard to this policy, individuals may appeal using established CSU procedures.

Class discussions should be both informed and respectful. All students are encouraged to raise questions, explore ideas, and express misgivings. We will aim to make certain that everyone’s voice is heard and that all viewpoints are given equal consideration.

Contributions to class discussions and active participation in small group work are essential to both the momentum of the course and the development of your ideas. This requires that you come to class prepared (having completed assigned reading, listening and assignments) and ready to participate in class activities.

LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS

Semester at Sea provides academic accommodations for students with diagnosed learning disabilities, in accordance with ADA guidelines. Students who will need accommodations in a class, should contact ISE to discuss their individual needs. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner prior to implementation. A memo from the student’s home institution verifying the accommodations received on their home campus is required before any accommodation is provided on the ship. Students must submit this verification of accommodations pre-voyage as soon as possible, but no later than July 19, 2016 to academic@isevoyages.org.

STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

The foundation of a university is truth and knowledge, each of which relies in a fundamental manner upon academic integrity and is diminished significantly by academic misconduct. Academic integrity is conceptualized as doing and taking credit for one’s own work. A pervasive attitude promoting academic integrity enhances the sense of community and adds value to the educational process. All within the University are affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity. All Semester at Sea courses adhere to this Academic Integrity Policy and Student Conduct Code.

Depending on the nature of the assignment or exam, the faculty member may require a written declaration of the following honor pledge: “I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment.”

RESERVE FILMS FOR THE LIBRARY

[For all of the films listed under electronic course materials I can provide a digital copy.]
RESERVE BOOKS FOR THE LIBRARY

none

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

Films:
Calle 54
Buena Vista Social Club
Susana Baca - Encuentro en el Estudio
The Land Where the Blues Began by Alan Lomax
Rejoice and Shout

Scans:
AUTHOR: Timothy Taylor
TITLE: “Popular Musics and Globalization”
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Global Pop
PUBLISHER: Routledge
ISBN #: 0415918723
DATE/EDITION: 1997
PAGES: Chapter 1

AUTHOR: George Lipsitz
TITLE: “It’s All Wrong, but It’s All Right’: Creative Misunderstanding in Intercultural Communication”
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Dangerous Crossroads
PUBLISHER: Verso
ISBN #: 1859840353
DATE/EDITION: 1994
PAGES: Chapter 8

AUTHOR: Peter Manuel
TITLE: “Cuba”
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Caribbean Currents
PUBLISHER: Temple University Press
ISBN #: 1592134637
DATE/EDITION: 2006 (revised and expanded edition)
PAGES: 19-30 and 43-63

AUTHOR: Greg Milner
TITLE: “Aluminum Cowboys”
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Perfecting Sound Forever
PUBLISHER: Faber & Faber
AUTHOR: Heidi Feldman
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Journal of Popular Music Studies
DATE/EDITION: 2010/ vol. 22 no. 2

AUTHOR: Maya Roy
TITLE: “By Way of a Provisional Epilogue: Buena Vista Social Club or Timba Cubana?”
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Cuban Music
PUBLISHER: Latin American Bureau,
ISBN #: 1558762825
DATE/EDITION: 2002
PAGES: Chapter 9

AUTHOR: Samuel Charters
TITLE: “Como se llama este rtimo?” and “Bahia Nights: Carnival in Brazil’s Black World”
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: A Language of Song: Journeys in the Musical World of the African Diaspora
PUBLISHER: Duke University Press
ISBN #: 978-0-8223- 4380-6
DATE/EDITION: 2009
PAGES: pp. 283-334

AUTHOR: Chris McGowan and Ricardo Pessanha
TITLE: “Bahia of All the Saints”
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: The Brazilian Sound: Samba, Bossa Nova, and the Popular Music of Brazil
PUBLISHER: Temple University Press
ISBN #: 1592139280
DATE/EDITION: 2009 (revised and expanded edition)
PAGES: Chapter 6

AUTHOR: Ndiouga Adrien Benga
TITLE: “‘The Air of the City Makes Free’: Urban Music from the 1950s to the 1990s in Senegal: Variété, Jazz, Mbalax, Rap”
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Playing with Identities in Contemporary Music in Africa ed. by Mai Palmberg
and Annemette Kirkegaard
PUBLISHER: Nordic Africa Institute
ISBN #: 9171064966
DATE/EDITION: 2002
PAGES: 75-85
AUTHOR: Samuel Charters
TITLE: “The African Blues Roots”
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: The Roots of the Blues: An African Search
PUBLISHER: Da Capo Press
ISBN #: 0399505989
DATE/EDITION: 1981
PAGES: Chapter 11

AUTHOR: Shannon Dudley

ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: The Steel band movement and Music
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Music from Behind the Bridge, Steel band Spirit and Politics in Trinidad and Tobago
PUBLISHER: Oxford University Press
DATE/EDITION: 2008
ISBN #: 978-0-19-532123-4
PAGES: 29-56