EMORY UNIVERSITY

SOC 443

SOCIOLOGY OF MUSIC

Spring 2026   Dr. Timothy J. Dowd
Tuesday / Thursday   231 Tarbutton Hall
2:30 – 3:45   tdowd@emory.edu
Callaway C101   Office Hours: 11:30-1:00 (W)

Graduate Teaching Assistant: Caicai Du; caicai.du@emory.edu

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 WEB Du Bois and Max Weber. Its subsequent development was aided by emergent schools of thoughts whose respective proponents accumulated systematic analyses of musical life. At its core this scholarship deals with the social aspects of music, emphasizing the context that surrounds and enables musical content.

We delve into this exciting literature and grapple with the social aspects of music 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 often 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., hip hop) are often 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

A) Attendance

You are strongly encouraged to attend class, especially because we will use class time to integrate the assigned readings and to present additional information not found in the readings. **Please Note**: missing more than 3 classes could negatively impact your final grade.

B) Office Hours and Appointments

I will be holding office hours in 231 Tarbutton Hall on Wednesdays from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Those hours are "open door," which means that you can drop by without an appointment.

I am also available for appointments outside of those office hours. Email me to arrange those appointments.

C) Electronic Device Policy

Electronic devices, such as laptops and tablets, can be very useful in terms of taking notes. However, when students use them in class to do other things (e.g., order from online stores, check social media posts) that proves detrimental both to student participation and discussion. If your usage of an electronic device in class becomes distracting, I will not hesitate to say so—and if I need to do so more than once, it will affect your final grade in a negative fashion.

On some occasions, I will ask everyone to put away their devices so that we can focus on interacting and exchanging information in intensive fashion.

D) Honor Code and AI Policy

The Emory University honor code applies fully to this course. When you submit your assignments, you are pledging to the honor code. For reference, please consult: https://catalog.college.emory.edu/policies/honor-code.html.

You may use AI tools for certain aspects of your learning and writing (e.g., feedback on spelling and grammar), just as you can collaborate with your peers for things such as brainstorming, getting feedback, or editing of your own work.

However, you **may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own**.

In the language of the Emory Honor Council: "*Using an artificial intelligence program to generate any content for any assignment in this course (including, but not limited to examinations, papers, homework, and creative work) constitutes plagiarism and is a violation of the Honor Code. The use of an artificial intelligence program in this course without permission from the instructor may also constitute seeking unauthorized assistance or violate other provisions of the Honor Code. Any suspicion of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Council.*" https://online.college.emory.edu/policies/AI.html.

E) Written Assignments

You are required to complete a final paper – one that you will write in stages across the semester.

For each "stage" I will distribute a question to which you will provide a 3- to 4-page answer that draws upon the class materials.

The final paper will emerge as you combine the stages together (incorporating the feedback that you receive along the way) and, at the end, provide an introduction and conclusion to the paper.

The dates for the staged assignments, as well as the final paper, are listed below and on the Canvas site. Each staged assignment is worth 25% of your grade, with the final paper itself also worth 25%.

Please note: my expectation is that everyone will earn an "A." Each stage will be graded as "satisfactory/unsatisfactory" given the emphasis, not on a perfect submission, but on a submission that will be revised. Doing the work (which includes responding to the comments for revision) is what I seek in the final version of the paper. Indeed, in past semesters, most students did indeed earn an "A" for their excellent final papers.

Please note, as well: My expectation regarding the final grade also includes the expectations that (a) students will attend class regularly rather than be absent, (b) that they will use electronic devices during class in responsible fashion, and (c) that students do not submit work that is generated by AI.

COURSE RESOURCES

As the semester progresses, class materials (e.g., syllabus, readings, lecture slides) will be posted on the Canvas site for SOC 443 (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 our Canvas site.

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 Department of Accessibility Services website (see http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/index.html).

COURSE READINGS

Musical sociology has a rich history that extends back more than a century, but *musical life* is changing rapidly with each passing year. We will balance both points in the following way: We will use lecture to touch on past scholarship that remains relevant for situating the present, and we will use recently-published readings to address current aspects of musical life. Thus, to understand the broader context of the readings, you will need to attend class.

Some of these readings are written for specialists. Consequently, they can use of jargon and sophisticated techniques of analysis. But, have no fear! My job will be to translate those readings for you and, in the process, show you the usefulness of those articles for making sense of current developments. Put another way, we will also use class-time both to ground and go beyond the readings below. Thus, to understand some of the readings, you will need to attend class.

COURSE SCHEDULE
(*Subject to Revision*)

January 13:   ***Introductions***

SECTION ONE: THE PRODUCTION OF MUSIC

January 15:   ***Becoming a Musician***

Jooyoung Lee. 2009. "Escaping Embarrassment: Face-Work in the Rap Cipher." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 72: 306-324.

January 20:   ***Becoming a Professional Musician***

Adam Schoenbachler. 2025. "Tipping Regimes: Organizational Dynamics and Labor Control Mechanisms on Nashville's Honky-Tonk Row." *Social Problems.* Forthcoming.

January 22:   ***Working in Music***

Timothy J. Dowd & Ju Hyun Park. 2024. "She *Still* Works Hard for the Money: Women Composers, Precarious Work, and the Gender Pay Gap." *Work and Occupations* 51: 408-476.

January 27:   ***Working in Music***

Xu Li and Amandine Ody-Brasier. 2025. "When Breaking the Law Gets You the Job: Evidence from the Electronic Dance Community." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 70: 611-654.

January 29:   ***Working in Music Organizations***

Alexandre Frenette. 2019. "Leveraging Youth: Overcoming Intergenerational Tensions in Creative Production." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 82: 386-406.

February 3:   ***Working in Music Organizations***

Qian Zhang and Keith Negus. 2025. "From Cultural Intermediaries to Platform Adaptors: The Transformation of Music Planning and Artist Acquisition in the Chinese Music Industry." *New Media + Society* 27: 3911-3930.

February 5:   ***Music Industries in Transition***

Rodrigo Gómez, J. Ignacio Gallego, and Argelia Muñoz-Larroa. 2025. "How Streaming Is Reshaping Latin American Culture: The Case of Mexican *Corridos Tumbados.*" Pp.

96-112 in *Music Streaming Around the World,* edited by David Hesmondhalgh. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

FIRST-STAGE ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED

February 10:   *Music Industries in Transition*

Håvard Kiberg and Hendrik Spilker. 2023. "One More Turn after the Algorithmic Turn? Spotify's Colonization of the Online Audio Space." *Popular Music and Society* 46: 151-171.

February 12:   *Film ("All Things Must Pass: The Rise and Fall of Tower Records")*

FIRST-STAGE ASSIGNMENT DUE

SECTION TWO: THE CONTENT OF MUSIC

February 17:   *Creators & Creative Content*

Taylor Price. 2025. "Cognition, Interaction, and Creativity in Songwriting Sessions: Advancing a Distributed Dual-Process Framework." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 88: 1-21.

February 19:   *Creators & Creative Content*

Aruna Ranganathan and Aayan Das. 2023. "Marching to Her Own Beat: Asynchronous Teamwork and Gender Differences in Performance on Creative Projects." *American Sociological Review* 88: 901-937.

February 24:   *The Content / Technology Nexus*

Andrew Nelson, Callen Anthony, and Mary Tripsas. 2023. "'If I Could Turn Back Time': Occupational Dynamics, Technology Trajectories, and the Reemergence of the Analog Music Synthesizer." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 68: 551-599.

February 26:   *The Content / Technology Nexus*

Alexandra Supper. 2025. "'More Where That Came From': How the Voice of Randy Travis Helps to Normalize AI." *Popular Music and Society* 48: 397-415.

March 3:   *Content, (Un)Conventionality, and Platforms*

Julianna Pillemer, Spencer Harrison, Chad Murphy, and Yejin Park. 2025. "Audience Entanglement: How Independent Creative Workers Experience the Pressures of Widespread Appeal on Digital Platforms." *Administrative Science Quarterly.* Forthcoming.

March 5:   *Content, (Un)Conventionality, and Platforms*

Ke Nie. 2023. "Bowing to Five Pecks of Rice: How Online Monetization Programs Shape Artistic Novelty." *Chinese Sociological Review* 55: 66-95.

March 10 & 12:   **SPRING BREAK (No Class)**

March 17:   *The Consecration of Classical Music*

Tokiko Inoue. 2018. "Western Classical Music in a Non-Western Culture: The Repertoires of Japanese Professional Orchestras in the Twentieth Century." *Poetics* 67 13-25.

SECOND-STAGE ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED

March 19:   *The Consecration of Classical Music*

Ju Hyun Park and Laura E.A. Braden. 2025. "Gender and Success in Getting 'Heard': How Orchestral Programming Choices Promote Women Composers." *Gender, Work & Organizations.* Forthcoming.

March 24:   *Film ("Searching for Sugarman")*

SECOND-STAGE ASSIGNMENT DUE

SECTION THREE: THE RECEPTION & CONSUMPTION OF MUSIC

March 26:   *The Love of Music*

Claudio E. Benzecry. 2009. "Becoming a Fan: On the Seductions of Opera." *Qualitative Sociology* 32: 131-151.

March 31:   *The Love of Music*

Vincenzo Cicchelli, Sylvie Octobre, Tally Katz-Gerro, Neta Yodovich, Femida Handy, and Stefanie Ruiz. 2023. "'Because We All Love K-Pop': How Young Adults Reshape Symbolic Boundaries in Paris, Manchester, and Philadelphia." *British Journal of Sociology* 74: 18-135.

April 2:   *Patterns of Musical Tastes*

Yoshimasa Kijima. 2025. "Cultural Omnivorousness of Young People in Japan, South Korea, and the United States." *Journal of Japanese Sociology* 34: 6-23

April 7:   *Patterns of Musical Tastes*

Femke Vandenberg, Michaël Berghman, and Koen van Eijck. 2025. "In Sync: Distinguishing Taste through the 'What' and the 'How' of Live Music Consumption." *Cultural Sociology.* Forthcoming.

April 9:   *Musical Practices in a New Era*

David Hesmondhalgh and Raquel Campos Valverde. 2025. "Living with Music in the Digital Age: Entanglements of the Functional and Aesthetic." *European Journal of Cultural Studies.* Forthcoming.

April 14:   *Musical Practices in a New Era*

So Yeon Park, Jin Ha Lee, Audrey Laplante, Xiao Hu, and Blair Kaneshiro. 2024. "Collaborative Playlists around the World: A Cross-Cultural User Study." *Transactions of the International Society for Music Information Retrieval* 7: 288-305.

THIRD-STAGE ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED

April 16:   *Music and Community: Bounding & Bridging*

Pranathi Diwakar. 2022. "Placing Caste: Spatialization, Urban Segregation, and Musical Boundary-Making." *Social Forces* 101: 1834-1855.

April 21:   *Film ("Thunder Soul")*

THIRD-STAGE ASSIGNMENT DUE

April 23:   *Music and Community: Bounding & Bridging*

Jabari M. Evans. 2022. "Exploring Social Media Contexts for Cultivating Connected Learning with Black Youth in Urban Communities: The Case of Dreamer Studio." *Qualitative Sociology* 45: 393-411.

May 5:   **FINAL PAPER DUE**