

**Music and Gender**  
**MUS342/WGS340/MES341**  
**Unique #s 21905/41595/41735/47095**  
**Meetings: Tuesdays 2-3:30**  
**MRH M3.113**  
**Instructor: Prof. Sonia Seeman**

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Office: MBE 3.204 office hours Th 3:30-5:30 pm and by appointment

**What is music in gender and sexuality?**

Scholars who study gender hold that gender constitutes a fundamental factor in social and cultural life. While Blacking proposed music as humanly-organized sound, we can push Blacking's premise of "soundly-organized humanity" into the realm of gender identification and sexual orientation. While it is possible to posit that gender distinctions have been a universal geographic and temporal constant in human societies, it has only been since the 1980s that scholars began to theorize gender and sexuality in music. In earlier studies, scholars investigated musical practices as a reflection of gender ideals. More recently, scholars have been pushing theoretical boundaries by interrogating the premises of gender and sexuality as culturally-constructed. That is, if gender and sexuality is culturally constructed, what is the role of musical practices in *constituting* gender differences? Further, how do gender identities intersect with other categories such as race, ethnicity, and class? This course will survey a range of readings, approaches, and writing styles in considering the relationship between musical practice and gender identification.

**Assignments and grading**

Assignments will consist of reading, active listening, and film viewing. Students will write summaries or position papers based on weekly readings, write a proposal for their midterm, and a final paper. You will each sign up for one session that you will facilitate. You will be expected to have read the material for that session, and submit 2-3 provocative and thoughtful discussion questions to your classmates by Sunday or Tuesday 10:00 pm prior to your session.

Written responses must be 4-5 double space typewritten pages min; 12 point font. You will choose 4 out of 6 possible writing assignments. When you are not writing an assignment, you still will be expected to read the material and participate in discussions in class and online black board contributions. You will accrue points from your oral contributions as well as written assignments. Your written, reading, or listening contributions will serve as the basis for your participation in discussion each week, and also provide a set of materials that you and your classmates can draw from in your final papers/projects. Your final paper will incorporate your essays written during the semester.

**Grades will be calculated according to the following points system:**

**1 facilitated discussion session**

**5 pts**

NOTE: For facilitated sessions, you must submit discussion questions to Blackboard by

**Sunday 10 pm** prior to Tues session; or **Tues 10 pm** prior to Thursday session.

**4 summaries/response papers selected out of 7**

**10 pts each @ 40 pts total**

**Midterm proposal for final paper**

**15 pts**

**Final 10-12-pp. research paper, to be used as a basis for a 15 minute presentation**  
**25 pts paper 5 pts presentation 30 pts**  
**Overall participation/blackboard postings 10 pts**

### **CLASS POLICIES**

This class abides by the University of Texas Honor Code: To read the entire statement, visit this website: [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/events/sjs\\_honorcode.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/events/sjs_honorcode.php)

Materials submitted to fulfill academic requirements **must represent your own efforts. Any act of academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism, is unacceptable.**

During class time cell phones must be turned off. In exceptional (and indispensable) circumstances (but never during an exam), cell phones could remain turned on and put on silent mode. Laptop computers are allowed in class **only for class-related purposes**. If use of laptop computers will disrupt class or distract the student from participating, the student(s) will be asked to shut it down or leave the classroom.

Make-up assignments and/or extensions of deadlines **must be discussed** with the instructor and would be arranged only under exceptional and documented circumstances. **Late work (non-approved extension) will be graded down.**

You are expected to behave as a professional scholar. This includes showing respect to the instructor, guest lecturers and classmates during discussions and disagreements. You are also expected to show courtesy to the instructor and classmates by alerting the professor to a scheduled absence or lateness. Your grade will be lowered for unexcused absences and late assignments.

Please see the instructor to discuss accommodations for physical, mental, or learning disabilities.

**Please note that syllabus and schedule are subject to change. We can discuss changes to the syllabus or substitute readings and revise in case of consensus and instructor agreement. The syllabus draft will be examined during T 9/4 session, and possible changes discussed.**

### **Discussion protocols**

In my experience, courses that explore issues of music and identity often have a transformative impact on individual students and their awareness of identity in their own lives. It is the goal of this classroom to support an open and safe forum that welcomes diverse perspectives. All participants in this course must respect the affiliations and identities of all participants on any basis, including, but not limited to, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender identity, disability, or sexual orientation.

As we will be reading, listening to, and witnessing a variety of viewpoints on the relationship between gender and sexual orientation, there are four guiding tenets that are crucial for providing a safe environment. Three of these (*generosity*, *provisionality* and *community*) were proposed by anthropologist Tom Boellstorf.

### **Generosity**

All readings selected for the syllabus are insightful and theoretically innovative. Critiquing aspects of the readings is fine, but if you find yourself rejecting an argument in toto, this indicates your reading is insufficiently generous. Look for ways that the readings can be useful to you. In other words, try on the concepts and perspectives, walk around in them, and see the

world around you through them, put them in dialogue with other ideas. Your critique will be stronger for having a firm grasp of the ideas first.

Generosity with readings also means tolerance for new or different ideas. By listening with an open mind to ideas or opinions that may seem foreign to you, or contradict your values, you may find your own perceptions have been enlarged, or, contrarily, that your previous values seems more pertinent. But for either to happen, it is necessary to first give yourself the space to consider different viewpoints.

### **Provisionality**

You are allowed (indeed, encouraged) to think out loud, say something and then take it back, and generally speak in a provisional manner, knowing that those around you will be patient, supportive, and slow to take offense. I do not expect you to arrive at class having full mastery of every possible permutation of the subject under discussion.

### **Community**

Some individuals are quite comfortable speaking at length: I encourage this, but I reserve the right to ask persons to wrap up their comments, or to solicit comments from persons who have not yet participated in any particular course meeting. Some of the topics we will be discussing may be both politically and personally sensitive, so I ask for your good will and awareness of the feelings of others. When you are facilitating a discussion session, please be aware of giving everyone equal opportunities to participate.

### **Communication**

Finally, if there are aspect of the course, assignments, discussions, audio or visual materials that cause concern or confusion, please contact me or see me during office hours.

### **Schedule of Topics**

**IB Th 8/30 Overview of the course; review of syllabus; introduction of students**

**BB discussion assignment: What is gender? What is music? How is gender related to music? What is parody? How does parody support or subvert gender identity?**

### **Handout:**

Build a definition of gender.

Building definitions of music.

Assignment: Watch: "Call me maybe" Carly Rae Jepsen + one cover or parody.

**BB posting by Monday 10 pm.**

### **IIA T 9/4 Discusion: Gender in music – some parameters**

**a. Discussion:** Discussion of your findings for "Call me maybe." Comparison of cover vs. parody. Is parody productive of new meanings and definitions of gender and sexuality?

**b. Lecture:** Essentialism/constructivist debates - How fixed are gender roles and definitions?

### **IIB Th 9/6 Intersections between essentialist and constructivist positions – cross-cultural evidence**

**Blackboard posting and discussion.**

1.Ortner, Sherry. 1974. "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" In *Woman, Culture and Society*. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, and Louise Lamphere, eds. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Pp. **Blackboard; FAL RESERVES HQ 1206 R65**

### **IIIA T 9/11 Constructivist approach to gender and music**

Presentation by Peers for Pride

Bornstein, Kate. Selections from *My gender workbook*.

Video: EZ Heeb "Fagette"; "

### **IIIB Th 9/13 Constructivist and cross-cultural views of gender and music**

#### **Blackboard posting and discussion.**

1. Koskoff, Ellen. "An Introduction to Women, Music, and Culture." In *Women and Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Edited by Ellen Koskoff. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987: 1-23.

### **IVA T 9/18 – No class meeting; view "Paris is Burning"**

#### **DUE: Paper assignment #1: Essentialism vs. constructivism in gender and music**

Read:

View on your own: "Paris is Burning"; Music video "Vogue" by Madonna 1990

**Take notes on use of music, construction of gender roles at Balls and in ?houses. Submit to blackboard:**

### **IVB Th 9/20 Gender, sexuality and Psychobilly – Guest lecture by Dr. Kim Kattari**

### **VA T 9/25 Anthropological definitions of gender: How do these definitions help us to understand pop videos?**

#### **Blackboard posting and discussion.**

#### **SELECT ONE:**

Guttman, Matthew C. 1997. "Masculinity." *The Dictionary of Anthropology*. Thomas Barfield, ed. London: Blackwell.

Janowiak, William. 1997. "Gender." *The Dictionary of Anthropology*. Thomas Barfield, ed. London: Blackwell.

Janowiak, William. 1997. "Sex." *The Dictionary of Anthropology*. Thomas Barfield, ed. London: Blackwell.

Povinelli, Elizabeth. 1997. "Feminist Anthropology." *The Dictionary of Anthropology*. Thomas Barfield, ed. London: Blackwell.

**-AND-**

**Select one video:** Michael Jackson: Billy Jean; Lady Gaga "Telephone"; Bulgarian singer Azis [Bear]; Madonna "Vogue"

**Lecture:** Background on the blues

### **VB Th 9/27 Lecture: Gender and the blues – What's in a text?**

What is the relationship between song texts and personal experiences? How do the blues constitute an alternative form of narrative?

**-All read-**

Titon, Jeff Todd. 2009. Chapter 4: "North America – Black America." – Selections on blues, texts and biographies. In *Worlds of music: Introduction to the music of the world's peoples*. Fifth edition. Jeff Todd Titon, general editor. Belmont CA: Schirmer Cengage Learning. Pp. 165 - 188.

#### **VI T 10/4 Blues, gender and sexuality**

##### **Blackboard posting and discussion.**

How do musical lyrics portray gender? Sexual identity? human relationships? How do lyrics support and/or subvert heteronormative values? What is irony, and how do you identify it in song words?

##### **-Select ONE-**

1. Gossett, Hattie. 1983. "Billie lives! Billie lives." In *This bridge called my back: Writings by radical women of color*. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds. Latham, NY: Kitchen Table - Women of Color Press. Pp. 109-112.

"Gloomy Sunday – The Hungarian Suicide Song" Billie Holiday with the Teddy Wilson Orchestra + song words.

2. Davis, Angela. 1998. "I used to be your sweet mama." In *Blues legacies and black feminism*. New York: Vintage. Pp. 3-41.

Ma Rainey's "Prove it on me blues"; Bessie Smith

3. Jones, Leroi [Amira Baraka]. 1963. "Chapter 6: Primitive blues and primitive jazz." In *Blues people: The Negro experience in white America and the music that developed from it*. New York: Morrow Quill Paperbacks. Pp. 60 – 70.

Lomax, Alan. *The Land Where the Blues Began 2000?* [1967]. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Folkways.

4.

Ex. from Ma Rainey; Billie Holiday; Big Mama Thornton.

#### **VIA Th 10/6 19<sup>th</sup>- early 20<sup>th</sup> century European constructions of gender, class and Western European classical music canon**

##### **Writing assignment #2: Creating your own gender definition(s) with music**

1. Cusick, Susanne G. 1999. "Gender, musicology and feminism" in *Rethinking Music*. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist, eds. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 471 – 498.

##### **–OR–**

2. Seashore, Carl. "Why No Great Women Composers?" *Music Educators Journal*. 26 (5): 21+88.

3. Prince, April. 2008. "Chapter 4: Constructing a bourgeois model: Themes in the reviews of Clara Schumann." In *Der anmutreichen, unschuldsvollen Herrin*. Phd dissertation: University of Texas, Austin. Pp. 69-190. **ONLINE through UT Library Website**

#### **VIIA T 10/11 Masculinities in music**

##### **Blackboard posting and discussion.**

##### **-Select ONE-**

1. Jarman-Ivens, Freya, ed. 2007. *Oh boy! Masculinity and popular music*. New York: Routledge. Selections.

2. Walser, Robert. *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England.

3. Hawkins, Stan. 1997. "The Pet Shop Boys: Musicology, Masculinity, and Banality." In *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender*. Edited by Sheila Whiteley. London and New York: Routledge, 118-133.

4. Palmer, Gareth. "Bruce Springsteen and Masculinity." In *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender*. Edited by Sheila Whiteley. London and New York: Routledge, 1997: 100-117.

Viewing: Led Zeppelin The Song Remains the Same.

### **VIIIB Th 10/13 Queering in music**

Brett, Philip; Wood, Elizabeth; Thomas, Gary C. 1994 [2006]. "Preface to the Second Edition"; "Preface to the First Edition." "Queering the Pitch"; "Lesbian and Gay Music." In *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*. New York; London: Routledge.

Viewing: Victor, Victoria.

### **VIIIA T 10/16 Gender and musical structure part one**

#### **Writing assignment #3: Response paper on queering or masculinizing music**

McClary, Susan. 1991. "Chapter Three: Sexual Politics in Classical Music." In *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 53 - 67.

### **VIIIB Th 10/18 Gender and musical structure part two**

#### **Blackboard posting and discussion**

Listening/viewing assignment

**-SELECT ONE-**

6. Bizet's Carmen [videorecording] / Triumph Films Inc. ; a film by Francesco Rosi ; produced by Patrice LeDoux. Francesco Rosi, director. Julia Migenes-Johnson as Carmen. Listen to opera; esp. habanera (act 1; scene 2) seguidilla (act 1 scene 2); flower song (act 2; scene 3). **FAL DVD 2054**

U-Carmen eKhayelitsha **DVD 7726**

Carmen: A hip hopera [On order for FAL]

### **IXA T 10/23 Music, Blackness/Whiteness and class**

1. Hayes, Eileen and Williams, Linda, eds. 2007. *Black women and music: More than the blues*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. Selections.

2. Fox, Aaron. 2004. "Prelude"; "Chapter 1: Voicing Working Class Culture"; "Chapter 7: 'The Women Take Care of That': Engendering Working-class Culture". In *Real Country: Music and Language in Working-Class Culture*. Pp. 1-45; 249-271.

3. White, Miles. 2011. "Introduction"; Chapter 4: Real niggas: Black men, hard men and the rice of gangsta culture." In *From Jim Crow to Jay-Z: Race, rap and the performance of masculinity*. Urbana, Chicago, Springfield: University of Illinois Press. Pp. 1-7; 63-88.

### **IXB Th 10/25 Guest lecture on Iraqi music, gender and children by Rahim AlHajj**

**-MIDTERM DUE-**

### **XA T 10/30 Gender and orientalism - Masculinist Western European perspectives on the "feminine east"**

#### **Writing assignment #4: Gender in music – structural analysis**

**XB Th 11/1 Contemporary orientalism: hip hop videos and cultural colonialism  
BLACKBOARD POSTING AND DISCUSSION**

Selections from: Snake (RJ Kelly); Indian Flute (Timbaland and Magoo).

**Lecture: Conversation with Alec McIntyre**

**XIA T 11/6 Music and instrumental traditions**

**Writing assignment #5 Orientalism and gender**

2. Doubleday, Veronica. 1999. "The Frame Drum in the Middle East: Women, Musical Instruments and Power." *Ethnomusicology*, 43 (1): 101-134.

3. Johnson, Maria V. "Black Women Electric Guitarists and Authenticity in the Blues." In *Black Women and Music: More than the Blues*. Edited by Eileen M. Hayes and Linda F. Williams. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007: 51-71.

**XIB Th 11/8 North Africa: music, gender and musical professionalism**

**BLACKBOARD POSTING AND DISCUSSION**

1. Examples from Cheika Remitti.

2. Schade-Poulson, Marc. 1999. *Men and Popular Music in Algeria: The Social Significance of Rai*. Austin: The University of Texas Press. Selections.

3. Al-Tae, Nasr. 2002. "Running with the Rebels: Politics, Identity, and Sexual Narrative in Algerian Rai." *Echo*. <http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/echo/volume5-issue2/archives/index.html>

**ONLINE**

Viewing:

Jones, L. JaFran. "A Sociohistorical Perspective on Tunisian Women as Professional Musicians." In *Women and Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Edited by Ellen Koskoff. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987: 69-83.

Virolle, Marie. "Representations and Female Roles in the Rai Song." In *Music and Gender: Perspectives from the Mediterranean*. Edited by Tullia Magrini. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003: 215-231.

**XIIA T 11/13 Gender roles and the nation state: Egypt**

**Writing Assignment #6: Gender and instrumental traditions**

1. Danielson, Virginia. 1997. *The voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthūm, Arabic song, and Egyptian society in the twentieth century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Viewing: Documentary: A voice like Egypt.

Nightingales.

**XIIB Th 11/15**

**-Writing day -**

**XIIIA T 11/20 Gender, violence and resistance**

**BLACKBOARD POSTING AND DISCUSSION**

1. MacDonald, David. 2010. "Geographies of the Body: Violence and Manhood in Palestine." *Ethnomusicology Forum* 19/2.

Listening: Palestinian hip hop videos.

2. Sugarman, Jane.

**XIII B Th 11/22 THANKSGIVING BREAK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**XIV A T 11/27**

**Writing assignment #7: Gender, violence and resistance in music**

**XIV B Th 11/29 Review/Catch up**

**XV A T 12/4 In-class peer review of paper drafts**

**XV B Th 12/6 Review; in-class writing session.**

**FINAL: Paper presentations**