

## **Draft syllabus: Global Popular Music**

### **2 credits (online, asynchronous, taught in English)**

Dr Abigail Wood, Department of Music  
avigail.wood@gmail.com

### **Prerequisites**

None: this course is open to all BA students and does not require musical knowledge.

### **Course description**

We live in an increasingly globalised age, when Internet-based streaming platforms put the sounds of the world at the fingertips of anyone with a smartphone. What lies behind the global success of songs like 'Despacito' and 'Gangnam Style', or artists like Shakira and BTS? Popular music traditions from around the world articulate distinct local music cultures and histories, yet at the same time influence—and are influenced by—global cultural flows, and are inflected by the social, political and economic conditions in which they are made. This course introduces popular music cultures from around the world, via a series of in-depth regional case studies from Nigerian highlife to South Korean K-pop, and from Indian Bollywood to Puerto Rican reggaeton. We will explore the history and key musical features of each style, as well as exploring wider issues in the study of popular music including connections between popular music and colonialism; migration and diaspora; the influence of streaming technologies on music production, distribution, and consumption; fandom; underground/DIY music scenes and the ethics of cultural collaboration and appropriation.

### **Course objectives**

- To develop an understanding of popular music as a global cultural phenomenon.
- To explore the historical, social, and political contexts of popular music from different regions of the world, focusing primarily on music from outside the UK/USA.
- To develop critical listening skills and awareness of core musical features of the musical traditions we study and their cultural significance.
- To become familiar with key issues in the academic study of popular music and global cultural flows.
- To examine the impact of globalization on the production, distribution, and consumption of popular music.

### **Teaching and learning**

The course will be taught online, asynchronously. The course is divided into seven units, each equivalent to 4 academic hours. The teaching materials for each unit will include recorded lectures, guided listening, and extracts from academic literature, supplemented by additional material (for example videos, newspaper articles, interviews with artists) and interactive learning elements. Live office hours will be available.

Outside the allotted class hours, students will be required to read one article/book chapter and to listen to a playlist of 8-10 songs for each two-week unit. Other reading and listening material will be introduced during the learning units.

### **Draft course outline and reading list**

#### **Weeks 1-2: Introduction: Popular music as global culture**

- Course overview: objectives and structure
- Definitions and concepts: What is global popular music?
- Historical overview of the globalization of popular music
- Global technologies and the production, dissemination, and consumption of popular music

*Theoretical approaches to global flows: global, local, cosmopolitan*

Regev, M. (2019). Musical Cosmopolitanism, Bodies and Aesthetic Cultures. *Roads to Music Sociology*, 79-94.

*The impact of global technologies on the production, dissemination, and consumption of popular music*

Bello, P., & Garcia, D. (2021). Cultural Divergence in popular music: the increasing diversity of music consumption on Spotify across countries. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 8(1), 1-8.

Demont-Heinrich, C. (2019). New global music distribution system, same old linguistic hegemony. *Media imperialism: Continuity and change*, 199.

#### **Weeks 3-4: Regional Focus: Africa**

*Music and social change: Ghanaian Highlife*

Collins, J. (1989). The early history of West African highlife music. *Popular Music*, 8(3), 221-230.

Van der Geest, S., & Asante-Darko, N. K. (1982). The political meaning of Highlife songs in Ghana. *African Studies Review*, 25(1), 27-35.

*Music and diaspora: Nigerian Afrobeats*

Krings, M., & Simmert, T. (2020). African Popular Culture Enters the Global Mainstream. *Current History*, 119(817), 182-187.

Adeniyi, E. (2022). Nigerian Afrobeats, the Irony of Belonging and Here–Elsewhere Dialectics. *Communicatio*, 48(1), 66-101.

Video: Afrobeats: <https://youtu.be/RzT-NqqazDw?si=q1DV4xnuAZp1CZhl>

## **Weeks 5-6: Regional Focus: Latin America**

*Latin pop from local to global: salsa, samba and reggaeton*

Waxer, L. (Ed.). (2002). *Situating salsa: global markets and local meanings in Latin popular music*. Psychology Press.

Messeder, G. (2019). Performing Samba in Beirut: Citizenship, Precarity and the Lebanese State. *Music and Arts in Action*, 7(1), 11-27.

Rivera, R. Z., Marshall, W., Hernandez, D. P., Radano, R., & Kun, J. (Eds.). (2020). *Reggaeton*. Duke University Press.

## **Weeks 7-8: Regional Focus: South and East Asia**

*Soundscapes of Bollywood*

Morcom, A. (2001). An understanding between Bollywood and Hollywood? The meaning of Hollywood-style music in Hindi films. *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 10(1), 63-84.

Mukherjee, M. (2012). The architecture of songs and music: soundmarks of Bollywood, a popular form and its emergent texts. *Screen Sound Journal*, 3, 9-34.

*K-pop and fandom*

Fuhr, M. (2015). *Globalization and popular music in South Korea: Sounding out K-pop*. Routledge.

Jung, S. (2012). Fan activism, cybervigilantism, and Othering mechanisms in K-pop fandom. *Transformative Works and Cultures*, 10(0).

## **Weeks 9-10: Regional Focus: Middle East**

*Egypt as a centre for popular music*

Danielson, V. (1996). New nightingales of the Nile: popular music in Egypt since the 1970s. *Popular Music*, 15(3), 299-312.

Lohman, L. (2013). *Umm Kulthum: Artistic Agency and the Shaping of an Arab Legend, 1967–2007*. Wesleyan University Press.

*Underground and DIY scenes in Iran*

Golpushnezhad, E. (2018). Untold stories of DIY/underground Iranian rap culture: the legitimization of Iranian hip-hop and the loss of radical potential. *Cultural Sociology*, 12(2), 260-275.

Golpushnezhad, E. (2023). From the left to the right, from the fringe to the centre: The trajectories of Iran's DIY hip-hop culture. *DIY, Alternative Cultures & Society*, 1(3), 227-241.

Nooshin, L. (2017). Whose liberation? Iranian popular music and the fetishization of resistance. *Popular Communication*, 15(3), 163-191.

### **Weeks 11-12: Regional Focus: Europe**

#### *The Eurovision Song Contest*

Bohlman, P. V. (2010). *Focus: Music, Nationalism, and the Making of a New Europe*. Routledge.

Tragaki, D. (Ed.). (2013). *Empire of song: Europe and nation in the Eurovision Song Contest*. Scarecrow Press.

#### *Gender and Europop*

Jamieson, D. (2007). Marketing androgyny: the evolution of the Backstreet Boys. *Popular Music*, 26(2), 245-258.

Wandler, H. (2020). How Munich and Frankfurt Brought (Electronic) Dance Music to the Top of the International Charts with Eurodisco and Eurodance—and Why Germany Was Not Involved. In *Made in Germany* (pp. 175-183). Routledge.

### **Weeks 13-14: “World music” or “global pop”: transcultural collaborations and/or cultural appropriation in popular music**

Brown, M. F. (1998). Can culture be copyrighted?. *Current anthropology*, 39(2), 193-222.

Meintjes, L. (1990). Paul Simon's Graceland, South Africa, and the mediation of musical meaning. *Ethnomusicology*, 34(1), 37-73.

Feld, S. (1996). pygmy POP A Genealogy of Schizophonic Mimesis. *Yearbook for traditional music*, 28, 1-35.

Webster-Kogen, I. (2014). Song Style as Strategy: Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Citizenship in The Idan Raichel Project's Ethiopian-influenced Songs. In *Ethnomusicology Forum* (Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 27-48). Routledge.

### **Assessment**

- Online quizzes: 30%

- There will be 7 online quizzes during the course summarizing the material covered in each learning unit; the student's best 6 scores will form part of the final grade)
- Final assignment: 70%
  - For the final assignment, students will choose one of the topics covered in the course, and will prepare EITHER a written essay or a recorded podcast episode. Topics and suggested reading will be provided to students; the assignment should discuss at least three articles and three songs in detail.