

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS
University of Virginia, Academic Sponsor

Voyage: Spring 2016

Discipline: Music

MUSI 2070-101: Popular Music

Division: Upper

Faculty Name: Mark Brill

Credit Hours: 3; Contact Hours: 38

Time: B Day, 13:15-14:35

Place: CR4

There are no pre-requisites for this course.

Course Description

This course will attempt to define popular music, to discern its cultural origins and influences, and to examine how it is connected to particular places, groups, and identities. It will also examine how musical ideas evolve as they travel across continents, intersecting and influencing other musics and cultures, and the way outsiders approach and often adopt popular music. A key component is understanding the role of technology in the production of local and global musical cultures.

Course topics have been selected based on the regions we will visit to take advantage of the unique opportunity to study music firsthand. The course will begin with a brief tutorial on basic music skills from a western perspective (rhythm, melody, harmony, timbre, texture, improvisation, etc.) as a way to inform the critical listening that we will practice. We will then consider issues of appropriation, authenticity, ritual, migration, social relationships, gender, ethnic and cultural identity, religion, globalization and syncretism, populist expression and political protest, and the influence of technology, the recording industry, and marketing. The course includes reading of critical writings on popular music cultures from the fields of history, musicology, sociology, ethnomusicology, cultural studies, and journalism, as well as extensive listening assignments. Additionally, the course will include written assignments, field assignments, and focused class discussion.

Course Objectives

The course aims to make students become better cross-cultural listeners, to increase their critical thinking through listening, and to cultivate an enhanced appreciation for the various styles of music and the musical soundscapes we will encounter during the course of our travels. Students will investigate where, when, and why music occurs, with particular attention to the role music plays in projecting cultural identity, and they will be expected to form and articulate written arguments and opinions of their own in response to the listening and readings.

Required Textbook

This course requires no purchase of texts, recordings, software, or other materials. Readings and listenings are available in our resource directory.

Class Attendance and Participation

Your presence and participation in class is essential for satisfactory completion of the course. You are expected to come to class prepared, having done the reading and listening assignments for the day, and to participate in class discussion. Additional music and video presented in class, as well as issues from our class discussion, will determine relevant topics that will appear on exams. Laptops, iPads, and any other electronic device are not permitted in class.

Exams

Two exams will be given to test your knowledge of material covered in class and in assigned readings over the course of the semester. Exams may include multiple choice and short answer questions, listening identification, and essay questions. Further information on exams will be covered in class. The midterm exam will be given on February 26 (B13). The final exam will be given on April 14 (B24).

Field Work

Experiential course work on Semester at Sea is comprised of the required field lab led by your instructor and additional field assignments that span multiple ports.

- **Pop Song Assignment 1:** Choose a popular song (outside of the U.S. and British popular music tradition) that has significance in your life. Write a 500-word paper that explains why you picked this song, and its significance. Plan to present this assignment to the class during the first two weeks of the semester.
- **Pop Song Assignment 2:** During our travels in port find one song of recorded music: something that you hear on the radio, a suggestion from a new friend, music you hear in a store, etc. After you identify the song, you may make a recording of it, find it online, or purchase a physical copy at a record store. You will then write a 500-word paper that describes the recording while referencing important course topics. The paper is due no more than a week after you have acquired the song. Plan to present this assignment to the class. The goal of this assignment is to assemble a community mix-tape of our journey.
- **Concert Report:** You will attend a performance of live popular music at one of the ports on our journey. (The concert should be different from any concerts associated with the Field Lab.) You will then write a 1000-word concert report on the performance, incorporating some of the topics we have covered in class. The report is due no more than a week after the event. Please indicate how many words your concert report contains.
- **Field Lab Reflection Paper:** During your Field Lab (see below), you will keep thorough notes of all aspects of the event: 1) people, 2) places, 3) musical performance, 4) cultural relevance and 5) personal reflections. You will then write a 1000-word reflection paper on the experience. The reflection paper is due no more than a week after the lab. Please indicate how many words your concert reports contain.
- **Ethnography:** In preparation for this project, you will break off into teams of two or three (TBD). Each team will collaboratively carry out an ethnography fieldwork project by interviewing and documenting the musical practices of a musician or musical ensemble at one of

the ports on our journey. (Your subject may not be any of the musicians encountered in our Field Lab.) Your aim will be to discover not only their personal history, but also their musical history, their particular relationship to the music world, the community they play in, etc. Interviewing techniques will be part of the preparation for these events. You will then collectively write a paper on your interview (1000 words per student), and deliver a 15-minute in-class presentation of your fieldwork data. Documentation could involve photographs, newspaper reports, interview transcriptions, or audio and/or video recordings you make. (Do not give a general history of the music that your subject plays. Concentrate on your subject.) Presentations will occur in the last weeks of the semester. Papers are due at the time of the presentation. Please indicate how many words your concert reports contain.

Field Lab:

Field Lab attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Please do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field lab. During this venture, students will keep thorough notes of all aspects of the experience: 1) people, 2) places, 3) musical performance, 4) cultural relevance and 5) personal reflections.

The field lab for this course will take place in Yangon, Myanmar, on [date TBA]. The field lab will include first-hand insight into the pop culture in Myanmar. With a local guide, the students will visit a Yangon recording studio, where they will interact with local artists and technicians, and gain a behind-the-scenes perspective of what goes in to making a recording. They will then encounter the Me N Ma Girls, Myanmar's first all-girl pop act, and one of the premiere pop groups in the country. The Me N Ma Girls are a creation of Nichole May, a dancer who came to Myanmar from Australia to select five artists from a pool of candidates that saw over 120 responses from advertisements in the local newspaper and via radio shows. The group released their first album in December 2011 and since then have recorded a music video in Bangkok, Thailand. This was the first time out of the country for all of them. They have plans to return to Bangkok so they can become "Famous and Globally recognized". Despite their fan support, the group still has an uphill battle, fighting familial expectations, government censorship, criticism from people set in more traditional ways, and lack of financial support, in addition to the practical obstacles—including power-cuts in the middle of their gigs—that often affect up-and coming groups.

The field lab will include personal interactions with business manager Nicole May, and then meet with the Me N Ma Girls themselves. A cross-cultural discussion session will provide the students with an opportunity to discuss the challenges and rewards of the Myanmar music industry. Through these activities, students will connect to the vibrant musical culture of Myanmar. Issues that will be explored include:

- the production of Myanmar popular culture
- the differences between recorded music and live music
- the impact that sound recording technology has on music and culture
- the differences between popular music in the United States and Myanmar
- the influence of traditional and foreign music on local pop music
- how the media is being used for social change and awareness

- how recording technology has changed the way we listen to, perform, and compose music.

Students will keep thorough notes of all aspects of the event, and then write a 1000-word reflection paper on the experience.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE (Subject to Change)

Depart Ensenada- January 5:

B1- January 8: Introduction; Defining Sound, Noise, Silence, Listening

- Reading: Manuel, *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World*, Ch. 1: “Perspectives on the Study of Non-Western Popular Musics”
 Khaldi, *What is Attention?* (2005)
 Chion, *Audio-Vision: “The Three Listening Modes”* (1994)
- Questions: Is there a difference between hearing and listening? What is silence? What is noise? How would you define what constitutes music? What would you include and exclude in this term, and why?

B2-January 10: Elements of Music: Melody, Rhythm, Harmony, Timbre

- Reading: Nettl, *Grove Music Online*, “Music”
 Schafer, *The Soundscape* (1993): “Noise”; “Rhythm and Tempo”; “Glossary of Soundscape Terms”
- Due: Pop Song Assignment 1

B3- January 13: Hawaiian Popular Music

- Reading: Manuel, *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World*, Ch. 10: “The Pacific”
 Buck, *A History of Hawaiian Music Production* (1997)
- Due: Pop Song Assignment 1

Honolulu: January 12

B4-January 15: Defining Popular Music

- Reading: Adorno, *On Popular Music* (1941)
 Middleton, *In the Groove or Blowing Your Mind?: Musical Repetition* (2006)
 Christopher Small, *A Place for Hearing From Musicking* (1998)
- Questions: What is your definition of popular? Does your taste factor into this decision?

B5-January 18: Industrialization and Globalization of Music

- Reading: Frith, *The Industrialization of Music* (1987)

White, *Rethinking Globalization through Music* (2011)
Questions: What happens to cultures as they spread over national boundaries? Are some cultures stronger than others?

Study Day: January 19

B6- January 21: Some Popular Music of Japan

Reading: Toru Mitsui: *Interactions of Imported and Indigenous Musics in Japan*
Manabe, *New Technologies, Industrial Structures, and the Consumption of Music in Japan* (2008)

B7-January 23: Contemporary Japanese Styles; Enka and J-pop

Reading: Yano, *The Marketing of Tears* (2008)
Fink, *Negotiating Ethnicity and Authenticity in Tokyo's Club Harlem* (2006)
Listening: AfroPop Worldwide: *Africa in East Asia: Shanghai Jazz to Tokyo Rastafari*

Yokohama: January 24-25

In-Transit: January 26

Kobe: January 27-28

B8- January 30: Some Popular Music of China

Reading: Manuel, *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World*, Ch. 9: "China"
Harris, *Reggae on the Silk Road: the Globalization of Uyghur Pop* (1998)
Fung, *Western Style, Chinese Pop* (2008)

Shanghai: January 31-February 1

In-Transit: February 2-3

Hong Kong: 4-5

B9- February 7: Some Popular Music of Vietnam

Reading: Manuel, *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World*, Ch. 8: "South-East Asia"
Valverde, *Making Vietnamese Music Transnational* (2003)
Olsen, *Popular Music from Vietnam*: pp. 1-13, 14-25, 256-60 (2008)
Gibbs, *How Does Hanoi Rock?* (2008)

Listening: *Advertising and Pop Music*, On Point with Tom Ashbrook, NPR (2008)

Ho Chi Minh: February 8-12

B10- February 14: "World Music"

Reading: Taylor, *World Music Today* (2011)
Lipsitz, *Diasporic Noise* (1994)

Questions: What do we mean by 'World Music'? Are there some cultures that have more 'traditional' music than others?

Study Day: February 15

B11-February 17: Burmese Pop; Stereo; The Impact of Recording and Technology on Music

- Reading: Brady, *The Talking Machine A Marvelous Inevitability* (1999)
Hammer: *Myanmar's Young Artists and Activists* (2011)
- Listening: Thxa Soe (excerpts)
- Viewing: Film: *Yangon Calling: Punk in Myanmar*
- Questions: How has technology shaped music-making and listening around the world? How does technology create global music?

Yangon: February 18-22

B12-February 24: Some Popular Music of India

- Reading: Manuel, *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World*, Ch. 7: "South Asia"
Manuel, *The Cassette Industry and popular Music in India* (1991)
Reddy: *Music in India: A Look at Something Different*
- Listening: *African Sounds of the Indian Subcontinent On AfroPop Worldwide*
- Viewing: Film: *Delhi Belly*

B13- February 26: Bollywood

- Reading: Arnold, *Grove Music Online*, 'India—Film Music'
Maira, *Identity Dub* (1999)
- Viewing: Film: *There'll Always be Stars in the Sky: Indian Film Music* (1992) (Bollywood documentary)

Midterm Exam

Cochin: February 27-March 3

B14-March 5: Music, Taste, Aesthetics, and Style

- Reading: Sterne, *Sounds Like the Mall of America* (1997)
Frith, *Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music* (2007)
- Questions: Does taste factor in to your definition of music? How do we distinguish 'good' from 'bad' music? What determines our taste? How do taste and style translate across borders? (How) can we appreciate music from other places?
- Listening: Kyrgyraa

Study Day: March 6

B15-March 8: Identity; Musical Appropriation

- Reading: White, *The Promise of World Music: Strategies for Non-Essentialist Listening* (2011)
Garofalo, *Whose World, What Beat: The Transnational Music Industry, Identity, and Cultural Imperialism*, pp. 16-32
Feld, *A Sweet Lullaby for World Music* (2000)
Tracing a Sample to its Source
(<http://www.musicofsound.co.nz/blog/tracing-a-sample-to-its-source>)

- Listening: Recording of *Afunakwa, Rorogwela* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vjw3ArRn2ck>)
Recording of Deep Forest, *Sweet Lullaby*
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFS_nfNvD2o)
- Questions: Who does a song or musical genre represent, and how? What is the relationship between music and identity? Who 'owns' the track 'Sweet Lullaby' by Deep Forest? What are the problems and issues raised here?

Port Louis: March 9

B16- March 11: Some Popular Music of South Africa; Kwaito

- Reading: Manuel, *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World*, Ch. 3: "Africa"
Schumann, *The Beat that Beat Apartheid* (2008)
Pareles, "Taking Africa with Her to the World", *The New York Times* (2008)
- Viewing: *Searching for Sugar Man* (2012)

Study Day: March 12

B17-March 14: Popular Music, Politics and Activism

- Reading: Drewett, *The Eyes of the World Are Watching Now* (2007)
Understanding the anti-apartheid lyrics of "Biko"
- Listening: Peter Gabriel, *Biko* (1980)
The Specials, *Nelson Mandela* (1984)
Die Antwoord
Spoek Mathambo
- Viewing: Miriam Makeba, *Mama Afrika* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FP6CdNVzjC8>
Amandla!: A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony

Cape Town: March 15-20

B18- March 22: Some Popular Music of West Africa

- Reading: Collins and Richards, *Popular Music in West Africa* (1981), pp. 12-37
- Viewing: Film: *Throw Down Your Heart* (2008)

B19-March 24: Highlife, Soukous and Juju

- Reading: Collins, *Ghanaian Highlife*, pp. 62-68
Tenaille, *E.T. Mensah: The King of Highlife* (2002)

B20-March 25: Some Popular Music of North Africa

- Reading: Manuel, *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World*, Ch. 5: "The Arab Middle East"
Langlois, *Pirates of the Mediterranean: Moroccan Music Video and Technology*
Langlois, *Local and Global in North African Popular Music* (1996)

Takoradi: March 27-28

Tema: March 29-31

B21- April 2: Student Presentations

B22-April 4: Student Presentations

B23: April 6: Student Presentations

Casablanca: April 7-11

Study Day: April 12

B24: April 14: Final Exam

April 16: Disembarkation in Southampton

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

Attendance and Participation:	10%
Pop Song Assignments:	10% (5% each)
Concert Report:	10%
Field Lab Report:	10%
Ethnography Paper and Presentation:	20%
Midterm Exam:	20%
Final Exam:	20%

HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."