

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

Thursdays 6:40PM-9:10PM; 421 Whitehead

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Office Hours: By Appointment. Please do not hesitate to ask for a meeting!

### SYLLABUS

#### CLASS OVERVIEW

This course serves as an introduction to the study of music from an ethnomusicological perspective and as a survey of several music cultures outside of the Euro-American art-music tradition. We will begin with a short overview of ethnomusicology as a discipline, and then continue on to readings on selected music-cultures. Several chapters in the textbook *Worlds of Music* will form the point of departure to delve into the cultural contexts for, and some general characteristics of, music-making in different parts of the world. Academic articles and/or excerpts from music ethnographies will then be used to explore specific musical genres or issues in more depth. We will seek to strike a balance between, on the one hand, learning about musical styles, sounds, instruments, etc., and on the other, discussing how music is tied up with so many other social issues and processes: identity, nationalism, politics, gender, economics, musical change, etc. Aspects of ethnomusicological research such as cross-cultural fieldwork will also be discussed.

NOTE: There are many geographical regions—for example, East and Southeast Asia, to name some large ones—whose music we will not be learning about directly in the course readings. The final research project will offer students an opportunity to examine music cultures in which they may be interested that were not covered in class.

#### LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the course, students will be expected to:

- demonstrate a general understanding of the field of ethnomusicology, including its principal methodologies and concerns.
- demonstrate general knowledge about select music cultures.
- apply some of the ideas about music and culture discussed in class to their own research project.

#### CLASS MATERIALS

##### 1. **Required text:**

Titon, Jeff Todd, ed. 2009. *Worlds of Music: An Introduction to the Music of the World's Peoples*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Belmont, CA: Schirmer Cengage Learning.

This textbook is available in hard-copy and as an eTextbook rental at the Brooklyn College Bookstore. However, you may wish to shop around for better prices. A quick internet search found significantly reduced prices for both formats.

- A copy of the textbook will be available on reserve at the Music Library.

##### 2. **Readings:** All additional readings will be available on databases available through the BC Library or will be posted on Blackboard.

##### 3. **Blackboard Account:** Instructions for opening an account are available at <http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/music/dcohen/coremusic/blackboard/how-to.html>. Readings, assignments, and scheduling information will be posted on Blackboard, so please check the course site frequently. If you are having problems accessing Blackboard, you must notify the instructor immediately and take action to remedy the problem. Technical difficulties with Blackboard will not be accepted as an excuse for late or missing work.

#### GRADING

Your final grade will be based on the following:

Blackboard Postings:	30%
Research Project:	25%
Attendance, Participation, & Other Assignments	30%
Final Exam	10%
Audio-Visual Presentation	5%

**Blackboard Postings:** Each week, you should write a short response (250-400 words) to the readings and post it on blackboard **by 5pm on the day the class meets**. Some weeks I may post a question to prompt discussion, but otherwise you should react to the points you found most compelling and/or problematic. The responses needn't be elegant, but they should be thoughtful. PLEASE ADDRESS ALL OF THE ASSIGNED READINGS IN YOUR RESPONSE. You may also engage in civil discussion with posts by your classmates. If you prefer, you may email me your posting.

**Attendance and Participation:** This course will be conducted as a seminar. Therefore, it is imperative that you do all of the reading each week (and take judicious notes), arrive on time for every class meeting, and participate actively. Be prepared to discuss your reactions to the readings. Unexcused absences and lateness will result in a lowering of your attendance grade.\* Perfect attendance will be rewarded with extra credit. If you need to inform me about an illness, emergency, or any other issue that may affect your grade, please do so in person AND by email.

\*For information regarding non-attendance because of religious beliefs, please see p. 53 of the Brooklyn College Undergraduate Bulletin at [http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/pubs/bulletin/2010/ug\\_bulletin2010.pdf](http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/pubs/bulletin/2010/ug_bulletin2010.pdf).

**In-Class Rules:** You are not permitted to use any mobile device during class without prior consent from the instructor; please mute all mobile devices and store them away at the beginning of class. Laptops may only be used for taking notes or consulting class materials. Violation of these rules will result in a lowered participation grade.

**Weekly Audio-Visual Presentations:** Each week, a different student will give a short presentation (approx. 10-15 minutes) during which he or she should play two to three audio-visual clips (from YouTube or any other source) to help us visualize some of the music discussed in the readings. For this presentation, you should: try to find clips with at least some kind of descriptions of what/when/where the performance is happening; scour the online comments (if applicable) and inform the class if there is anything notable to report; try to find clips that show the music in its “traditional” forms as well as ones that show contemporary (modernized, popularized) developments; make connections between what you are showing and points—regarding cultural context, musical characteristics, etc.—mentioned in the readings. Presenters will be exempt from submitting a written response for that week (but, of course, must still do the readings). Note that this “week off” from writing a response is not exchangeable; it must be used the week of your presentation.

**Research Project and Presentation:** Early in the term, you should select a topic to research for your final paper and presentation. Your topic can be anything that relates to music and its social and cultural contexts, but should cover a type of music that you would not write about in another class. Therefore, topics related to European art 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). Either way, your project should include bibliographic research that includes academic sources. Full details about the various components of the project will be provided during the first few weeks of the semester; be prepared to hand in a project proposal with preliminary bibliography by March 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Final Exam:** There will be a final exam in this class that will cover the materials discussed throughout the semester. I encourage you to take notes during class lectures and discussions, and to start making connections between different topics. I will provide details about the exam towards the end of the semester.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:**

The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies>. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

NOTE: This schedule is tentative and is subject to change. I will announce changes in class and will try to post up-to-date information on the Blackboard site.

Abbreviations: WoM = *Worlds of Music* textbook; TBA = To Be Announced

### **WEEK 1 (January 31<sup>st</sup>): Introduction to the Course; Music Cultures**

### **WEEK 2 (February 7<sup>th</sup>): Overview of Ethnomusicology; Papua New Guinea**

Nettl, Bruno. 2005. Chapters 1 & 2 of *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. BLACKBOARD

Feld, Steven. 1986. "Sound as Symbolic System: The Kaluli Drum." In *Explorations in Ethnomusicology: Essays in Honor of D.P. McAllester*, edited by C. Frisbie, 147-158. Detroit: Information Coordinators. BLACKBOARD

### **WEEK 3 (February 14<sup>th</sup>): Native America: Background**

Lee, Dorothy Sara. 1993. "North America; 1: Native American." In *Ethnomusicology: Historical and Regional Studies*, edited by Helen Myers, 19-36. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. BLACKBOARD

Curtis, Natalie, ed. 1907. *The Indians' Book*. New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers.  
GOOGLE BOOKS (Free eBook) > Read pp. v, xxi-xxxi.

McAllester, David P. 2009. *WoM* Ch. 2. > Read pp. 33-45.

Witmer, Robert. 1991. "Stability in Blackfoot Songs: 1909-1968." In *Ethnomusicology and Modern Music History*, edited by Stephen Blum, Philip V. Bohlman and Daniel M. Neuman, 242-253. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.  
BLACKBOARD

### **WEEK 4 (February 21<sup>st</sup>): The Arab World**

Rasmussen, Anne K. 2009. *WoM* Ch. 10. > Read pp. 473-493 & 499-502.

Racy, Ali Jihad. 1998. "Improvisation, Ecstasy, and Performance Dynamics in Arabic Music." In *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, edited by Bruno Nettl and Melinda Russell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 95-112. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. BLACKBOARD

### **WEEK 5 (February 28<sup>th</sup>): Maghrib; Arab Diaspora**

Rasmussen, Anne K. 2009. *WoM* Ch. 10. > Read pp. 502-532.

Gross, Joan, David McMurray, and Ted Swedenburg. 1996. "Arab Noise and Ramadan Nights: Rai, Rap, and Franco-Maghrebi Identity." In *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity*, edited by Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg, 119-155. Durham: Duke University Press. BLACKBOARD

### **WEEK 6 (March 7<sup>th</sup>): North and South India**

Reck, David B. 2009. *WoM* Ch. 6. > Read whole chapter (pp. 265-276)

Neuman, Daniel. 1980. *The Life of Music in North India: The Organisation of an Artistic Tradition*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. BLACKBOARD > Read Ch. 2, "Becoming a Musician." (pp. 30-58)

### **WEEK 7 (March 14<sup>th</sup>): Andes; Afro-Peruvian; Colombia; Gender**

Schechter, John M. 2009. *WoM* Ch. 9. > Read pp. 447-471.

Waxer, Lise: 2001. "Las Caleñas Son Como Las Flores: The Rise of All-Women Salsa Bands in Cali, Colombia"  
*Ethnomusicology* 45(2):228-259. JSTOR

**WEEK 8 (March 21<sup>st</sup>): Nueva Canción; Andean South America**

Schechter, John M. 2009. *WoM* Ch. 9. > Read pp. 415-447.

- **Research Project Proposal Due**

**NO CLASS March 28<sup>th</sup>: SPRING BREAK!**

**WEEK 9 (April 4<sup>th</sup>): Caribbean**

Readings TBA

**WEEK 10 (April 11<sup>th</sup>): Central & Southern Africa**

Locke, David. 2009. *WoM* Ch. 3. > Read pp. 112-135.

Berliner, Paul F. 1993 [1978]. *The Soul of Mbira: Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. BLACKBOARD > Chapters TBA

**WEEK 11 (April 18<sup>th</sup>): West Africa**

Locke, David. 2009. *WoM* Ch. 3. > Read pp. 84-123.

TBA

**WEEK 12 (April 25<sup>th</sup>): Fieldwork; “World Music” and Ethics**

Berliner, Paul. 1993. Chapter 1 of *The Soul of Mbira*. BLACKBOARD

Feld, Steven. 2000. “The Poetics and Politics of Pygmy Pop.” In *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, edited by Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, 254-279. Berkeley: University of California Press. BC LIBRARY eBOOK. (Skip pp. 263-265).

**WEEK 13 (May 2<sup>nd</sup>): Presentations**

**WEEK 14 (May 10<sup>th</sup>): Presentations**

**FINAL EXAM: Thursday May 16<sup>th</sup>, 6pm to 8pm**

**FINAL PAPER DUE DATE TBA**