MUSC 244_Music of the 20th Century

Mondays & Wednesdays 11:00AM-12:20PM

Location: RHH003

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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday by appointment (MST 306).

The modernism that defined much of the 20th Century was born already in the last decade of the 19th Century and rode on the shirttails of the incredible pace of major technological innovations and inventions in the 19th century: steam engines, ocean liners, photography, moving pictures, the phonograph, the telegraph, the telephone, and cinema, to name a few. The rise of symphony orchestras, the proliferation of conservatories and standardized music pedagogy, and an explosion of publishing and commercial music had a wide reaching impact on how music would be produced and consumed.

The 20th Century was a century of horrific world wars, massive disease epidemics, nuclear arms struggles, cruel dictatorships, internment camps, torture, terrorism, and environmental disasters, but it also saw the birth of the United Nations, the European Union, the environmental movement, the civil rights movement, personal computers, the internet, and more genres of music than any one person could name. Amidst the frantic pace of change and progress, art and music often provided an alternative vision of hope for the world. Music may not be a universal language, but when life is lived more musically and our dealings with other human beings approached with our ears ready to perceive changes, nuance, and complexity of textures, we become more able to imagine solutions to the problems around us.

This course will look at avant-garde and classical music traditions that arose out of European and American movements in the late 19th and early 20th century as well as tracing the history of Jazz, Swing, Bebop, Free Jazz, Tropicalia & Samba, Rock n Roll, Psychedelia, Disco, House, Electronica, and Hip Hop. We will not always be able to move in a straight line chronologically or geographically speaking, but as we listen to the 20th Century and focus in on its trends, innovations, and its ecstatic push for change, we will get a better picture of how and why we are where we are today.

IMPORTANT: All your reading assignments, links to listening and films, etc. will be posted on Moodle. Please always check Moodle in the afternoon after our class for any updates. I will also always send out a group email when I have posted anything new. Please also find a bibliography of suggested readings and links to websites, films, blogs, and other things. A digital copy of this syllabus will also be on Moodle should you happen to lose your hard copy.

Policies:

Attendance. Because course material is cumulative, it is important to come to all class meetings and complete written work promptly. Please arrive on time and remain in the classroom for the duration of our 80-minute class period. Whatever the reason for an absence, you are responsible for handing in any assignments on or before the due date for full credit, and for getting notes from a classmate.
Please turn your cellular phone off and refrain from text messaging or using laptop or tablet computers during class. These devices distract those around you.

**Materials:**

- Required texts (available at Broad Street Books):
  - Paul Griffiths, *Modern Music and After* (Oxford)
  - Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise*
  - Joanna Demers, *Listening Through the Noise*
  - David Toop, *Haunted Weather*

Streaming sound files and supplementary materials available on Moodle.

**Grading Rubric:**

*Presentations and Participation (50%)* This grade reflects a global assessment of your preparations for and contributions to in-class discussions, analyses, performances, and other group activities.

*Midterm Paper (20%)* This will be a short paper (article length, ca. 5 pages double-spaced) taking the form of a concert, record, or film review.

*Final Project (30%)* Your final project will take the form of a 10-page paper, a class presentation with a shorter written component, or a creative project (a composition, short film, app design, game, etc.) that I will approve several weeks before the end of the semester. Start thinking about your final projects early on in the semester! This is a big part of your grade!

**Disability Resources:**

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and provide documentation of the disability. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Disability Resources as soon as possible.

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Dean Patey in Disability Resources, located in North College, Room 021, or call 860-685-2332 for an
appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations.

**Academic Honesty:**

Students are expected to abide by Wesleyan University’s Honor Code in all assignments and examinations. Discussion of class content among students is strongly encouraged, but simply copying a classmate’s responses to homework or exams undermines our community of trust, and keeps you from practicing the skill covered in the assignment.

Suspected Honor Code violations will be referred to the Honor Board. Don’t hesitate to approach me if you have questions or concerns about academic honesty in this course.

**Schedule of Class Topics and Assignments***

*Subject to revision. Changes will be announced in class and updated on Moodle. Check Moodle before and after each class!!

**Week 1 (No class)**

**Week 2 European Modernisms**

25 January     Debussy & the first sounds of modernism. An overview of modernisms many 'isms'.


**Week 3 American Modernisms**


3 February     "American Originals": Ives, Cowell, & Partch, William Grant Still, George Gershwin.

**Week 4    Europe WWI and after**

8 February     Paris to NY: Stravinsky & Varese

10 February    Berlin: Kurt Weill and Bertholt Brecht. Cabaret, music halls, Broadway.

**Film:** *Rahsaan Roland Kirk and John Cage—Sound??* (1967).
Reading: Selections from *Silence* by John Cage & George Lewis's essay, *Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives*.

**Week 5**  
Afrological and Eurological Perspectives

15 February  
**Group Presentations today and Thursday!!!**  
John Cage, David Tudor & the New York School

17 February  
BEBOP! Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis.

**Week 6**  
Post WWII. The International Avant-Garde

22 February  
Darmstadt and the International Avant-Garde  
(Stockhausen, Xenakis, Boulez, Cage, Ligeti).  
Musique Concrete and GRM.

24 February  
Cage, Black Mountain College, The New School,  
Fluxus, Happenings.

**Week 7**  
The ONCE Festival & the Avant-Garde in the Midwest.

29 February  
Milton Cohen's Space Theater. ONCE  
Festival/Ann Arbor Film Festival. The young  
Iggy Pop, Robert Ashley, Sonic Arts Union,  
ONCE Group.

2 March  
Herbert Brun, Lejaren Hiller, James Tenney.  
Cybernetics of cybernetics and music in the  
laboratory.

**Week 8 & 9**

**SPRING BREAK! 3/4 - 3/21**

**Week 10**  
The 60s

21 March  
Greenwich Village, Amiri Baraka, the Folk  
Revival, Judson Church, the downtown loft  
scene. British Invasion. Rock n' Roll.

**Week 11** Revolutions.

28 March

*Group Presentations today and Thursday!!!*
Detroit: STAX & MOTOWN. Muscle Shoals.
Paris & Situationism.

30 March AACM, Art Ensemble of Chicago, Sun Ra, Moondog.

**Week 12** European Political Avant-Gardes

4 April The European political avant-garde: Hans Eisler, Luigi Nono, Helmut Lachenmann.

6 April Cornelius Cardew, The Scratch Orchestra, AMM.

**Week 13** Experimental Music in and out of the Electronic Studio.

11 April Alvin Lucier, Maryanne Amacher, Pauline Oliveros, Eliane Radigue & Max Neuhaus.

13 April IRCAM, GRM, STEIM & The BBC Radiophonic Studios.
The Electronic Music Studio and new instrument design.

**Week 14** Minimalism

18 April La Monte Young, Tony Conrad, The Velvet Underground.

20 April Terry Riley, Steve Reich, & Philip Glass.

**Week 15** PUNK & NEW WAVE!

25 April *Group Presentations today and Thursday!!!*
New York Punk & CBGB. British Punk and the rise of New Wave. Cabaret Voltaire, Joy Division, New Order, The Hacienda, Factory Records & Antler Records...
27 April  
Postminimalists: Greenaway & Nyman.

Week 16

2 May  
'80s New York: Brian Eno, David Byrne, Robert Ashley, Laurie Anderson, Meredith Monk, Rhys Chatham, Arthur Russell, Peter Gordon, Ned Sublette. MTV.

4 May  
South Bronx via Jamaica. The rise of Rap.  
House goes International. 90s Electronica (Milles Plateaux, Mego, Touch). John Zorn & Tzadik. Trip Hop.  
Hip Hop goes global.

***************READING PERIOD 5/5- 5/9***************

Final Presentations will happen during Reading Period. TBC