

Syllabus: MUS 235, Critical Studies in Music, Winter 2016

Michael Dessen, University of California, Irvine

Course meets: 4:00 pm-6:50 pm, CAC 1021

Office hours: By appointment (email me your available times)

Email: mdessen@uci.edu

About this course

In this seminar, we will explore a variety of scholarly and theoretical writings on music, loosely grouped around a different theme each week. Instead of focusing on a single methodology, topic or intellectual orientation, we will study works by researchers in diverse fields, highlighting questions that have shaped interdisciplinary discourses around music in recent decades. The goal is to help you improve your ability to analyze and engage with contemporary writing on music and culture.

The weekly readings are the core of this seminar. You will need to spend significant time each week carefully reading the articles and taking notes so that you are prepared for each class; this is reflected in the fact that your grade for "informed participation" counts for a large percentage of your course grade. If you have trouble understanding an article, you should note exactly what you find confusing, including specific quotes with page numbers, so that you can ask precise questions in class. Everyone is required to participate in all discussions, but your participation grade reflects how much your comments are informed by careful reading, not how much you talk. Listening is also an important aspect of participation, and we are all responsible for maintaining a respectful atmosphere in our discussions.

In the first half of every class, we will examine the assigned articles as objectively as possible. Here, the focus will be on clarifying what each author is saying, not on our personal opinions about their ideas. In the second half of class, we'll discuss our responses to the readings and how they might be relevant to our own work. In this discussion, your individual reactions to the readings are not only welcome but required.

Assignments

All writing assignments must be submitted through UCI GoogleApps by sharing a GoogleDoc with me (mdessen@uci.edu) using your UCI gmail address. Please share the work with me when you are ready to submit the final version, not before.

I expect the coursework to take you roughly 7 to 9 hours per week outside of class. If you find yourself doing significantly more, please speak with me and I'll provide suggestions for working more efficiently. In addition to the weekly readings, the coursework also includes:

1. *Abstracts and mini-presentations based on the weekly readings:* Each student will do several of each type over the course of the quarter. I will email the schedule of deadlines for these assignments before week one, and it is your responsibility to remember your own deadlines.
2. *Book assignment:* I will provide a handout at the beginning of the quarter listing the books that you may choose from for this assignment, along with guidelines for your essay, which must be submitted by 9am on Wednesday, March 16 (finals week). It is fine for more than one student to choose the same book, but please see the notes below about "required materials" and "academic integrity policies."
3. *Final self-evaluation:* By Friday of finals week, you must submit a one-paragraph explanation of the course grade you think you have earned and why.

Guidelines for abstracts

An abstract is a concise summary. Scientific articles are accompanied by abstracts so that researchers can quickly glean the results of an experiment, and abstracts are also used in the humanities and social sciences to sum up an author's thesis and method.

Some of the articles we'll read will lend themselves well to an abstract, in that they have a clear central idea with supporting arguments. Others will be poetic in style and more difficult to summarize, but in all cases, the challenge of abstract writing is to capture the essence of the article as fully as possible within the word limit.

Use GoogleDoc's "word count" feature to make sure your abstract is 200 words or less. Writing a good abstract takes a great deal of revision since every word literally counts.

Guidelines for mini-presentations

For the presentations, you have only five minutes and will be timed. You may use a handout or powerpoint if you wish (either sharing a google presentation or doc with me before the start of that class, or bringing hard copies) but you must keep any such supporting text short enough to be processed by your audience during the presentation. In other words, do not provide pages of detailed notes and expect us to follow them while

listening to you talk, or to read them later; regardless of how great your notes are, this will lower your grade because it is not the goal of the assignment. Five minutes does not allow for much detail, so the challenge here is how to concisely communicate the author's key ideas. This practice is important for many kinds of teaching and public speaking, and will also further your understanding of the essay.

Required materials

All articles will be provided to you as PDFs via EEE Dropbox. For the book assignments, it is your responsibility to plan ahead so that you can get the book in time. You will be able to find most books on the list in the library, but if you choose a book someone has already checked out or a book not in our library, you may need to purchase it.

Grades

Grades will be determined as follows:

- Informed participation: 40%
- Abstracts and presentations: 40%
- Book assignment: 20%

Academic integrity policies

Do not collaborate on any assignments. All written assignments and presentation preparation must be entirely your own, and you may not collaborate with other students.

When writing abstracts, do not consult abstracts or sources by other authors, whether published or not. This would defeat the purpose of the assignment.

When preparing presentations and working on the book assignment, consult sources only if truly necessary and fully cite all sources. If you find an article difficult, I urge you to first re-read it carefully rather than follow the impulse to immediately search the web for someone telling you what (they think) it means. That said, there may be times when you need some help, and in those cases, you may consult quality sources and *must provide full citations for all references*, whether published or unpublished. In general, these will be either "works cited," e.g. works from which you quoted text or paraphrased an idea (in which case you should always provide a page number), or "references," e.g. sources you consulted to help you better understand and discuss your topic generally. Please note that using direct quotes from any source, published or unpublished, always requires quotation marks and a proper citation. If you use text written by another person, published or unpublished, without citing it clearly, thus implying that the words are your own, this is plagiarism, which is a violation of UCI's academic honesty policies and will be reported.

Please review UCI's policies on Academic Honesty, listed at www.honesty.uci.edu. If you ever have any doubts about when or how to cite sources, you should ask me. Violations of academic honesty policies will be taken very seriously.

Late/absence policies

Attending all classes is required. Late assignments will not be accepted and will receive a grade of "0" or "F". If you have a truly severe illness or emergency, you should contact me on or before the due date and be prepared to provide documentation. Any absences beyond serious, documented illness or emergencies will significantly lower your participation grade.

Special needs

If you have a disability that affects your performance in this course, you must document it through the Disabilities Services Office, and have them contact me with a contract by the end of the first week of the quarter. No special arrangements will be made for disabilities without going through this process.

Office hours and getting help

If you have any trouble with the course, it is important to seek help as early as possible. If you want to meet for help, please email me and list the times you are free in the following two or three days.

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Schedule

January 11:

1. hooks, bell. "Theory as Liberatory Practice." *Teaching to Transgress*, 59-75. New York: Routledge, 1994.
2. McClary, Susan. "Turtles All the Way Down (on The 'Purely Musical')." *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form*, 1-31. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
3. Koskoff, Ellen. "What Do We Want to Teach When We Teach Music? One Apology, Two Short Trips, Three Ethical Dilemmas, and Eighty-Two Questions." *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist, 545-59. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

January 18: No class today (UCI holiday)

January 25:

1. Radano, Ronald, and Philip Bohlman. "Introduction: Music and Race, Their Past, Their Presence." *Music and the Racial Imagination*, 1-56. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
2. Grace Wang. "Interlopers in the Realm of High Culture: 'Music Moms' and the Performance of Asian and Asian American Identities," *American Quarterly* 61:4 (2009): 881-903.
3. Lewis, George E. "Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives." *Black Music Research Journal* 16, no. 1 (1996): 91-122.

February 1:

1. Iyer, Vijay. "On Improvisation, Temporality and Embodied Experience." *Sound/Unbound*, ed. Paul D. Miller, 273-292. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008.
2. Wong, Deborah. "Listening to Local Practices: Performance and Identity Politics in Riverside, California." *Speak It Louder : Asian Americans Making Music*, 139-158. New York: Routledge, 2004.
3. Becker, Judith. "Introduction and Chapter 1, Rethinking Trance." *Deep Listeners: Music, Emotion, and Trancing*, 1-12, 25-34. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004.

February 8:

1. Cusick, Suzanne G. "Toward a Lesbian Relation to Music: A Serious Effort Not to Think Straight." *Queering the Pitch : The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, eds. by Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood and Gary Thomas, 67-84. New York: Routledge, 1994.
2. Davis, Angela Y. "I Used to Be Your Sweet Mama: Ideology, Sexuality and Domesticity." *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday*, 3-41. New York: Pantheon Books, 1998.
3. Green, Lucy. "Gender Identity, Musical Experience and Schooling." *Sociology and Music Education*, ed. Ruth Wright, 139-154. Burlington: Ashgate, 2010.

February 15: No class (UCI holiday)

February 22:

1. Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.
2. Subotnik, Rose Rosengard. "Individualism in Western Art Music and Its Cultural Costs." *Developing Variations : Style and Ideology in Western Music*, 239-64. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
3. Small, Christopher. "Introduction and Chapter 2, on the Ritual of Performance." *Music of the Common Tongue : Survival and Celebration in African American Music*, 1-16, 49-80. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1998.

Feb. 29:

1. Hayles, N. Catherine. "Computing the Human." *The Cybercultures Reader*, eds. David Bell and Barbara M. Kennedy, 557-73. London: Routledge, 2007.
2. Miller, Paul D., and Ken Jordan. "Freeze Frame: Audio, Aesthetics, Sampling and Contemporary Multimedia." *Sound/Unbound*, ed. Paul D. Miller, 97-108. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008.

3. Kassabian, Anahid. "Introduction and Chapter 1." *Ubiquitous Listening: Affect, Attention and Distributed Subjectivity*, xxi-xxx and 1-19. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.

March 7:

1. Kerman, Joseph. "How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out." *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Winter, 1980), pp. 311-331.
2. Becker, Howard. "Preface" and "Chapter 1: Art Worlds and Collective Activity." *Art Worlds*, ix-xi and 1-39. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982.
3. Pasler, Jann. "The Political Economy of Composition in the American University, 1965–1985." *Writing Through Music*, 318-362. New York: Oxford, 2008.

Finals week meeting, Wed, Mar 16, 4:00-6:00pm

1. Born, Georgina, and David Hesmondhalgh. "Introduction: On Difference, Representation and Appropriation in Music." *Western Music and Its Others*, 1-58. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
2. Agawu, V. Kofi. "Introductory Chapter, and Chapter 1: Colonialism's Impact." *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions*, 1-22. New York: Routledge, 2003.
3. Feld, Steven. "A Sweet Lullaby for World Music " *Public Culture* 12.1 (2000): 145–71.

The book assignment must be submitted by 9am on Wednesday, March 16.

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Book Assignment

Due by 9am on Wednesday, March 16 (via googledoc shared with mdessen@uci.edu)

About choosing and finding the books:

Please select a book from the list below for this assignment. Many are in the library but none are on reserve and some might be checked out, so I suggest you start early in case you need to purchase it on your own.

Writing Assignment:

- Roughly 4 double-spaced pages (around 1,400 words)
- Roughly evenly divided between each group of questions below, i.e. about 2 pp. for each
- Revise carefully for writing quality

1. What is the author's main argument and how do they support it? Include some information on their methodology, i.e., what kinds of sources or data do they draw on (interviews or other fieldwork? archival research? analyses of media, of musical recordings or performances, or other author's work?) In addition, discuss the field(s) the book is considered a part of, and how it relates to previous work in those areas. Is it a highly innovative book with new ideas challenging conventional understanding, or does it respond in another way to previous scholarship? These questions may be addressed by the author in the book itself, typically in an introductory chapter, or they may require a little searching on your part, such as finding published book reviews that situate the book in a larger context.

2. How do the author's ideas relate to your own understanding of the topic - or, in cases where you knew nothing about the topic previously, to your understanding of music more generally? Rather than simply stating whether you agree or disagree with the author, try to relate the ideas to your own personal experience or perspectives, using specific examples as needed.

Citing sources:

It is critical that you fully and properly cite any sources you may choose to consult in writing your paper. Please re-read the detailed section on academic integrity policies on the course syllabus before starting this assignment.

Books to choose from:

- Agawu, V. Kofi. Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Aparicio, Frances R. Listening to Salsa : Gender, Latin Popular Music, and Puerto Rican Cultures. Hanover, NH ; London: University Press of New England for Wesleyan University Press, 1998.
- Attali, Jacques. Noise : The Political Economy of Music. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.
- Bauer, Amy. Ligeti's Laments: Nostalgia, Exoticism and the Absolute. Burlington: Ashgate Press, 2011.
- Becker, Judith. Deep Listeners Music, Emotion, and Trancing. 2004. Indiana University Press.
- Berliner, Paul. Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Borgo, David. Sync or Swarm : Musical Improvisation in a Complex Age. London: Continuum, 2007.
- Born, Georgina. Rationalizing Culture : Ircam, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-Garde. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Brett, Philip, and George E. Haggerty. Music and Sexuality in Britten : Selected Essays. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Brinner, Benjamin. Playing across a Divide : Israeli-Palestinian Musical Encounters. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Brodbeck, David. Defining Deuschtum: Political Ideology, German Identity and Music-Critical Discourse in Liberal Vienna. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Chang, Jeff. Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation. New York: Picador, 2006.
- Chernoff, John Miller. African Rhythm and African Sensibility: Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- DeNora, Tia. Music in Everyday Life. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- DeVeaux, Scott. The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Frith, Simon. Performing Rites : On the Value of Popular Music. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996.

- Goehr, Lydia, and Oxford University Press. The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works an Essay in the Philosophy of Music. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Griffin, Farah Jasmine. If You Can't Be Free, Be a Mystery: In Search of Billie Holiday. New York: Free Press, 2001.
- Gaunt, Kyra Danielle. The Games Black Girls Play : Learning the Ropes from Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop. New York: New York University Press, 2006.
- Hisama, Ellie M. Gendering Musical Modernism : The Music of Ruth Crawford, Marion Bauer, and Miriam Gideon. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Keil, Charles, and Steven Feld. Music Grooves : Essays and Dialogues. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Kelley, Robin D.G. Africa Speaks, America Answers: Modern Jazz in Revolutionary Times. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012.
- Kingsbury, Henry. Music Talent, and Performance : A Conservatory Cultural System. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988.
- Kramer, Lawrence. Music as Cultural Practice, 1800-1900. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990.
- Lewis, George E. Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- LeVine, Mark. Heavy Metal Islam : Rock, Resistance, and the Struggle for the Soul of Islam. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2008.
- Long, Michael. Beautiful Monsters : Imagining the Classic in Musical Media. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008.
- Looker, Benjamin. Point from Which Creation Begins : The Black Artists' Group of St. Louis. University of Missouri Press, 2004.
- Manovich, Lev. The Language of New Media. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001.
- McClary, Susan. Conventional Wisdom : The Content of Musical Form. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Monson, Ingrid T. Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Nettl, Bruno. Heartland Excursions : Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995.
- Ochoa, Ana María Gautier. Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth Century Columbia. Duke University Press, 2014.
- Oja, Carol. Bernstein Meets Broadway: Collaborative Art in a Time of War. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Pasler, Jann. Writing through Music : Essay on Music, Culture, and Politics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Patel, Aniruddh D. Music, Language, and the Brain. Oxford, England ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Perlman, Marc. Unplayed Melodies : Javanese Gamelan and the Genesis of Music Theory. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Piekut, Ben. Experimentalism Otherwise: The New York Avant-Garde and Its Limits. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.
- Porter, Eric. What Is This Thing Called Jazz?: African American Musicians as Artists, Critics, and Activists. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002.
- Reardon, Colleen. A Sociable Moment: Opera and Festive Culture in Baroque Siena. Forthcoming from Oxford University Press, 2016 (I will get you a copy to read if you choose this book).
- Rose, Tricia. Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America. Wesleyan University Press: Published by University Press of New England, 1994.
- Saul, Scott. Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Small, Christopher. Musicking : The Meanings of Performing and Listening. Music/Culture. Hanover: University Press of New England [for] Wesleyan University Press, 1998.
- Solie, Ruth A. Music in Other Words : Victorian Conversations. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004.
- Subotnik, Rose Rosengard. Developing Variations : Style and Ideology in Western Music. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
- Thornton, Sarah. Club Cultures : Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1996.
- Tucker, Sherrie. Swing Shift: "All-Girl" Bands of the 1940s. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Walser, Robert. Running with the Devil : Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music. Music/Culture. Hannover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993.
- Waxer, Lise. The City of Musical Memory : Salsa, Record Grooves, and Popular Culture in Cali, Colombia. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2002.
- Wong, Deborah Anne. Speak It Louder : Asian Americans Making Music. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Young, Miriam. Singing the Body Electric: The Human Voice and Sound Technology. Burlington: Ashgate, 2015.