

Fall 2014
VPD LL101B
Th. 2-4:50

Glenda Goodman
Office: SOS 257
Office hours Th. 12-1:30
glenda.goodman@usc.edu

History 498: Music and Media in America



Overview

Music is ephemeral. Yet musical sounds have long been captured and reproduced through material objects. Whether those “objects” are old-fashioned hymnals or a music-streaming service like Spotify, they offer people ways to engage with music. From Oliver Ditson’s antebellum publishing company to Thomas Edison’s Gilded Age phonograph to Steve Jobs’ millennial iPod, the way music is transmitted tells us much about American culture in any given time period.

This seminar explores the history of American musical media from the colonial period to the present. We will examine the technological innovations that have changed how music is disseminated over the last three hundred years, and consider how those innovations directed the development of a multitude of musical styles. We will inquire into how media influenced the way Americans listened to music and affected their musical tastes. And we will look at the commercialization and corporatization of popular music, issues of sound preservation, and the ever-shifting terrain of copyright and piracy.

Our learning will be based on the music media materials housed in the USC Doheny Library Special Collections. Four class meetings will be held at Special Collections. Through in-class

work and written assignments students get hands-on experience working with musical media, and will develop individual research projects based on the materials.

This course is intended for advanced undergraduates. History 201 is recommended but not required. No prior music knowledge is necessary.

Required Books

The required books are available at the USC bookstore. All other readings are on Ares.

- Timothy Taylor, Mark Katz, Tony Grajeda, eds. *Music, Sound, and Technology in America: A Documentary History of Early Phonograph, Cinema, and Radio*. Duke University Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-8223-4946-4
- Susan Douglas, *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination*. University of Minnesota Press, 2004. ISBN 0-8166-4423-3
- William Howard Kenney, *Recorded Music in American Life: The Phonograph and Popular Memory, 1890-1945*. Oxford University Press, 1999. ISBN 0-19-517177-2
- Andre Millard, *America on Record: A History of Recorded Sound*, 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press, 2005. ISBN 0-521-54281-2

Organization and Requirements

Preparation

Come to class having read and thought about the texts assigned for that day, and be ready to share your thoughts in discussion. Occasionally I will ask you to listen to music before class. Please resist the urge to multitask while listening.

Attendance

You are expected to attend every class. Not only is difficult to learn anything if you are not actually present, but the class will suffer without your contributions. Contact me if you need special accommodations in the event of a family emergency or extended illness.

Classroom Etiquette

Class meets for nearly three hours once a week, which does not give us much time to cover the dramatic changes in musical media in the last four hundred years. Being punctual and staying the entire time is both the polite thing to do and the best way to learn in this class.

Technology can be a wonderful aid to learning, but when it becomes a distraction it wastes everyone's time. Computers and tablets may be used for taking notes and referring to readings, but this policy will be revised if they become a distraction.

Absolutely no cell phone use will be permitted (including texting).

Academic Integrity

Intellectual development requires honesty, responsibility, and doing your own work. Taking ideas or words from others—plagiarizing—is dishonest and will result in a failing grade on the paper and possibly other disciplinary actions. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, ask me or consult USC's online "Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism" (http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug_plag.htm). For more on USC's policies about academic integrity see "The Trojan Integrity Guide" (<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/tio.pdf>).

Disabilities

If you have special academic needs due to a disability you are required to register with

Disability Services and Programs. Obtain a letter verifying your needs for accommodations from DSP and give me a copy soon as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30am-5:00pm Monday through Friday. They can be reached at ability@usc.edu and (213) 740-0776.

Evaluation

Grades are based on two components: participation and written work.

For participation, students are expected to do all of the readings before the class on which they are assigned. Before class students should come up with at least three questions. Email questions to glenda.goodman@usc.edu at least one hour before class. We will use these questions as the basis of our in-class discussion. Additionally, there are a few times in the semester when students are expected to do work in Special Collections during the week between class meetings. Those weeks are indicated on the syllabus. Expectations and goals for that work will be covered in class.

There are four written assignments for this class: one short essay, a library guide on music media, one short response paper, and one final project. Information about the assignments is available in the “Schedule and Assignments” section, and each assignment will be discussed in class. Papers should be sent to me as email attachments by 5pm on the day they are due. Paper grades will be lowered one level for each day they are late (e.g., a grade of B becomes a B- if one day late, a C+ if two days late, etc.).

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- participation 30%
- 5-page essay, due Sept. 21 15%
- library guide, due Oct. 5 10%
- 3-page response paper, due Oct. 27 5%
- 15-page final project, due Dec. 12 40%
 - 10% of final project grade is based on the in-class presentation Dec. 4

Schedule and Assignments

August 28: *Tangible and Ephemeral: Music Media and Material Culture*

Readings:

Adrienne LaFrance, “The Machine That’s Saving the History of Recorded Sound,” *The Atlantic*, June 13, 2014

Alex Ross, “The Record Effect,” *The New Yorker*, June 6, 2005

Giorgio Riello, “Things That Shape History: Material Culture and Historical Narratives,” *History and Material Culture* (2009), 24-46

*Register to use Special Collections during the next week before the Sept. 4 class:

http://www.usc.edu/libraries/locations/special_collections/using/first_time.php

September 4: *Early Music Printing and the History of the Book*

Class meets in VPD LL101B, goes together to Special Collections (DML 206)

Readings:

Richard Crawford, "Introduction" to *American Sacred Music Imprints 1698-1810* (1990), 1-54

Hugh Amory, "Printing and Bookselling In New England, 1638-1713," *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World* (1999), 83-116

Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books?" *Daedalus* 111:3 (1982): 65-83

Optional:

David D. Hall, "The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century," *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, 55-82

*Before doing the readings for the week, spend time learning about music printing technology here: <http://www.musicprintinghistory.org/>

September 11: *Commercial Sheet Music from the 18th Century to Tin Pan Alley*

Class meets at Special Collections (DML 206)

Readings:

Richard Crawford, "Home Music Making and the Publishing Industry" and "From Ramparts to Romance: Parlor Songs, 1800-1865," *America's Musical Life* (2001), 221-271

David Suisman, "Prologue" and "When Songs Became a Business," *Selling Sounds: The Commercial Revolution in American Music* (2009), 1-55

Assignment 1: Sheet music covers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were often quite stunning. What role did illustrations play in popularizing music? Look at several examples from the USC Special Collections' Armond Fields American Theatre Collection and from the websites listed below. Email your five-page essay to me by 5pm Sept. 21.

Online sheet music resources:

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/hasm/>

<http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/sheetmusic/>

<http://library.brown.edu/cds/sheetmusic/afam/>

September 18: *Inscribing Black Music*

Readings:

Dena Epstein, "The Port Royal Experiment," "Slave Songs of the United States: Its Editors," and "Slave Songs of the United States: Its Publication," *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War* (1977), 252-273, 302-342

Ronald Radano, "Denoting Difference: The Writing of the Slave Spirituals," *Critical Inquiry*, 22:3 (1996): 506-544

Eileen Southern, "Slave Advertisements," *Readings in Black America* (1971), 31-35

*Familiarize yourself with *Slave Songs of the United States*, which can be found through the Hathi Trust: <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001291591/Home>

*Also spend time exploring this website on runaway slaves:

<http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/>

Essay due 5pm Sept. 21

September 25: *From Acoustic to Electric: The Birth of Sound Recording Technology*
Class meets at Special Collections (DML 206)

Readings:

- Timothy D. Taylor, Mark Katz, and Tony Grajeda, eds., "Introduction," "Predictions,"
"Phonograph Debates," *Music, Sound, and Technology in America* (2012), 11-47, 113-133
Jonathan Sterne, "Plastic Aurality: Technologies into Media," *The Audible Past: Cultural
Origins of Sound Reproduction* (2003), 179-214
Andre Millard, "The Inventors," "The Machines," and "Competing Technologies,"
America on Record: A History of Recorded Sound, 2nd ed. (2005), 17-36, 115-157

*In class we will work with the following collections:

- Phonograph cylinders collection (collection no. 1008)
Ampico collection of piano rolls (collection no. 0028)

Preparation for Assignment II: During the next week return to Special Collections at least once, spend another hour working with these collections. Select at least ten of each type of item. What do you notice when comparing multiple items? What might we learn from these materials, and what questions do you have about them? Come to class Oct. 2 ready to discuss your findings.

October 2: "Good Music" and Social Values in Early Recordings

Class meets at Special Collections (DML 206)

Readings:

- Millard, "A Phonograph in Every Home" and "The Music," 37-64, 80-95
Mark Katz, "Making America More Musical: The Phonograph and 'Good Music,'" *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (2010), 56-79
William Kenney, "'His Master's Voice': The Victor Talking Machine Company and the Social Reconstruction of the Phonograph," *Recorded Music in American Life: The Phonograph and Popular Memory, 1890-1945* (1999), 44-64
Taylor, Katz, and Grajeda, "The Phonograph in Everyday Life," "Men, Women, and Phonographs," and "Performers and the Phonograph," 48-56, 70-78, 84-94
Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" (1939), *The Collected Essays and Criticism* (1986), 5-22

Listening (I will email you links to these recordings):

- Enrico Caruso, "Vesti la giubba" from Ruggero Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*
Caruso, "Over There" by George M. Cohan
Billy Murray, "Over There" by George M. Cohan

Assignment II: consult the Special Collection guide to using primary sources.

<http://libguides.usc.edu/content.php?pid=22511&sid=5101659> Based on your work with sheet music, piano rolls, wax cylinders, and any other media we have worked with in class create a list of strengths and limitations for four kinds of music media that would be useful for future researchers to know. Email the lists to me by 5pm October 5.

October 9: *Regionalism and the Rise of Record Companies*

Readings:

Millard, "The International Industry of Recorded Sound," 65-79

Kenney, "The Phonograph and the Evolution of 'Foreign' and 'Ethnic' Records," "The Gendered Phonograph," "African American Blues and the Phonograph," "Economics and the Invention of Hillbilly Records in the South," and "A Renewed Flow of Memories," 65-180

*In class we will begin discussing possibilities for your final projects. Think about what you might like to do, and come to class prepared to spend about five minutes telling us your ideas.

October 16: *Radio*

Reading:

Millard, "Swing and the Mass Audience," 176-188

Susan Douglas, "Introduction," "Exploratory Listening in the 1920s," "Tuning in to Jazz," "Radio Comedy and Linguistic Slapstick," "The Invention of the Audience," "The Kids Take Over," and "The FM Revolution," *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination* (1999). 3-21, 55-160, 219-283

Taylor, Katz, and Grajeda, "Introduction," "Radio as Dream, Radio as Technology," and "Music on the Radio," 239-266, 301-324

October 23: *Music and the Moving Image, Part I: Early "Talkies"*

NB: I will not be in class this week. I suggest you all watch *The Jazz Singer* together in our regular class time (one student should check out the DVD from the Lamont Reserves before class). If you decide not to do this, each of you should watch it on your own.

Readings:

Taylor, Katz, and Grajeda, "Introduction," "Technologies of Sight and Sound," "Conducting and Scoring to the Movies," and "Responding to the Talkies," 137-153, 200-211, 226-236

Millard, "Recorded Sound in the Jazz Age," 96-111

Assignment III: write a short (3-page) response to *The Jazz Singer*, incorporating your thoughts from the primary source readings assigned for October 23. Email your response to me by 5pm October 27.

October 30: *Record Revolutions and the Idea of the Album*

Readings:

Millard, "High Fidelity at Last," "The Studio," "Perfecting Studio Recording," and "The Cassette Culture," 189-222, 258-327

Michael Frontani, "Mood of the Sixties," *The Beatles: Image and the Media* (2007), 126-177

November 6: Individual meetings

NB: There is no class meeting this week. Instead we will meet individually to discuss your final projects. Send an abstract of your project to me the day before the meeting.

November 13: *Music and the Moving Image, Part II: Music on TV*

Readings:

Carol Vernallis, "The Aesthetics of Music Video: An Analysis of Madonna's 'Cherish,'" *Experiencing Music Video: Aesthetics and Cultural Context* (2004), 209-235

John Mundy, "Popular Music and the Small Screen" and "I Want My MTV...and My Movies with Music," *Popular Music On Screen: From the Hollywood Musical to Music Video* (1999), 179-247

Judith Tick, ed. "MTV and the Music Video" and "The Turning Points in the Career of Michael Jackson," *Music in the U.S.A.: A Documentary Companion* (2008), 814-825

November 20: *The Digital age and the New Ephemerality*

Readings:

Millard, "Into the Digital Era" and "Consolidation and Connectivity in the Digital Era," 346-407

Carol Vernallis, "Introduction" and "YouTube Aesthetics," *Unruly Media: YouTube, Music Video, and the New Digital Cinema* (2013), 3-29, 127-154

Jon Pareles, "Pay What You Want for This Article," *The New York Times*, Dec. 9, 2007

November 27: Thanksgiving (no class)

December 4: *Preservation and Final Project Presentations*

NB: Each student should prepare a 20-minute presentation based on their final project. The presentation should introduce the class to the main questions, materials, and conclusions you are working with for the final paper.

Reading:

Adrienne LaFrance, "The Library of Congress Wants to Destroy Your Old CDs (for Science)," *The Atlantic* May 13, 2014

Council on Library and Information Resources, "The State of Recorded Sound Preservation in the United States: A National Legacy at Risk in the Digital Age" (2010), 9-137

Kevin Smith, "Planning for Musical Obsolescence," *Scholarly Communications @ Duke*, July 28, 2014

15-page final paper due 5pm December 12