

# **MU3107**

## **Popular Music Studies**

### **The Anglo-American Tradition 1960-95**

*Aims:* To enable the students to develop an understanding of the role, development and significance of the post-war Anglo-American tradition of popular music within contemporary culture. The main perspective will be of popular music as an expression of mass culture, with an emphasis on the application of sociological ideas to the study of popular music. The module seeks to equip students with listening and analytical skills required to identify and articulate the musical elements that define sound and genre.

#### Initial Course Document:

1. Timetable of lectures and seminars
2. Assignments (with a first list of essay titles) and due dates
3. General Course Bibliography

Matthew Spring (September 2003)

#### Learning Outcomes:

1. An understanding of the historical development of post Anglo-American Popular music tradition.
2. An awareness of the cultural significance of that development.
3. Increased understanding of the contemporary situation in popular music.
4. The ability to analyse the objective musical elements that make up a song or track.
5. The opportunity to present a case study.
6. The opportunity to communicate ideas both musical and cultural.
7. The skills to undertake independent project work.

## Timetable of lectures

**N.B. All lectures sessions are compulsory. Attendance will be monitored and a register taken each session.**

I have suggested readings for each week. All the readings that are highlighted in bold in the list below are in the library on the restricted loan (i.e. cannot be taken out of the library and are held behind the desk, though in several cases there are other copies available that can be taken away). The listening suggestions are very general as the CD collection is not that comprehensive. The listening suggestions are preparatory to the lecture and the readings retrospective. The CDs can be taken out overnight.

### Week 1

29<sup>th</sup> September 15, 2003

1. **The course plan**
2. **Popular music and mass culture theory**
3. **The Popular Music Industry to 1995**
4. **Jazz and Blues – the beginnings**

Readings: **Shuker 'Every I's a winner' (27-50)**

Further reading: Strinati (1-50); Frith (1983), 19-76; Paddison (1996), Chapter 3

Listening: Elvis, Buddy Holly and late 50s/early 60s rock and roll

### Week 2

October 6<sup>th</sup>

1. **American 1950s experience** Elvis and Buddy Holly, Chess Records and Chicago
2. **Analysis methods**  
A/Madonna 'Over and over' Like a Virgin (1984)  
B/The Beatles 'Lucy in the Sky' Sergeant Pepper (1967) analysis from Allen F. Moore (1998) The Beatles: Sergeant Pepper, pp.32-4  
C/Beach Boys 'Good Vibrations' from John Covach (2000), Understanding Rock, Essays in Musical Analysis, pp.42-46.

Reading: **Middleton 'Change gonna come'? Popular music and musicology (101-26)**

Further reading: Strinati (1995) 51-81; Attali (1985, rep.1992), chp.4; Frith (1983), 75-158

Listening: The Beatles (Sergeant Pepper), The Rolling Stones and The Who. Especially Sergeant Pepper

### Week 3

October 13<sup>th</sup>

1. **Youth Culture in the 1960s Britain.**
2. **Case Study 1 – The Civil Rights Movement and the Popular Music Industry**
3. **Hippies, Festivals and Country Rock**

Reading: **Frith (1983) Chapter 3 'Rock and Mass Culture' 39-57**

Further reading: Moore (1998), The Beatles: Sergeant Pepper. Frith (1983), 159-202

Listening: David Bowie, Deep Purple, Black Sabbath.

#### **Week 4**

October 20<sup>th</sup>

- 1. Heavy Metal and Glam Rock in the 1970s**
- 2. Case Study 2: The Velvet Underground and the New York Art Scene**
- 3. Electric Guitar Bands – A Perspective**

Reading: **Weinstein (2000) 'The Beast that Refuses to Die' 11-58**

Further Reading: Friedlander (1996); Pattison, Robert (1987): *The triumph of Vulgarity* (Oxford)

Listening: The Sex Pistols, The Clash- Soft Cell and The Pet Shop Boys

#### **Week 5**

October 27<sup>th</sup>

- 1. Punk and Electro-Pop.**
- 2. Dance, Disco and DJs**
- 3. The Hook**

Reading: Sabin (ed.) 1-30

Friedlander (1996). Street (1986); Hebdige (1979)

Listening: Listening: Madonna and K.D.Lang.

#### **Week 6**

November 3<sup>rd</sup>

- 1. The Pop Vocal**
- 2. The Girl Singer**
- 3. Case Study: Madonna**

Reading: McClary (1991): 'Living to Tell, Madoona's Resurrection of the Fleshly'

*Feminine endings, music, gender, and sexuality* (Minnieapolis: Minnesota University Press), 148-66

Further Reading; Bayton (1998); Garr (1992); Reynolds and Joy (1995)

Listening: Bob Marley, Twinkle Brothers

#### **Week 7: Reading Week – No Session.**

#### **Week 8**

November 17

**1. Case Study Five: Reggae, ska, Rap and the African Diaspora**

**2. Analysis 2**

A/ Madonna 'Open You Heart' from Susan McClary (1991), *Feminine Endings*, pp.158-62

B/Beatles 'From me to you', Richard Middleton (1990) *Studying Popular Music – Tagg's 'hypothetical substitution'* pp. 180-83

Reading: **Brewster and Broughton (1999), Reggae 104-117**

Reading: Oliver (1990): *Black Music in Britain* (Open Univ)

Listening: Listening: Prince, George Michael, Euythmics

## **Week 9**

**November 24<sup>th</sup>**

- 1. The eighties global icons**
- 2. The Influence of technology**

**Reading: Shuker (2001), chapter 3 (51-66)**

Reading: Frith (1988) Music for Pleasure Part VI,

Listening: Chemical Brothers

## **Week 10**

December 1

- 1. The nineties - Girl Bands and Boy Bands**
- 2. Ecstasy, Rave culture and the anarchy of subcultures**

Reading: Reynolds (1998) 'fight for your right to party' (165-180)

Reading: Regan, (1998): Producing Pop (Open Univ)

Listening: Paul Simon's Gracelands; Yousuf N'dour

## **Week 11**

December 8

- 1. The Globalisation of pop music and MTV.**
- 2. World Music and Crossovers**

Reading: Born and Hesmondhalgh (2000) in Simon Frith 'The Discourse of World Music' (305-322)

Reading: Taylor (1997), 1-38; Barret (1996): The Global Jukebox (London)

Listening: Hear Say

## **Week 12**

January 5th

- 1. Towards an aesthetics and an analytical framework for popular music**
- 2. The Death of 'Pop' Music in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?**

Reading: Middleton (1990), Chapter 6 (172-244)

Further Reading: Frith, Simon (1996): Towards a Popular Aesthetic (269-278)

### **3. Assignments and due dates**

**Two pieces of work are required:**

**One artist study 50% - 3,000 words**

**One essay 50% - 2,000 words**

Due Date for both pieces of work – 11.00 am Monday January 19th

Cut Off date (max 40%): January 26th

1 Essay (c.2,000 words)

Essay Titles. If you wish to formulate your own title this can only be done in consultation with me. The

essay subject should be one of those below or a title of the student's own choice, but submitted in advance, and agreed by the lecturer. Students will be expected to show skills of independent investigation and research, of musical analysis, as well as communication skills. While concentrating on a specific topic it will be in the context of a general understanding of the history and development of post 1952 popular music.

1. Can Adorno's notion of diachronic standardisation be usefully applied to pop music since the sixties? Assess the merits and demerits of this approach, citing plentiful musical examples.
2. Attali's book *Noise* is based on the idea that the relationship between noise and order in a piece or repertory indicates much about how the society that produced this music channels violence. Discuss this statement in relationship to Western popular music of the 60s and 70s.
3. Outline the ways that technological developments in popular music since the late 80s have impacted on the creative methods and performance styles of Western Popular music.
4. Give a critique of the analytical approaches that have been applied to Popular music. Give an assessment of their validity in each case.
5. Discuss the role of the girl singer as rebel in the career of successful pop artists since the 70s.
6. Have pop artists led the debate on issues of sexuality and gender that are current in society as a whole, or do they merely reflect them? Discuss with reference to the music of a chosen number of representative artists.
7. Rave could never have happened without Ecstasy. Discuss the importance of ecstasy drugs culture on the rave scene of the late 80s and early 90s. Show how it effected the music and performance events of the time.
8. How has black music in Britain reflected the social conditions of black youth in Britain since the 80s?
9. Trace the rise and fall of punk. Why did it happen and what was its social significance?
10. To what extent has British musical fashion been influenced by white imitations of black cultural modes of expression?
11. How has popular music been influenced by the belief that it is an art form?
  12. Trace the developments in UK dance music since the introduction of the Criminal Justice Bill to clamp down on outdoor dance events. To what extent did that piece of legislation influence and affect developments in dance music.
  13. Has the notion of a politically engaged rock/popular music ever been anything other than a clever marketing strategy?
  14. Should rap be described primarily as poetry or music?
  15. Has the role of women performers in rock/pop changed significantly since 1977?

## 2. Artist Study (50%)

A written study of an artist, or artists, given in the form of a report with a clear statement of aims and objectives, and submitted with a clearly articulated plan and supporting material as appendices. The main body of the study should not exceed 3,000 words but extra material can be given in appendices. The study needs to be more than a chronological account of a popular music act and needs to be aware of simply transmitting positive publicity surrounding the subject – particularly that from Internet sites. The greater social context needs to be taken into account and an in-depth understanding of the music should be demonstrated in the work. Musical material (in any form of notation or recorded) can be incorporated in any form, but must be discussed and relevant to the study as a whole to be included. The student should demonstrate good written communication skills, a clear and articulated methodology, independent research and investigation skills and skills in analysing, understanding and articulating all the constituent musical elements.

## 4. General Course Bibliography and Discography

### Key Texts

Frith, Simon & Straw, Will (ed). (2001) *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock* (CUP)  
Larkin, Colin (ed). (1998) *Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, Palgrave (formally Macmillan Press)  
Middleton, Richard (1990) *Studying Popular Music* (Open U.P)  
Covach, John & Boone, Graeme (ed), (1998) *Understanding Rock* (Oxford U.P)  
Shuker, Roy (2001) *Understanding Popular Music* (Routledge, London, second edition)

### 1960s and The Beatles:

Moore, Allen F. (1998): *The Beatles: Sergeant Pepper* (Cambridge, CUP)  
Mellor, Wilfred (1973); *The Twilight of the Gods* (London)

### Feminist/Gender Issues:

Bayton, Mavis (1998): *Frock Rock* (Oxford, OUP)  
Garr, Gillian, G (1992): *She's a Rebel* (Washington)  
McClary, Susan (1991): *Feminine endings, music, gender, and sexuality* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press)  
Reynolds, Simon and Press, Joy (1995): *The Sex Revolts: Gender, Rebellion and Rock'n'roll* (London, Serpent's Tail)

### Rock/Pop in General:

Belz, Carl (1972): *The Story of Rock* (Oxford, OUP)  
Fletcher, Peter (1981): *Roll over Rock* (Great Yarmouth)  
Regan, Keith (1998): *Producing Pop* (Open University, Milton Keynes)

### Methodologies:

Cavache, John & Boone, Graeme N.: *Understanding Rock* (Oxford, OUP)  
Frith, Simon and Goodwin, Andrew: *On Record, rock, pop and the written word* (London and New York, Routledge)  
Frith, Simon (1988): *Music for Pleasure* (Oxford, Blackwells)  
Bradley, Dick (1992): *Understanding Rock and Roll* (Open University, Milton Keynes)  
Middleton, Richard (1990): *Studying Popular Music* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes)

#### Adorno and Mass Culture:

Strinati, Dominic (1995): *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture* (London and New York, Routledge,)

Attali, Jacques (1985, rep.1992) *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press)

Paddison, Max (1996): *Adorno, Modernism and Mass culture* (London, Kahn and Averill)

#### Globalisation:

Taylor, Timothy D (1997): *Global Pop* (Routledge, London)

Barret, Robert (1996): *The Global Jukebox* (London)

Born, Georgina and Hesmondhalgh, David (2000): *Western Music and its Others* (California)

#### Sociology of Rock:

Frith, Simon (1976): *The Sociology of Rock* (London, Constable)

(also published as):-

Frith, Simon (1983): *Sound Effects, Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock* (London, Constable)

Lonhurst, Brian (1995): *Popular Music and Society* (Cambridge, CUP)

#### Aesthetics:

Frith, Simon (1996): *Performing Rites* (Oxford, OUPress)

Pattison, Robert (1987): *The Triumph of Vulgarly* (Oxford, OUP)

#### Punk:

Sabin, Roger, ed: *Punk, The Cultural Legacy of Punk* (London, Routledge)

Hebdige, Dick (1979): *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*

Marcus, Greil: *Lipstick Traces*

Colegrave, Stephen & Sullivan, Chris (2001): *Punk* (London, Cassel & Co.)

Heylin, Clinton (1993): *From the Velvets to the Voidoids* (London, Penguin)

Frith, Simon & Horne, Howard, (1987): *Art into Pop*

#### Social History/Politics:

Frith, Simon, ed. (1989) *World Music, Politics and Social Change* (Manchester, Manchester University Press)

Friedlander, Paul (1996): *Rock and Roll: A Social History* (Boulder)

Street, John (1986): *Rebel Rock. The Politics of Popular Music* (Oxford, Blackwells)

Gillet, Charlie (1996): *The Sound of the City*

Walker, Robert (1993): *Running with the Devil* (Wesleyan, Wesleyan University Press)

Oliver, Paul (1990): *Black Music in Britain* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes)

Orma, John (1986): *The Politics of Rock* (Illinois, University Press)