Emory University

SOCIOLOGY OF MUSIC

Soc 443s; Spring 2008

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:30-3:45, 215 Woodruff Library

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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. Note that all students must adhere to the Emory College Honor Code when completing both examinations and assignments.

A) Attendance

You are expected to attend class, especially because we use class time to discuss, among other things, the readings and theoretical traditions. 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 will be take-home exams consisting of short-answer and essay questions. Each exam will be worth 20% of your final grade. I will distribute the first exam on February 14, the second exam on March 20, and the last exam on April 22, and you will turn each exam in during the designated class meeting.

D) Final Paper

You will complete a 10 to 12 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 March 4 and submit an outline by April 1. 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.

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 Library's electronic reserves (click on "Reserves Direct").

If you have any special needs, please contact me at the beginning of the term and we will discuss the necessary arrangements.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(Subject to Revision)

SECTION ONE: THE PRODUCTION OF MUSIC

January 17  Introductions

January 22  Musicians – Constraints and Opportunities


January 24  Music Organizations – Conflict and Creativity


**January 29**  
**Music Industries – Dynamics of Conformity and Change**


**January 31**  
**Music Fields – The Role of Intermediaries**


**February 5**  
**Music Fields in Transition – The Intersection of Technology & Law**


**February 7**  
**Globalization of Music Production – Issues of Appropriation**


**February 12**  
**Globalization of Music Production – The Local / Global Issue**


**February 14**  
**Film Presentation**
First Examination Distributed

February 19  FIRST EXAMINATION DUE (In Class)

SECTION TWO: THE CONTENT OF MUSIC

February 21  Musical Instruments – Rationalization and Standardization


February 26  Music Genres – Constructing and Enacting Conventions


February 28  Music Genres – The Global Context


March 4  Consecration of Music – Classical Music


FINAL PAPER TOPIC DUE

March 6  Consecration of Music – Beyond Classical Music


March 12-14  SPRING BREAK (No Class)
March 18  
*Change and Conformity in Music Fields – Classical Music*


March 20  
*Change and Conformity in Music Fields – Beyond Classical Music*


**Second Examination Distributed**

March 25  
*Film Presentation*

SECOND EXAMINATION DUE (In Class)

**SECTION THREE: THE RECEPTION AND CONSUMPTION OF MUSIC**

March 27  
*Active Listeners – Incorporating Music into Daily Life*


April 1  
*Active Listeners and Music Technology*


**FINAL PAPER OUTLINE DUE**

April 3  
*Music and Community*

Laura Clawson. 2004. “‘Blessed Be the Tie That Binds’: Community and Spirituality among Sacred
Harp Singers.” *Poetics* 32: 311-324.


**April 8**  
*Listeners and the Internet: Isolated or Communal?*


**April 10**  
*Princeton / Mellon Meeting on Orchestras (No Class)*

**April 15**  
*Music and Mobilization*


**April 17**  
*Music, Cultural Capital, and Habitus*


**April 22**  
*Music and Cultural Omnivores*


**Third Examination Distributed**

**April 24**  
*Film Presentation*

**THIRD EXAMINATION DUE (In Class)**

**May 6**  
*FINAL PAPER DUE*