

MUS112: Music of the World, Autumn 2004
Music Department, University of Sheffield
Dr. Anthony McCann
Email: a.t.mccann@NOSPAMsheffield.ac.uk, Tel: 0114 2220496
Class time: 2.10-3pm Fridays
Office hours Monday 1-2pm, Tuesday 11am-12pm.

Course Website: <http://www.beyondthecommons.com/courses.html>

Level One 10 credits

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1: Non-assessed "thought piece" (due in class, week 5)

You are encouraged to undertake one piece of work, no less than 500 and no more than 750 words long, relating to themes of the course. The piece may be presented in any literary or artistic style, and students are encouraged to imaginatively explore format options. Please bring it along to class in week 5, where you will present your piece to a work-group in class, and explain the thought processes you went through to come up with it. Performance pieces will be presented to the class. See the "thought piece guidelines" on the website for further information.

Assignment 2: 1000 word book response essay (due 10am, Friday of Week 12)

Read an ethnography of your own choosing from the reading list provided (see website). Please do not leave this to the last minute as the book you wish to review may not be available - library resources are very much in demand nearer the end of term. Please don't keep the books out for too long – other people use them too. Review the book, giving particular attention to the following points:

1. summarise the contents and principal arguments of the book. Remember that content includes style, approach, and subject matter.
2. reflect on the approach of the book using your existing experience and other pertinent items (including course materials). If you can find them, it might be helpful to consult other reviews of the book concerned.
3. open out the review by relating the subject matter of the book to one or more issues raised through your reading, discussion, and personal experience.

The final review is to be submitted double-spaced and word-processed, with full citational details for all references. Marks may be lost for poor presentation, incorrect spellings, faulty grammar, etc.. Short quotations from the book are placed in inverted commas, while longer quotations (40 words or more) are better laid out as single-spaced, indented paragraphs. NOTE WELL: Over-quoting is not a helpful way to reach 2,500 words and may make me frown and scrunch up my nose, something best to be avoided (the worst I ever received was 70% of a paper constituted by four quotations! They failed.).

Assignment 3: Essay Question (due January, 2005, date to be confirmed).

Write around 2,500 words (excluding notes, references, etc.) on a subject of your choosing relevant to the course “Music of the World”, in consultation with myself. An outline of this essay (250 words) is to be submitted at your second tutorial.

OR

Write around 2,500 words on **one** of the following questions:

1. “In the summer of 1987, a series of meetings took place in an upstairs room of a North London pub, the Empress of Russia. Present were about 25 representatives of independent record companies, concert promoters, broadcasters and other individuals active in the propagation in Britain of music from around the world. The objective was to discuss details of a modest promotional campaign for the autumn, and to boost sales of the increasing numbers of records being issued, as the boom in interest in African music continued and extended to other parts of the world. One of the obstacles to persuading record shops to stock much of the new international product was reported to be the lack of an identifying category to describe it, record shop managers didn’t know whether to call it ‘ethnic’, ‘folk’, ‘international’, or some other equivalent, and were inclined in the absence of an appropriate niche in their racks simply to reject it. It was decided, as part of a month-long promotion that October, to create such a tag and attempt to spread its use via one or two music press adverts, a cassette compilation of music on the various labels involved in the campaign, and the distribution to record shops of ‘browser cards’ bearing the new appellation, to be placed in the sections it was hoped they would now create in their racks. After a good deal of discussion the term chosen was ‘World Music’, other contenders such as ‘Tropical Music’ being judged too narrow of scope. ... Within months the term was cropping up in the British press, within a year it had crossed the Channel and was rivalling the existing French phrase ‘sono mondiale’, coined three years earlier by the fashionable Paris glossy *Actuel* and its broadcasting subsidiary Radio Nova, and within three years it was in regular mainstream music industry use in Britain, the United States and northern Europe. This may be regrettable for those people, including myself, who dislike the term for its combination of a meaninglessly wide literal field of reference, with a capricious and subjective actual application, but it is also understandable. No better short phrase has yet been proposed, and thus the term World Music has taken on quite a sturdy life of its own, which is one of the reasons it forms the title of this book. The clinching reason is its nearest rival. The Virgin Directory of World Popular & Roots Music From Outside The Anglo-American Mainstream is somewhat lacking in *élan*. It is also still lacking in precision” (Philip Sweeney, *Virgin Directory of World Music* (Virgin, 1991), ix). Discuss the issues raised in this passage critically in relation to themes raised in class.

2. Choose a sound recording that you passionately dislike. To the best of your ability, undertake a socio-cultural analysis of the recording, and undertake a critical analysis of your reaction to it, before, during, and at the end of this piece of work. Then, choose a sound recording that would normally strike you as “exotic”, and about which you know little or nothing. To the best of your ability, using your text-book and other sources, undertake a socio-cultural analysis of the recording, and undertake a critical analysis of your reaction to it, before, during, and at the end of this piece of work. Compare your experience undertaking an analysis of both.

3. You have been hired to produce a World Music festival. Bearing in mind some of the representational and ethical issues that have been raised in class, describe and justify the rationale for your festival, and discuss your criteria for act selection, your marketing strategies, and your guiding principles for the public relations team.

4. Approach someone you know who is skilled at playing an instrument or singing, whether they do so casually or professionally, and ask them if they would consent to be interviewed for a class assignment in ethnomusicology. Use this interview as the basis for an analysis of some of the themes, issues, or questions raised in class.
5. You have been contractually obligated to design and teach an undergraduate Music of the World course to non-music students. Outline your course rationale, discuss how it might relate to the expectations of students, and discuss some of the challenges that you think you might face in teaching such a course.
6. “The world of world music has no boundaries, therefore access to world music is open to all. There’s ample justification to call just about anything world music” (Philip Bohlman in *World Music: a very short introduction* (Oxford, 2003), i). Undertake a critical analysis of this statement in relation to themes raised in class.
7. Using five websites as evidence, critically analyze some of the ways which people talk about and conceptualize “world music” in professional marketing contexts.
8. “If we want to understand the different musics of the world ... we need to understand them on their own terms – that is, as the various music-cultures themselves do. We also need a way to talk about music as a whole without imposing ideas of music inappropriately. To start, we can ask whether there is something about music common to all music-cultures, whether the people in those cultures are aware of it or not” (Jeff Todd Titon in *Worlds of Music* (Schirmer, 2002), 5). Undertake a critical analysis of this statement in relation to themes raised in class.
9. “The whole of world music may come into view because of an ability to focus on and perceive one meaningful part” (Philip Bohlman in *World Music: a very short introduction* (Oxford, 2003), 1). Undertake a critical analysis of this statement in relation to themes raised in class.
10. Attend a local concert or music event and undertake a critical analysis of the event in relation to themes raised in class, particularly with regard to issues of music and identity in Sheffield.

Grading Guidelines

Some general guidelines for students on the criteria I use to award a particular grade for an essay ...

Elements expected of ALL essays:

- Relevance: it directly answers the question;
- Understanding of the topic;
- Evidence of the use of appropriate sources (e.g. books, journals, newspapers etc);
- Organization of material into a coherent structure (e.g. beginning, middle, and end);
- Clear style, including accurate spelling, clear sentence construction, punctuation;
- References;
- Bibliography;
- Legibility. (illegible essays will be returned unmarked);
- Use of your own words, except where directly quoting from another source;
- Language: please avoid racist and sexist language.

These are the minimum criteria for the grading of all pieces of written work.

First class

The student will demonstrate excellence in the use of the following criteria:

- independent thought and critical judgement;
- insightful conceptual analysis;
- critical evaluation of sources and issues;
- clearly developed thought process in response to the question or title of the paper;
- comprehensive understanding of relevant issues;
- use of literature and/or sources in ways that are both relevant and supportive of points made in the paper;
- sources fully and accurately identified;
- *heightened awareness of personal relevance of issues under discussion.*

(in addition to incorporating all the elements expected of all essays)

Fail

There will be an inadequate use of a significant number of the features outlined for a First. Thus, a typical Fail will:

- display independent thought largely in the form of unsubstantiated opinion;
- demonstrate no evidence of critical judgement;
- include unbalanced coverage of relevant issues, with some omitted altogether;
- lack insightful conceptual analysis;
- *show no awareness of personal relevance of issues under discussion* - it could have been written by anybody, with no evidence that *you personally* engaged with the issues under consideration.;
- include attempts to fulfil some of the elements required of all essays, but it will have failed by and large to achieve those aims.

For example:

- there may be an attempt to respond to the question, but the essay as a whole will not answer it;
- exposition will tend to be confused and badly structured;
- it will often be badly written;
- there may be no references;
- evidence of little or no reading around the topic.