

JUNE 2007

**Victoria University of Wellington
Media Studies (SEFTMS)**

MDIA 403 Mass Media and Popular Culture

2007 Trimester 2. Course Guide

Course Convener:
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2007 CLASS PROGRAMME

In 2007, the course will be an advanced study of selected aspects of popular music culture:

- history (historiography).
- biography.
- local music scenes.
- audiences, consumers, and fans.

There is also scope, through the major course 'project', for students to follow their particular interests in the field, in a directed study.

It is assumed that students will have already completed MDIA 205 and/or MDIA305 Popular Music Studies, as part of their Media Studies major.

If not, you should do some 'background' reading:
See the READING LIST (I will go over this handout at the first class).

The class meets on Thursdays:

4.10 pm to 6.00pm,
in 42-44 Kelburn Parade, room 101 (downstairs; front of building).
The class will be conducted, in part, on a seminar/discussion basis.

Course workload:

This course is worth 30 points.
The expectation is that this equates to approximately 20+ hours of work per week, over a twelve-week trimester. Obviously, individual effort will vary, depending on when you have pieces of work due, and the nature of these assessment points.

Course aims and objectives:

The general aim of the course is to critically engage with selected aspects of popular music studies at a level commensurate with graduate study.

In 2007, the aspects focused on will be historiography, biography; music scenes; and audiences and consumption. Students will also undertake an independent study, in consultation with the course lecturer.

On successful completion of the paper, students will be able to:

(1) Identify and critically discuss the nature and influence of selected theoretical paradigms. In relation to debates surrounding the production, distribution, and consumption of popular music.

(2) Demonstrate the relative importance of 'history', economics, technology, geographic, and social/cultural factors in the discourse around the selected aspects of popular music studies.

Primarily through the 'project', students will demonstrate the ability to:

(3) Articulate a research question and an understanding of relevant methodological/theoretical approaches to it.

(4) Critically evaluate existing research from an informed perspective;

(5) Collect, analyse, and organise information and ideas and to convey those ideas clearly and fluently (in written and spoken forms);

CLASS SCHEDULE:

12th July

INTRODUCTION:

Introductions.

Course assessment; resources (See References List – handout)

Handouts distributed for first half of course.

19th July

POPULAR MUSIC STUDIES: The State of the Field**Background reading (Handouts)**

Roy Shuker (2007) "What's goin' on?" (Introduction) *Understanding Popular Music Culture*, New York; London: Routledge.

Simon Frith, (1996) "The Value Problem in Cultural Studies", *Performing Rites. On The Value of Popular Music*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., chapter 1.

26th July

ISSUES IN POPULAR MUSIC HISTORY

Selection and representation in the history of popular music:
written histories, (auto-) biography, visual histories, and 'rock' museums.

Background reading (Handouts):

Santelli, R. (1999) 'The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum: Myth, Memory, and History', in Kelly, K. and McDonnell, E. (eds) *Stars Don't Stand Still in the Sky*, New York: New York University Press, pp. 237-43.

David Buckley (2003) "Halls of Fame/Museums", *CONTINUUM Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World, Volume 1: Media, Industry and Society*, London and New York: Continuum, pp.29-31.

Gilbert B. Rodman (1999) "Histories", in Bruce Horner and Thomas Swiss, eds. *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture*, Malden, Mass; Oxford (UK): Blackwell, pp. 35-45.

2nd August

ISSUES IN POPULAR MUSIC BIOGRAPHY

Background reading (Handouts):

Thomas Swiss (2005) "That's Me in the Spotlight: rock autobiographies", *Popular Music*, 24,2: pp. 287-294.

Robert Strachan (2003) "Biography/autobiography", *CONTINUUM Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World, Volume 1: Media, Industry and Society*, London and New York: Continuum, pp.11-14.

9th August: Assignment 1 (Book Review) Due

9th August; 16th August

**FROM SUBCULTURES TO SCENES (Dr. Geoff Stahl)
DETAILS TO BE PROVIDED.**

20th AUGUST – 2nd SEPTEMBER: MID TRIMESTER BREAK

ASSIGNMENT 2 (SCENES ESSAY) DUE 3RD SEPTEMBER

6th September:

(1) POPULAR MUSIC AUDIENCES: INTRODUCTION

Background readings (Handouts): tba

(2) Initial discussion of individual projects

(You should bring to class a one page statement of intent, which you will ‘speak to’– this is not assessed: it is just to get you started on the project).

13th September:

POPULAR MUSIC AUDIENCES

Example: Record Collecting as Social Practice.

20TH; 27TH September

Seminar Presentations

The presentation is a compulsory part of the course, it relate to course objective 5, but is not assessed.

It is to enable you to organize your material and ideas for the written presentation of your project, get feedback on progress, possible source materials, etc.

9th October: final considerations etc re. Projects; course review.

(15-19th October: Study Week)

22nd. October (Monday) submission of ASSIGNMENT 3: individual project.

ASSESSMENT: INTERNAL. Three components:

Assignment 1: DUE 2nd August. 1200-1500 words 20%

A CRITICAL review of ONE popular music biography (or autobiography).
(Relates to course objectives 1 and 2)

This should include:

- A concise (2-300 words) summary of the book.
- Clarification of the sources utilized by the author(s), and a critique of these.
- A summary of at least three reviews of the volume, and some comment on these.
- An assessment of the volume's contribution to popular music studies (i.e. placing it within the broader field).

The last should be the major focus of your assignment.

Further clarification, and examples, will be provided in class.

Assignment 2: DUE 4th September. SCENES

Essay 1,500 – 1,800 words; 30% (Relates to course objectives 1 and 2)

DETAILS TO BE PROVIDED BY GEOFF

Assignment 3: DUE Monday 22nd October

Individual Project 2,500-3,00 words; 50%

(Relates to course objectives 3,4, and 5).

Topics will be individually negotiated, and should initially be situated around a clear research question. Further clarification, and guidelines, will be provided in class.

EXTENSIONS AND LATE ESSAYS

Extensions can only be granted by the course coordinator (Associate Prof. Shuker), and only in exceptional circumstances. If you feel you may need an extension, you **MUST** speak to or email me **BEFORE** the due date, providing relevant certification (e.g. a doctor's certificate, a note from a counselor, etc.)

Late essays submitted without an extension will be given a maximum grade of C.

No essays will be accepted later than one week after the due date.

The Final Date for submission of any written work in this course is Friday 26th October.

General University/Faculty Information/Regulations follow.

Please ensure you are familiar with these.

