

Course Syllabus

MUS 235, Critical Studies in Music, Fall 2017

University of California, Irvine

Course meets: 1:00 pm-3:50 pm, MM 302

Instructor: Michael Dessen

Office hours: By appointment (just send me your free times to set up a meeting)

Email: mdessen@uci.edu

About this course

In this seminar, we will explore a variety of scholarly and theoretical writings on music. 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. Coursework includes: weekly reading (on average two substantial articles each week); weekly short writing and peer review assignments; and two short essays based on books you will choose from a list.

Coursework details

Weekly reading and class discussion

The weekly readings and discussions (listed on the [Schedule](#)) are the core of this seminar. You are expected 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 third of your course grade. If you have trouble with 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 expected 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.

Weekly writing/review assignments

Each week, I will provide one or more questions for you to choose for a short writing assignment based on the assigned readings. Typically they will ask you to answer in 500-700 words (for questions related to an article) or 200 words (in the case of abstract writing). I expect you to carefully revise and proof your work before submitting it. These writing assignments must be completed by 12pm noon on Tuesday.

After that hour on Tuesday, you will receive via Canvas an assignment to "peer review" the work of one or more students in the class. I expect you to provide detailed feedback and constructive suggestions, and to address both content and writing quality. We will discuss this more in the first class and also review the logistics of how to submit assignments and complete peer reviews using Canvas and GoogleDocs. We will also continue to evaluate how the peer review process is working throughout the quarter and make adjustments if needed.

Two book assignments

Each of these assignments will involve reading a book and writing a short essay (1000-1500 words). Instructions are detailed on the [Book Assignment](#) page. These assignments will not be peer-reviewed. The first book assignment is due mid-quarter and the 2nd during finals week, but you are expected to work on them regularly throughout the quarter.

One individual meeting

Our course begins in week 0 which adds an 11th class meeting in the quarter, but class will not meet on Thanksgiving day and, in addition, we will not hold class on October 26. Partly to account for the cancelled October class and also to check in with each person's individual progress, I will schedule an individual meeting with each student during week five. You do not need to prepare anything in particular for this meeting, but I will ask you to reflect on how the coursework relates to your broader goals for research and/or creative activity.

Calculating your weekly workload

In case it helps you manage your time, my expectation is that all of this coursework to take you *roughly* 8 or 9 hours per week outside of class as follows: 4-5 hours reading and taking notes, 2 hours on the writing assignment and peer review, and 2 hours on ongoing book assignment work. (In addition, note that for the week of October 26 and Thanksgiving week, since there are no readings due, you can use the entire time to work on the book project.) If you find yourself investing significantly more time per week, please speak with me and I'll try to help.

Guidelines for abstracts

Some of the week's options for writing assignments will include writing an abstract of one of the articles we are reading. For this course, you must limit your abstracts to 200 words.

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. Writing a good abstract takes a great deal of revision since every word literally counts.

Required materials

Weekly articles are all in the Readings folder in the "Files" section of Canvas. For the book assignments, it is your responsibility to plan ahead so that you can get your chosen books in time to meet the deadline. 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, it is your responsibility to find a copy.

Grades

I will not be assigning grades to your individual writing assignments, but I will give you feedback on your work and will communicate with you at any time that your work overall falls below what I consider to be a "B" grade, since this is the minimum grade for graduate course requirements at UCI.

At the end of the quarter, I will determine your course grade by considering these three, equally-weighted categories of work:

- Informed participation in class discussion of readings
- Weekly writing/review assignments
- Book assignments

Please note that "informed participation" is a third of your grade, meaning that if you choose not to participate at all in our discussions, your course grade cannot exceed a D (66%), regardless of the quality of your writing submissions.

In addition, by Friday of finals week, you must send me a one-paragraph explanation (no essays, please) of the course grade that you think you have earned and why. This is only one part of my calculation, but it is important that you complete it.

Academic integrity and citation guidelines

Unless an exception is specified in class, all writing assignments must be entirely your own work and you may not collaborate with other students. I value collaboration highly, including the collective thinking we do together in our weekly class meetings, but for various reasons I do not allow collaboration for the writing and peer review assignments in this course.

For all writing assignments, please refrain as much as possible from consulting published sources by other authors about the article or book you are addressing. If you find an article or book 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 truly need 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 integrity policy and will be reported.

Please review UCI's [Academic Integrity Policy \(https://aisc.uci.edu/policies/academic-integrity/index.php\)](https://aisc.uci.edu/policies/academic-integrity/index.php). 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

You are expected to attend all classes and submit all assignments on time. Late assignments will not "count" in my evaluation of the assignment category of your grade. Our class discussions are a crucial part of the work we are doing in this course, so aside from truly severe illness or emergencies, any absences will significantly lower your participation grade.

Special accommodations

If you have a disability that affects your performance in this course, you should 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. To set up a meeting, simply contact me and list your free times in the following few days so I can reply to suggest a meeting time.

Schedule

September 28

First class meeting (nothing due)

October 5

1. 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.
2. 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.

October 12

1. 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.
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.

October 19

1. 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.
2. Lewis, George E. "Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives." *Black Music Research Journal*, 16: 1 (1996): 91-122.

October 26

No class meeting this day; sign up for individual meetings with instructor for following week, and continue working on the Book Assignments.

November 2

1. Green, Lucy. "Gender Identity, Musical Experience and Schooling." *Sociology and Music Education*, ed. Ruth Wright, 139-154. Burlington: Ashgate, 2010.
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. Cleage, Pearl. "Mad at Miles." In *Deals with the Devil: And Other Reasons to Riot*, 36-43. New York: Ballantine Books, 1993.

Note: There is a 3rd article this week because it is extremely short (Cleage)

November 9

1. 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.
2. 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.

November 10 (Friday):

Book Assignment #1 is due by 5pm on Friday Nov. 10

November 16

1. Becker, Judith. "Introduction and Chapter 1, Rethinking Trance." *Deep Listeners: Music, Emotion, and Trancing*, 1-12, 25-34. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004.
2. Iyer, Vijay. "On Improvisation, Temporality and Embodied Experience." *Sound/Unbound*, ed. Paul D. Miller, 273-292. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008.

November 23

No class meeting this day (Thanksgiving holiday)

November 30

For this class, I have invited Professor Amy Bauer to give a guest presentation. (I will be in class as well, but she chose these readings and will lead the discussion.) The assigned readings due this day will be listed here soon.

December 7

1. Feld, Steven. "A Sweet Lullaby for World Music " *Public Culture* 12.1 (2000): 145–71.
2. Moore, Andrea. "Neoliberalism and the Musical Entrepreneur." *Journal of the Society for American Music*, 10:1 (2016), 33–53.

Exam week

- Class will not meet during exam week
- Book Assignment #2 is due by 5pm on Wednesday Dec. 13
- You must also submit by Friday, Dec. 15 a one-paragraph explanation of the course grade you think you have earned and why (see the "Grades" section of the Syllabus).

Book Assignment Instructions

Note: The actual Canvas "assignment" you'll use to submit your essay links here for the instructions below, and the submission process for those assignments in Canvas will be worked out early in the quarter (I'm working with EEE to solve a problem with GoogleApp integration). -MD

MUS 235, Critical Studies in Music, Winter 2016

Michael Dessen, University of California, Irvine
Book Assignments Instructions

Due dates and other details:

- **1st book assignment due** by 5pm on Friday Oct. 10 (end of week 6)
- **2nd book assignment due** by 5pm on Wednesday Dec. 13 (finals week)
- Googledoc between 1000-1500 words, submitted via the Canvas assignment
- List of book options is in [this PDF file \(https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/6427/files/2161207/download\)](https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/6427/files/2161207/download) 
 [\(https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/6427/files/2161207/download\)](https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/6427/files/2161207/download) 
 [\(https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/6427/files/2161207/download\)](https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/6427/files/2161207/download) in the Files folder

Instructions

For each of these two assignments, you will choose a book from [this list \(https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/6427/files/2161207/download?wrap=1\)](https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/6427/files/2161207/download?wrap=1) 
 [\(https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/6427/files/2161207/download?wrap=1\)](https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/6427/files/2161207/download?wrap=1) 
 [\(https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/6427/files/2161207/download?wrap=1\)](https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/6427/files/2161207/download?wrap=1) and compose an essay of roughly 1,000-1,500 words (3-5 pp. double spaced) in response to the questions below.

For at least one of the assignments, I strongly encourage you to choose a book that is well outside your own area of specialization. I also ask that if you do choose a book containing one of the assigned weekly readings, you only do so for one (not both) of the book assignments.

Many of the books on the list are in our library but none are on reserve and some might be checked out. Please make your choices and locate the books at the start of the quarter, in case you need to purchase a book on your own or recall it from the library.

For each assignment, after reading the book, compose an essay that addresses these two groups of questions, with roughly equal emphasis on each group:

1. What is the author's main argument/question, and how do they support/investigate it? Include some information on their methodology and the kinds of sources or data do they draw on? (For example: Do they conduct interviews or other fieldwork? Do archival research? Analyze media/reception? Analyze musical scores? Analyze musical sounds via recordings or performances? Analyze work by other authors?) In addition, do you best to briefly contextualize the book by discussing the field(s) it 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?
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.

Citation reminder

It is critical that you fully and properly cite any sources you may choose to consult in writing your paper. Please read the section on academic integrity policies on the course syllabus before starting this assignment, and consult with me at any time if you have questions about citation practices.

MUS 235, Fall 2017, UCI, Dessen - List of options for book assignments. Note:

- See assignment instructions for the questions to address in your written essay response
- Some articles assigned for class are from books on this list; please do not pick those for both book assignments

- 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.
- *Balance, Christine Bacareza. Tropical Renditions: Making Musical Scenes in Filipino America. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.
- *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.
- Cheng, William. Just Vibrations: The Purpose of Sounding Good. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016.
- Chernoff, John Miller. African Rhythm and African Sensibility: Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- (*)Chion, Michel, translated by James Steintrager*. Sound: An Acouological Treatise. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.
- Daughtry, J. Martin. Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Davis, Angela. Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday. New York: Pantheon Books, 1998.
- 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.
- Ella Jaji, Tsitsi. Africa in Stereo: Modernism, Music, and Pan-African Solidarity. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Fink, Robert. Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Feldman, Martha. The Castrato: Reflections on Natures and Kinds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016.
- Frith, Simon. Performing Rites : On the Value of Popular Music. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Goehr, Lydia. 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.
- Kajikawa, Loren. Sounding Race in Rap Songs. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015.
- 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.
- *Krapp, Peter. Noise Channels: Glitch and Error in Digital Culture. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- Lewis, George E. Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Le Guin, Elisabeth. The Tonadilla in Performance: Lyric Comedy in Enlightenment Spain. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015.
- *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.
- Manabe, Noriko. The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Protest Music After Fukushima. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- 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.
- Omojola, Bode. Yorùbá Music in the Twentieth Century: Identity, Agency, and Performance Practice. Rochester: University of Rochester 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).
- Revell Carr, James. Hawaiian Music in Motion: Mariners, Missionaries, and Minstrels. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2014.
- 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.
- Scherzinger, Martin. Music in Contemporary Philosophy. New York: Routledge, 2014.
- 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.
- Sterne, Jonathan. MP3: The Meaning of a Format. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.
- Stoeber, Jennifer Lynn. The Sonic Color-Line: Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening. New York: New York University Press, 2016.
- Subotnik, Rose Rosengard. Developing Variations : Style and Ideology in Western Music. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
- Sundardi, Christina. Stunning Males and Powerful Females: Gender and Tradition in East Javanese Dance. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2015.
- Taylor, Timothy. Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- 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.

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