

Dr. Marci Vogel

GESM 110: Seminar in the Arts | Fall, 2022

MIXTAPE: EXPLORATIONS ACROSS GENRE

What defines a mixtape? In short, a mixtape is a compilation of songs curated by an individual on an audio cassette. A great mixtape though is not just a bunch of songs thrown together haphazardly. It's an expression of oneself. It's a gift to a friend going through a tough time. It's an autobiography. It's a love letter. It's a poem set to music. It's a party in the palm of the hand. — Stuyvesant High School student Roxy Perazzo ('23)

I am intrigued with combining the remnant of memories, fragments of relics and ordinary objects, with the components of technology. It's a way of delving into the past and reaching into the future simultaneously. The art itself becomes the bridge. — pioneering Black Arts Movement artist Betye Saar

To enter a new world, and have there freedom of movement and newness. — American Modernist poet William Carlos Williams

We often think of innovation as the province of individual genius, but more often than not, transformative invention arises out of inspired combination: the melding of copper and tin that ushered in the Bronze Age, for example; or the unexpected infusion of mold to a bacteria-ridden Petri dish, leading to the formulation of penicillin. Synchronizing pre-recorded sound with moving image produced the dynamic film industry we know today, and the exuberant dance of Gene Kelly with a studio backlot rainstorm remains one of the most brilliant cinematic collaborations of the twentieth century.

In this interdisciplinary course, we'll explore the creative endeavors of artistic change-makers working across traditional boundaries to widen the field of expressive form. Our point of entry will be literary, with cross-genre blends of poetry and prose; novel mashups of history and memoir; and striking juxtapositions of fact and fiction. Assemblage, bricolage, montage—such composites are often referred to as “hybrid,” but whatever the label, a creative approach that replaces *either/or* with *both/and* is what will serve as our soundtrack throughout the semester.

We'll push play on classic mix-masters Dante, Basho, and Baudelaire, check out 20th century samplings by T.S. Eliot and Jean Toomer, and crank up the volume on tracks by contemporary mixers, such as Claudia Rankine and Anne Carson. We'll listen for Maya Angelou's “space between the notes,” with stops along the route for our own collaborative undertakings, cross-pollinations, and spirited affinities. We'll remain open to wonder, ask questions, and upend all expectation of what belongs with what. Our ultimate destination: to mix-it-up in service to the full range of experience. All majors—especially the undecided—are invited to take part.

BOOKS

- George, Lynell. *a handful of earth a handful of sky: the world of Octavia E. Butler*. Santa Monica: Angel City Press, 2020.
- Mullen, Harryette. *Urban Tumbleweed: Notes from a Tanka Diary*. Minneapolis: Graywolf: 2013.
- Nezhukumathil, Aimee. *World of Wonders: in Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2020.
- Paz, Octavio and Marie José. *Figures & Figurations*. Translated by Eliot Weinberger. New York: New Directions, 2008.
- Ruhl, Sarah. *Eurydice: A Play*. New York: Theater Communications Group, 2021.
- **Please note: You will also select one text from a course bibliography** provided early in the semester. Brief, additional readings will be posted on Blackboard/shared in class.