

Brooklyn College, CUNY, Spring 2013

**MUSC 4440 / MUSC 7850X – Music of the World's People / Seminar in Ethnomusicology**

### **RESEARCH PROJECT GUIDELINES**

#### Overview

You should by now have begun to think about a topic to research for your final paper and presentation. Your topic should cover a type of music that you would not write about in another class. Therefore, topics related to European art music and American popular music are generally not appropriate for this project. You might consider taking advantage of the rich musical diversity of NYC to do an ethnographic project (which would involve documenting musical events and interviewing musicians)—but keep in mind that these types of projects can be quite intensive (see pages 542-559 of the textbook). You should select a fairly specific topic that will allow you to research it in some depth. Topics such as “the history of reggae” or “music in China” are probably too broad; more focused topics—for example, on the origins and early history of a particular genre, or on a specific musical instrument or artist—are more suitable. If you have questions about prospective topics, don’t hesitate to ask me.

Here are some titles of student papers from previous semesters that fit the goals of this course well:

4440

“Klezmer Wedding Music”  
“Fela Anikulapo Kuti – Nigeria’s Music Rebel”  
“Erhu vs. Western Violin”  
“Cultural Origins of Brazil’s Samba”

7850X

“Mysticism, Ritual, and Religion in Indonesian Gamelan Music”  
“Representation in Revival: Shifting Definitions of Boogaloo, Past and Present”  
“Swinging Addis: The Music of Ethio Jazz and Groove and its Pioneers”  
“An Examination of the Music and Culture of Talamancan Indians in Costa Rica”

#### Assignments & Due Dates

- Project proposal with preliminary bibliography
  - 1 paragraph explaining your project
  - Bibliography should include AT LEAST: 2 books; 3 articles from journals or encyclopedias (or chapters in an edited volume). Sources should be cited in a proper citation format; see the citation information I have posted on Blackboard
  - **Due March 21<sup>st</sup>** (hard copy only)
- Paper outline
  - Main headings and bullet points for content
  - Bibliography with an updated list of sources
  - **Due April 4<sup>th</sup>** (hard copy only)
- Draft section
  - A draft of one section of your paper, approximately 1 double-spaced page
  - **Due April 18<sup>th</sup>** (hard copy only)

- Draft introduction
  - With clear thesis statement
  - One to two paragraphs
  - **Due May 2<sup>nd</sup>** (hard copy only)
- Presentation
  - **May 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Every student will give a 12-15 minute presentation on the research they are doing towards their final research paper. Although the final paper will not be due until a few weeks later, for the presentation you must be at a fairly advanced stage of research and present on the main ideas you will be covering in your paper. My recommendation is that you do the bulk of your research up until the week before your presentation. Then, spend the week before your presentation developing that content into an oral presentation. Keep in mind that the presentation makes up a significant part of your overall grade for the project.

In your presentation, you should be as creative as you feel comfortable in order to engage your audience, while comprehensively and clearly conveying the research you have done. Your presentation must include at least one audio or audio-visual example. You are welcome, but not required, to prepare slides in a presentation program to help guide you and the class through the presentation. However, if you do this, please do not read exactly what is on your slides! This is a poor presentation style and you will lose marks if you do this. I strongly advise you to PRACTICE your presentation in advance, and make sure to limit it to the allotted time.

Presentation files and/or web links can be put on the classroom computer via a USB drive, and small files can be emailed to me (or to yourself). You may also plug your own laptop into the projector (note: mac computers will require adaptors). The classroom is equipped with a computer; CD, DVD, and VHS players; and a 3.5mm stereo plug to connect audio from laptops and portable music players. Technology rarely works exactly how we expect it to, so it is advisable that you try out whatever technology you would like to use before or after the preceding class sessions to ensure that it will work. If your audio/visual aids are not working on the day of your presentation, you will be asked to proceed without them. Note: I have witnessed innumerable cases in which students try to embed audio (and sometimes video) files into their PowerPoint slides and the audio does not play when opening the PowerPoint file from a USB drive or after downloading it from email. Make sure you know what you're doing if you try this!

- Final paper
  - Length should be (excluding bibliography) 7-10 pages for 4440; 9-12 pages for 7850X; double-spaced; 12-point font Times New Roman; margins no larger than 1" on all sides; pages numbered
  - **Due May 27.** Final papers should be submitted through Blackboard; details will follow.