COURSE DESCRIPTION

The sociology of music has a long history. Its initial development benefited from the work of scholars who played central roles in the sociological discipline, including Max Weber and Theodor Adorno. Its subsequent maturation was aided by emergent schools of thoughts whose respective proponents accumulated systematic analyses of musical life, such as the art-worlds approach of Howard Becker and the production-of-culture approach associated with Richard Peterson. Its recent boom has been fueled by sophisticated use of theories and methods and by thoughtful debate regarding fundamental concepts.

We delve into this important literature and grapple with the social and cultural foundations of music. We do so in three broad sections, considering (1) the production of music (2) the content of music, and (3) the reception and uses of music. Along the way, we address a number of important questions, which include the following: How did we come to have the current system of music, with its particular notes and forms of composition? Why does much music sound so similar? What types of environments foster innovative music and musical diversity? Why are some types of music (e.g., the works of Beethoven) deemed as “high culture” while other types (e.g., rhythm and blues) are classified as “popular culture?” How do issues of race, gender, and class shape the production and consumption of music? How do people use music in their everyday lives?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This advanced course is organized as a seminar, which entails the combination of much class discussion, a fair amount of reading, three examinations and a written assignment. The Emory University honor code applies fully to this course. When you sign an exam or submit your assignments, you are pledging to the honor code. For reference, please consult: http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policy/honor_code.html.
A) Attendance

You are expected to attend class, especially because we use class time to discuss, among other things, the readings, theoretical traditions and related research. Regular attendance, moreover, will raise your final grade. If you do not miss any classes, I will add two points to your final grade; if you miss only one class, I will add one point to your final grade.

B) Class Participation and Discussion

Active participation requires adequate preparation. You therefore must read the assigned material before class and develop your own assessment of this material. Such careful preparation will improve the quality of class discussion. Of course, class discussion should be both informed and respectful; moreover, it should be a forum wherein all can raise questions, explore ideas, and express misgivings. Class participation comprises 20% of your final grade.

C) Examinations

You will take three, non-cumulative examinations – one following each major section (e.g., The Production of Music). These in-class exams consist of short-answer and essay questions. Prior to each exam, I will distribute a handout that will help you prepare for the test. Each exam will be worth 20% of your final grade. The first exam will occur on February 18, the second exam will occur on March 30, and the last exam will be on the date scheduled by the registrar – April 30.

D) Final Paper

You will complete an 8 to 10 page paper (typed and double-spaced). The paper should deal with some aspect of the sociology of music, yet it should also relate to your own substantive interests. Consequently, this paper may take a variety of forms. For example, it can be a review of the literature, a research proposal, or an empirical project. I ask that you discuss your topic with me by February 25 and meet with me to discuss your outline by March 18. The final paper is due on May 6 and comprises 20% of your final grade.

COURSE RESOURCES

As the semester progresses, class materials (e.g., syllabus, overheads) will be posted on the Blackboard site for SOC 443s (see http://classes.emory.edu/).

The assigned readings are drawn from many sources, so there is no textbook. Instead, the required readings will be available on the class Blackboard site (click on the “Reserve Readings” button) and at Woodruff electronic reserves (see https://ereserves.library.emory.edu/index.php).
If you have any special needs, please contact me at the beginning of the semester and we will discuss the necessary arrangements (for additional information, visit the Emory Office of Disability Services website; see http://www.ods.emory.edu/).

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

*(Subject to Revision)*

**January 14:**  
*Introductions*

**January 19:**  
*NO CLASS (Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday)*

**SECTION ONE: THE PRODUCTION OF MUSIC**

**January 21:**  
*Becoming a Musician – Conventions and Proficiency*


**January 26:**  
*Be(com)ing a Professional Musician – Connections and Limitations*


**January 28:**  
*Working in the Music Business – Careers and Challenges*


February 2:  **Music Organizations – Creativity and Commerce**


February 4:  **Music Fields – Dynamics of Conformity and Change**


February 9:  **Music Fields in Transition – The Intersection of Technology & Law**


February 11 & 16:  **Film Presentation (20 Feet from Stardom)**

Exam Preparation Sheet Distributed (February 11th)

February 18:  **FIRST EXAMINATION**

SECTION TWO:  **THE CONTENT OF MUSIC**

February 23:  **Musical Instruments – Rationalization and Standardization**


February 25:  Music Genres – Emergence and Evolution


DUE DATE FOR MEETING RE: PAPER TOPIC

March 2:  Consecration of Music – Classical Music


March 4:  Consecration of Music – Popular Music


March 9 & 11:  SPRING BREAK (No Class)

March 16:  Change and Conformity in Musical Fields – Classical Music


March 18:  Change and Conformity in Musical Fields – Beyond Classical Music


DUE DATE FOR MEETING RE: PAPER OUTLINE

March 23 & 25:    Film Presentation (Beautiful Dreamer: Brian Wilson & the Story of Smile)

Exam Preparation Sheet Distributed (March 23rd)

March 30:        SECOND EXAMINATION

SECTION THREE: THE RECEPTION & CONSUMPTION OF MUSIC

April 1:          Active Listeners – Incorporating Music into Daily Life


April 6:          Active Listeners and Music Technology


April 8:          Music Fans and Scenes


April 13:  **Music and Mobilization**


April 15:  **Music and Community**


April 20:  **Music and Cultural Omnivores/Univores**


April 22 & 27:  **Film Presentation (Searching for Sugarman)**

Exam Preparation Sheet Distributed (April 22nd)

April 30:  **THIRD EXAMINATION (3:00 – 5:30 pm)**

May 6:  **FINAL PAPER DUE**