Music as Social Experience
UHC MU 101
Dr. Steven Cornelius

Course Description: This course uses a variety of theoretical perspectives to investigate the ways in which musical practice serves as a reflection of, and model for, social ideas and understandings. Specific topics include gender relationships in Bizet’s Carmen, the sources of spiritual efficacy in Yoruba theology, social dystopia in Sondheim’s Sweeney Todd, and the politics of Jimi Hendrix’s Woodstock performance. 4 credits.

Course goals:
• To develop skills for listening to music.
• To reveal music’s relationship to culture.
• To encourage self-reflection and independent thinking about musical experience.

Learning Outcomes: At course’s end, students will be:
• Prepared to think critically about a wide variety of musical styles and traditions.
• Able to make connections between musical practice and social values.
• Empowered with the skills necessary for lifelong musical learning.

Required Reading:
• Sound Tracks: An Introduction to Music as Social Experience. Steven Cornelius and Mary Natvig. Manuscript. (on line)
• Articles as assigned within each unit.

Written assignments: Honors College assignments are designed to help students develop proficiency in argumentation, rules of citation, information literacy, and written and oral communication.
• Daily journal and class blog: You are required to keep a general track of your listening experiences. Comment on these (and others’) experiences using appropriate musical vocabulary while placing your listening within a cultural context. Reflect on music’s value and purpose.
• Three short papers (500 words each).
  • Assignment 1: Describe your musical world. Due: September 8.
  • Assignment 2: Visit Library of Congress Website and analyze a Civil War-era song publication. Due: TBA.
  • Assignment 3: Review a concert or musical event. Due: Within 7 days of the event.
• Biography: Interview a family elder and record his/her musical remembrances. Reflect on music’s role in the elder’s life as compared to your own (1000 words). Due: October 13.
• Music and...: Explore a particular musical relationship. Possible topics to be discussed in class. Requirement includes an oral presentation and 2000 word paper. Due: Dec. 6.

Academic Conduct: It is plagiarism to present another’s work as your own. Any plagiarized work will receive an F and may result in failure for the entire course. A second infraction for academic misconduct will result in a hearing before the Academic Conduct Committee. For detailed information on plagiarism, see the Boston University Academic Conduct Code: http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/undergrad-resources/code/

Grading:
Journal/blog: 5%
Short papers: 15% (3 @5% each)
Elder bio/reflection: 10%
Presentation/paper: 30%
Midterm exam: 20%
Final exam: 20%

Special Guests
October 4: Jaleel Ojuade, Nigerian scholar (tentative)
October 18: Indian music and dance specialist: TBA

Section I: Introduction:
(Weeks 1 & 2)
Goals:
• To develop tools for listening.
• To understand the basic elements of music.
• To develop a musical vocabulary.
• To explore the relationships between musical sound and musical meaning.
Topics:
• Music and the Brain
• Music in Mythology: Orpheus and other tales
• Music and Culture
• Music and Hearing
• Active Listening
Text Reading: “Elements of Music”
Additional Reading:
http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/musical/2008/09/08/080908crmu_music_ross
http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/08/15/reclaiming-the-
Assignment 1: Describe your musical world. Due: September 8.

Section II: Musical Identity

Part 1. Music and Ethnicity

Goal: To become familiar with markers of musical ethnicity.

Topics:

- Music and History: The Jali of West Africa
- Oral tradition and the blues
- William Grant Still's Afro-American Symphony
- Malian Blues: Salif Keita

Select Repertoire: “Kelefaba” and “Kuruntu Kelafa,” “Cross Road Blues,” Afro-American Symphony

Text Reading: “Music and Ethnicity”

Additional Reading:


Assignment: Interview an Elder (1000 words). Due: October 19.

Music and Gender

Goals:

- To understand the close relationships between gender and music.
- To become familiar with important trends, composers, and pieces that exemplify gender issues in music.

Topics:

- Defining Gender
- Gender in Rock ‘n’ Roll
- Gender on Stage
  - Carmen’s Dilemma
- Siegfried's Manhood
- Castrati and Pants Roles
- Lesbian and Gay Issues

**Sample Repertoire:** “When I Was a Boy,” “It's My Party,” “Habanera” (Carmen), Act II/scene 2 (Siegfried), “Non so piu cosa son,” (Le Nozze di Figaro)

**Reading:** “Music and Gender”

**Additional Reading:**


---

### Part 5. Music and Spirituality

**Goals:**
- To understand how humankind uses music to express spirituality.
- To investigate musical relationships between the sacred and the secular.
- To become familiar with select works exemplifying spiritual traditions in music.

**Topics:**
- Contextualizing “Amazing Grace”
- Buddhist Chant: The Gyuto Monks
- Yoruba Religion / Santería in the New World

**Select Repertoire:** “Amazing Grace” (versions performed by Aretha Franklin, Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and Old Harp Singers), “Yamantaka,” “Babalu Ayé”

**Text Reading:** “Music and Spirituality”

**Additional Reading:**


Website: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/html/grace/grace-timeline.html

Part 2. Music and Nation
Goal: To understand music’s role in shaping and reflecting national identity.
Topics:
- National Identity and Music
  - Jimi Hendrix plays “The Star-Spangled Banner”
  - A Scene from Casablanca (1942)
  - “Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika” (South African Anthem)
- 19th-Century Nationalism in Europe
  - Concert “Folk” Music in Bulgaria
Sample Repertoire: “The Star-Spangled Banner,” “La Marseillaise,” Borodin’s The Steppes of Central Asia, Koutev’s “Polegnala e Todora”
Text Reading: “Music and Politics”
Additional Reading:


Midterm Exam

Part 3. Music and War
Goals:
- To explore examples in which music supports, protests, or remembers war.
- To understand how music reflects human responses to war and/or conflict.
Topics:
- Iraq and Vietnam: Musicians take Sides
- American Civil War: Military Bands and Parlor Songs
- Native American Ghost Dance
- Music of the Holocaust: Death Camps, Songs of Resistance
- Three Responses to World War II: Messiaen, Britten, and Penderecki
Text Reading: “Music and War”
Additional Reading:
http://www.sibetrans.com/trans/trans10/cusick_eng.htm

Assignment: Go to this Library of Congress-sponsored Website. Type in keywords to find a Civil War-era song publication. (This may require some experimentation.) Analyze the lyrics and images in a 500-word essay.  
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amssquery.html
Due: TBA.

Section III: Musical Narratives

Music and Film
Goals:
- To explore ways that music communicates cinematic action, mood, and emotion.
- To examine how music portrays and enhances attitudes, characters, objects, settings, and time.
- To provide a brief overview of the history of music in film.

Topics and Repertoire:
- The Art of Film Scoring: *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial, King Kong* (1933 original)
- A Silent Film Landmark: *Metropolis* (1927)
- Sounds of Science Fiction: *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951)

Text Reading: “Film Music”

American Musical Theater
Goals:
- To demonstrate how social issues are reflected in musical theater.
- To provide an overview of 20th-century American musical theater.
- To understand two groundbreaking 20th-century musicals.

Topics and Repertoire:
- Mapping an Exposition: Sondheim’s *Sweeney Todd* (1979), Opening Scene
- Staging the American Experience: *Showboat* (1927)
- Ethnic conflict: *West Side Story* (1957)

Text Reading: “Musical Theater”
Website: http://www.victorianlondon.org/mysteries/sweeney_todd-01.htm

Music and Dance
Goals:
- To examine dance genres in different cultures and times.
- To see how dance reflects regional/national histories and identities.
- To understand the relationship between music and movement.

Topics and Repertoire:
- Argentine Tango
- Brazilian Capoeira
• Ghanaian Baamaya
• European classical dance

Final Week: Lightning Talks and Conclusions