

Socialist Musical Imaginaries — MUS224

Cross listed: Anthropology, Global & International Studies, Russian & Eurasian Studies

Mondays/Wednesdays 10:10-11:30

Blum N210

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2-4



COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is the relationship between musical culture and political ideology? Taking examples from China, Cuba, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, this course surveys the cultural policies of socialist states and their effects on the lives, listening habits, and creative output of musicians and music consumers. From the politics of Azeri opera, to the subversive sounds of Siberian punk, to the performance of masculinity in Chinese and Cuban pop music, we will investigate how political ideologies generated state support for certain kinds of music while suppressing other forms of unofficial, underground and protest music. Students will develop an understanding of how socialist cultural policy models in diverse regions of the world have understood the uses and the threats posed by musical culture in daily and symbolic life. Furthermore, we will evaluate what happens when the ideological imperatives of a regime transform, fade away, or are suddenly replaced with a new political ideology. Readings include historical, anthropological, and musicological texts that examine the relationship of musical sound to publics, counterpublics and states. Students do not need to read musical notation to take this class.

MATERIALS

REQUIRED TEXTS **Available for purchase at the Bard College bookstore.*

- Lau, Frederick. 2008. *Music in China: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Moore, Robin D. 2006. *Music & Revolution: Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press and Center for Black Music Research.
- **Recommended, but optional:** Yurchak, Alexei. 2005. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- All other readings are available on the Moodle. Please print and bring to class.

COURSE BLOG & MOODLE

- You must log into the [Course Blog](https://courseblogs.bard.edu/mus224s16/) with your Bard credentials ASAP:
<https://courseblogs.bard.edu/mus224s16/>
- Register on [Moodle](https://moodle2.bard.edu/course/view.php?id=628): <https://moodle2.bard.edu/course/view.php?id=628>
**Moodle key: punkS16

Each week, one or two students from the class will be assigned to post a report on the week's class-related events, readings and in-class discussions. The report should be two to three paragraphs long. It should summarize the readings done for the week, raise unresolved questions, and, when possible, provide relevant outside information. You may wish to include links or images. The weekly report should be posted **no later than Wednesday by 9 PM**. Students not assigned to post a report that week will write with brief comments that critique, praise and extend the weekly report. These comments should be posted **no later than Thursday by 9 PM**.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Attendance & Participation	25%
Course Blog Writing	10%
Tests #1-3 (<i>15% each</i>)	45%
Lecture/Event Responses	5%
Final Paper	15%

Your attendance and participation in this course is critical. You are allowed up to two absences for any reason. After that, I reserve the right to lower your grade. Timeliness is also very important: two late arrivals equals one absence. In-class assignments cannot be made up. If you miss class, you are responsible for whatever we covered during our meeting.

You will have three tests throughout the course of the semester—one at the end of each unit, as marked in the syllabus.

You are expected to attend *at least* three events outside of class this semester. I will announce lectures, concerts and workshops in class and through email as they arise. For each event that you attend, you should write a one-page, single-spaced response paper. Additional responses will count as extra credit.

Your **final paper** should be 7-10 pages in length, double-spaced. It should provide a deep analysis of one musical piece, style, or social movement related to the class topic. Your paper should include at least three scholarly sources beyond the course readings, and should develop an ethnomusicological argument or stance with regard to the topic of your choosing (i.e., thematizing gender and performance, violence, power, economics, cultural politics, spirituality, tradition, representation, etc.)

PARTICIPATION RUBRIC

This class will benefit greatly from your thoughtful, sustained and enthusiastic participation. To be optimally prepared, readings and other assignments should be given sufficient time. On average, you have 35-50 pages of reading per class meeting; please plan accordingly.

“Participation” comprises 25% of your final grade and includes contributing your voice to class discussion, and also listening and responding to your peers to enhance class discussions. **Please come to class prepared to pose at least one discussion question based on the day’s readings.** The following is a rubric that outlines how participation will be graded:

A: You contribute to nearly every class meeting, raising interesting questions or problems that demonstrate your deep engagement with the readings and assignments. You are able to respond to the comments of others and contribute to the flow of discussion. Without your participation, our discussion would be substantially less productive.

B: You contribute sometimes, with comments that demonstrate good preparation. You are able to respond to the comments of others and contribute to the flow of discussion. Without your participation, our discussion would be less productive.

C: You contribute rarely, offering comments that demonstrate some preparation. You rarely respond to the comments of others and only occasionally contribute to the flow of discussion. Without your participation, our discussion would be about the same.

D: You contribute very rarely or not at all, making it difficult to evaluate your preparedness. Without your participation, our discussion would be unchanged.

Also D: You contribute to discussions but your comments demonstrate unsatisfactory preparation and do not enhance the flow of conversation. Without your participation, our discussion would be improved.

IN-CLASS TECHNOLOGY PROTOCOLS

Please bring your class notebook and a writing implement to every class. Cherish class meetings as a protected space: eighty minutes free from social media and online shoe shopping. If you text, tweet, update your status, or do anything besides give your attention to the class in my classroom, you will be excused and counted as absent for that day.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I take plagiarism very seriously. When in doubt, cite. If you paraphrase, cite. We will cover some of the basics of how to cite in class. If specific questions about attribution of ideas or intellectual property arise, please bring your questions to me or raise them in class.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

n.b. The following plan is subject to change. Please consult the Moodle for final decisions on readings, assignments and deadlines.

ONE: WHAT WAS SOCIALISM...?

2/1 Introduction: Engineering Human Souls

- Zhdanov, [excerpt](#) from 1934 speech defining “Socialist Realism”
- In-class: excerpts from *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels) and *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Taylor)

2/3 Marxism & Music

- Moore, “Introduction: Music and the Arts in Socialist Cuba,” pp. 1-25.
- Zemtsovsky, “Musicological Memoirs on Marxism,” pp. 167-189.

UNIT ONE: THE SOVIET UNION

TWO: MAKING MARXIST-LENINIST MUSIC

2/8 **Inventing Soviet Socialist Music: the 1920s**

- Excerpts from Frolova-Walker and Walker, *Music and Soviet Power, 1917-1932*
 - “Preface” (ix-xix)
 - “Art and the Proletariat” (21-22)
 - “Musical Responses” (32-33)
 - “A Letter from Komsomol Members...” (175-178)
 - “Bartok and the Problem of Folk Music” (230-237)
 - “The Rules Change” (314-323)
 - “On the Restructuring...” (324-325)
 - “On the Music Front” (326-327)

2/10 **“National in Form, Socialist in Content”**

- Frolova-Walker, “National in Form, Socialist in Content”: Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics,” pp. 331-337
- Levin, “Making Marxist-Leninist Music in Uzbekistan,” pp. 190-203.

THREE: SOCIALIST REALISM IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

2/15 **The Art of Fear**

- Anon., “[Chaos Instead of Music](#),” *Pravda*, January 28, 1936.
- Ross, “The Art of Fear: Music in Stalin’s Russia,” pp. 215-259.
- Werth, “When the ‘Formalists’ were ‘Genuises,’” pp. 17-23.

2/17 **Musicologists on Trial**

- Werth, “The Arbiter of the Arts,” “Zhdanov meets the Musicians” and the “Conference of Musicians at the Central Committee of All-Union Communist Party Moscow: January 1948,” pp. 35-103.
- * In-class excerpts of *Testimony*

FOUR: SOVIET UNDERGROUND

2/22 **Sonic Samizdat**

- Daughtry, J. Martin. 2009. “Sonic Samizdat’: Situating Unofficial Recording in the Post-Stalinist Soviet Union.” *Poetics Today* no. 30 (1): 27-65.

2/24 **Imagining the West**

- In-class screening of *East Side Story*
- For fun: Hetko, “[The Soviet-Era Subculture Devoted to Hating David Bowie](#)” on *Slate* magazine

FIVE: ROCKING THE STATE

2/29 **Rock on Bones**

- Yurchak, Alexei. “Imaginary West” and “True Colors of Communism: King Crimson, Deep Purple, Pink Floyd,” pp. 158-237.
- **Listen:** “[Bones and Grooves: The Weird Secret History of Soviet X-Ray Music](#),” NPR’s *All Things Considered*

3/2 Soviet Punk

- Steinholt, "Siberian punk shall emerge here: Egor Letov and Grazhdanskaia Oborona," pp. 401-415.
- Zhuk, TBD
- **Listen:** "[How Rock and Roll Brought the Soviet Union Down](#)," PRI's *The World*

SIX: ALL THAT IS SOLID MELTS INTO AIR

3/7 From Late to Post-Soviet

- Wanner, "Nationalism on Stage: Music and Change in Soviet Ukraine," pp. 136-155.
- Yurchak, "Gagarin and the Rave Kids: Transforming Power, Identity, and Aesthetics in the Post-Soviet Night Life," pp. 76-109.

3/9 *Exam on USSR*****

UNIT TWO: CHINA

SEVEN: MAO MEETS MARX AND LENIN

3/14 Making People's Music

- Lau, "Music of the People" (ch. 1), pp. 1-27.

3/16 Elevating the Folk

- Lau, "Constructing National Music" (ch. 2), pp. 30-55
- Mu, "Academic Ignorance or Political Taboo? Some Issues in China's Study of its Folk Song Culture," pp. 303-320.

*** Screening of *Farewell My Concubine* in Weis Cinema, time & place tbd.**

EIGHT: SPRING RECESS!

NINE: INVENTING CHINESE REVOLUTIONARY MUSIC

3/28 Symbolic Localities

- Lau, "Regional Musics with the National Soundscape" (ch. 3), pp. 59-85
- Jones, "Mass Music and the Politics of Phonographic Realism," pp. 103-136.

3/30 The East is Red

- Lau, "Musical Interfaces between East and West" (ch. 4), pp. 86-112
- Lee, "The 'East is Red' Goes Pop: Commodification, Hybridity and Nationalism in Chinese Popular Song," pp. 95-110.

TEN: MUSIC AS PROPAGANDA

4/4 Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

- Lau, "Music and Ideology" (ch. 5) and 6, pp. 117-139
- Perris, "Music as Propaganda: Art at the Command of Doctrine in the People's Republic of China," pp. 1-28.

4/6 Compliant Performers, Subversive Performance?

- Baranovitch, Nimrod. "Compliance, Autonomy, and Resistance of a "State Artist," pp. 173-212.

ELEVEN: WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

4/11 ***Exam on China***

UNIT THREE: CUBA

4/13 Revolución Cubana

- Moore, “Revelry and Revolution” and “Music and Social Change in the First Years,” pp. 26-79.
- **Listen:** “Cuban Rock and the Revolution” parts [one](#) and [two](#), NPR Music, *Alt.Latino*

*** Tuesday, 4/12 at 5 PM: Alexandra Vasquez lecture

TWELVE: INSITUATIONALIZING CUBAN SOCIALISM

4/18 Amo Esta Isla!

- Moore, “Artistic Institutions, Initiatives, and Policies” and “Dance Music and the Politics of Fun,” pp 80-134.

4/20 Canción Protesta

- Moore, “Transformations in *Nueva Trova*” and “Afro-Cuban Folklore in a Raceless Society,” pp. 135-196.

THIRTEEN: MUSIC & IDEOLOGICAL CRISIS

4/25 Socialist Santería

- Moore, “*Ay, Dios Ampárame*” and “Music and Ideological Crisis,” pp. 197-250.

4/27 Cold War Kids

- Moore, “Conclusion: Musical Politics into the New Millenium,” pp. 251-264.
- Vasquez, “Cold War Kids in Concert,” pp. 203-234.

FOURTEEN: THE SOUNDS OF LATE CUBAN SOCIALISM

5/2 Advising Day. No class.

5/4 Resistance or Compliance?

- Baker, “Cuba Rebelión: Underground Music in Havana,” pp. 1-38.
- Astley, “Porno Para Ricardo,” pp. 455-472

FIFTEEN: EAST OF HAVANA

5/9 *East of Havana* film – in-class screening

5/11 ***Exam on Cuba***

SIXTEEN.

5/16 ...And What Comes Next?

- Miller and Yúdice, “Command Cultures and the Postcolonial,” pp. 107-145.

5/18 Final Papers Due by noon to msonevyt@bard.edu

REFERENCES

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