Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music, Spring 2017

SEMINAR IN MUSIC THEORY: ANALYSIS OF POPULAR MUSIC MUSIC 7641X/4900

SYLLABUS

Instructor: Tom Johnson Office: Roosevelt Extension, Room 401 Email: johnson.tom.g@gmail.com **Office Hours:** M. 5:30-6:30p or by appointment.

I hereby agree that, in order to take this class, I must read this syllabus and must abide by the information herein. Any information provided on the syllabus is required knowledge for me, the student. I will check the syllabus and schedule before asking the instructor about any due dates, requirements, meeting times, or anything else that is on this syllabus.

Signature:

Description:

Overview of techniques for the analysis of popular music since 1950, including analysis of form, harmony, timbre, rhythm, style and genre. "Popular music" is defined broadly, covering Top 40, hip hop, R&B, soul, blues, rock, disco, indie, metal, and others. Reading and written work will be assigned weekly. The course will culminate in a final analysis project and a conference-style presentation.

Course Goals:

- To gain competency in traditional music theoretical skills for the analysis of popular music.
- To produce a major project on the analysis of a particular track, artist, or repertoire.
- To build skills necessary for public discourse on popular music.

Readings:

I will provide electronic copies of most readings on Blackboard. There will be a few occasions when you'll need to track down an article or two on your own through JSTOR or on Music Theory Online.

Many of our readings will come from this text, which I suggest you purchase:

Mark Spicer and John Covach, eds, Sounding Out Pop: Analytical Essays in Popular Music (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010). ISBN: 978-0-472-03400-0.

Materials:

- ➤ I highly recommend having access to Spotify, where I will create a course playlist folder.
- Audacity: http://www.audacityteam.org/download/
- Audio Timeliner: http://www.singanewsong.org/audiotimeliner/download.html
- Any kind of notation software. Finale Notepad is a decent free option: https://www.finalemusic.com/products/finale-notepad/resources/
- > Students will need access to a computer and their BC Portal for Blackboard.

Grading:

Reading responses and participation: 30%	Traditional Analysis: 10%	
Final Paper: 25%	Revised/Expanded project: 15%	
Final Presentation: 10%	Annotated bibliography assignment: 10%	

Grading Rubric:

Individual grades will be given for the annotated bibliography, the traditional and expanded analyses, and each part of your final project. The general rubric is as follows:

A – Excellent work. B- – Completed work but seriously flawed. C – Incomplete work with many errors. A- – Very good work, cogent arguments.

B+ – Good work, with some gaps in reasoning. N/C – Unacceptable in completeness, scope,

B – Completed work, questionable mastery.

depth.

Attendance:

Attendance at all classes is expected. We only meet 14 times this semester, so your attendance at every session is of the utmost importance. It is also imperative that you are on time to class. Please notify me as soon as possible if you will not be in class.

Integrity:

All assignments, exams, etc., must be done entirely individually unless explicitly stated otherwise. Work submitted as one's own should not be done in collaboration with any other person, nor should it use material borrowed from any other source unless the source is explicitly and properly cited. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating, plagiarism, and unfair advantages, and each student is responsible for avoiding them. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found here:

http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Academic Integrity Policy.pdf If a faculty member—such as myself—suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.

Disability:

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the Center for Student Disability Services, please provide me with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with me as soon as possible.

Course Syllabus Changes

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus as warranted by the progress and needs of the class and the curriculum.

Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music, Spring 2017

MUSIC 7641X/4900 – ANALYSIS OF POPULAR MUSIC

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Date	Subject	Reading	HW DUE	
01. Mon. 01/30	Introduction: Why and how do music scholars study popular music?			
02. Mon. 02/06	Form	• Burns (2002), "Close readings"	Response 1	
		• Biamonte (2011), "Intro"		
		• Covach (2010), "Leiber and Stoller"		
		• Attas (2015), "Form as Process"		
		• optional: Osborn (2013), "Subverting the Verse-Chorus"		
		• optional: Covach (2005), "Form in Rock Music" –		
Mon. 02/13	No Class			
03. <u>Wed</u> . 02/15	Form/narrative	Burns (2010), "Vocal Authority"	Response 2	
		• Neal (2007), "Narrative Paradigms"	Transcription assignment due	
		• Stanyek (2014), "Forum on transcription," 131–137.		
		• optional: Spicer (2004), "(Ac)cumulative Form"		
Sun. 02/19	Last day to drop without a grade of W			
Mon. 02/20	No Class			
04. Mon. 02/27	Harmony	Hanenberg (2016), "Rock Modulation and Narrative"	Bibliography assignment due Response 3	
05. Mon. 03/06	Harmony II	Nobile (2016), "Harmonic Function"	Traditional analysis choice	
		• optional: Burns (2000), "Harmonic and Voice-Leading"	Response 4	
06. Mon. 03/13	Rhythm	• Biamonte (2014), "Formal functions"	Traditional analysis due	
		• Adams (2009), "Metrical Techniques"		
		Bulter (2006), "Unlocking the Groove"		
		• optional: Radiohead articles – Hesselink (2013), "Pyramid		
		Song"; Osborn (2014), "Kid Algebra"		
07. Mon. 03/20	Intertextuality	• Burns, et al. (2015), "Lady Gaga"	Response 5	
		Holm-Hudson (2001), "Sonic Historiography"		

		Leydon (2010), "Recombinant Style Topics"	
		• optional: Spicer (2009), "Strategic Intertextuality"	
		• optional: Lacasse (2000), "Intertextuality, Hypertextuality"	
08. Mon. 03/27	Gender/Sexuality	Johnson-Grau (2002), "Sweet Nothings"	Response 6
		• Hubbs (2015), "Jolene"	
		Hubbs (2007), "I Will Survive"	
		• (optional): McLeod (2002), "Rock and a Hard Place"	
		• (optional): Hubbs (2011), "Redneck Woman"	
		• (recommended): Butler (1988), "Performative Acts"	
09. Mon. 04/03	Race	Hagstrom-Miller (2007), "Segregating Sound" (Intro)	Final project selection
		• Rose (1995), "Never Trust"	
		• Floyd (1997), "The Power of Black Music" (Intro)	
		• (optional): Hagstrom-Miller (2007), "Segregating Sound" (Ch 7)	
		• Floyd (1997), "The Power of Black Music" (Conclusion)	
Mon. 04/10&17			
Wed. 04/19	Course withdrawal period ends. Last day to withdraw from a class with a grade of W		
10. <u>Thu</u> . 04/20	Audio/Visual	Guest: Paula Harper	Revised/Expanded Project Due
		• Cook (1998), "Analysing Musical Multimedia" (Ch 3.1, 4.1)	
		• Kaplan (1987), "Rocking around the Clock" (Ch 1, 5)	
		 Nyong'o (2010), "Lady Gaga's Lesbian Phallus" 	
11. Mon. 04/24	Genre/Style	Brackett (2016), "Intro"	
12. Mon. 05/01	Timbre	Guest: Megan Lavengood	Final project abstract
		• Lavengood (2017), "A New Approach to Timbre" (Ch 5)	
13. Mon. 05/08	Tonality/Summary	Spicer (2017), "Fragile, Emergent, Absent Tonics"	
14. Mon. 05/15	Presentations!		Final project presentations!
Monday. 05/22	FINAL PROJECT DUE BY 3:00PM		

This schedule is subject to change to better suit the needs of the class. I will likely modify it a number of times. Please check Blackboard for updated versions. I will announce most changes in class.

Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music, Spring 2017

ANALYSIS OF POPULAR MUSIC

Tom Johnson

Weekly Bibliography

Week 1 – Introduction:

- Austerlitz, Saul. 2014. "The Pernicious Rise of Poptimism." The Pernicious Rise of Poptimism, April 4. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/06/magazine/the-pernicious-rise-of-poptimism.html
- Covach, John. 1997. "We Won't Get Fooled Again: Rock Music and Musical Analysis." In Theory Only 13 (1-4): 117-42.
- Everett, Walter. 2000. "Confessions from Blueberry Hell, Or, Pitch Can Be a Sticky Substance." In Expression in Pop-Rock Music: A Collection of Critical and Analytical Essays, edited by Walter Everett, 269–345. New York: Garland.
- McClary, Susan, and Robert Walser. 1990. "Start Making Sense! Musicology Wrestles with Rock." In On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word, edited by Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin, 277-92. New York: Pantheon Books.

Week 2 – Form:

- Attas, Robin. 2015. "Form as Process: The Buildup Introduction in Popular Music." Music Theory *Spectrum* 37 (2): 275–96.
- Biamonte, Nicole. 2011. "Introduction." Music Theory Online 17 (3). http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.11.17.3/mto.11.17.3.biamonte.html
- Burns, Lori. 2002. "Close Readings' of Popular Song: Intersections among Socioultural, Musical, and Lyrical Meanings." In Disruptive Divas: Feminism, Identity, and Popular Music, edited by Lori Burns and Mélisse Lafrance, 31–61. New York: Routledge.
- Covach, John. 2005. "Form in Rock Music: A Primer." In Engaging Music: Essays in Music Analysis, edited by Deborah Stein, 65-76. New York: Oxford University Press.
- -. 2010. "Lieber and Stoller, the Coasters, and the 'Dramatic AABA' Form." In Sounding Out Pop: Analytical Essays in Popular Music, edited by John Covach and Mark Spicer, 1–17. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Osborn, Brad. 2013. "Subverting the Verse-Chorus Paradigm: Terminally Climactic Forms in Recent Rock Music." Music Theory Spectrum 35: 23-47.

Week 3 – Form/Narrative:

Burns, Lori. 2010. "Vocal Authority and Listener Engagement: Musical and Narrative Expressive Strategies in the Songs of Female Pop-Rock Artists, 1993-95." In Sounding Out Pop: Analytical Essays in Popular Music, edited by John Covach and Mark Spicer, 154–92. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

- Neal, Jocelyn. 2007. "Narrative Paradigms, Musical Signifiers, and Form as Function in Country Music." Music Theory Spectrum 29 (1): 41–72.
- Spicer, Mark. 2004. "(Ac)cumulative Form in Pop-Rock Music." Twentieth-Century Music 1 (1): 29–64.
- Stanyek, Jason. 2014. "Forum on Transcription." Twentieth-Century Music 11 (1): 101-61.

Week 4/5 – Harmony:

- Biamonte, Nicole. 2010. "Triadic Modal and Pentatonic Patterns in Rock Music." Music Theory *Spectrum* 32 (2): 95–110.
- Capuzzo, Guy. 2004. "Neo-Riemannian Theory and the Analysis of Pop-Rock Music." Music Theory Spectrum 26 (2): 177–200.
- Doll, Christopher. 2007. "Listening to Rock Harmony." PhD Dissertation, New York: Columbia University.
- Everett, Walter. 2009. The Foundations of Rock: From "Blue Suede Shoes" to "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes." New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hanenberg, Scott. 2016. "Rock Modulation and Narrative." Music Theory Online 22 (2).
- Harrison, Daniel. 1997. "After Sundown: The Beach Boys' Experimental Music." In Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis, edited by John Covach and Graeme M. Boone, 33–57. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Moore, Allan F. 2001. Rock: The Primary Text. Burlington: Ashgate.
- Nobile, Drew. 2016. "Harmonic Function in Rock Music: A Syntactical Approach." Journal of Music *Theory* 60 (2): 149–80.
- Temperley, David. 2007. "The Melodic-Harmonic Divorce in Rock." Popular Music 26 (2): 323-42.
- -. 2011. "The Cadential IV in Rock." Music Theory Online 17 (1). http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.11.17.1/mto.11.17.1.temperley.html.

Week 6 – Rhythm:

- Adams, Kyle. 2009. "On the Metrical Techniques of Flow in Rap Music." Music Theory Online 15 (5). http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.09.15.5/mto.09.15.5.adams.html.
- Biamonte, Nicole. 2014. "Formal Functions of Metric Dissonance in Rock Music." Music Theory Online 20 (2). http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.14.20.2/mto.14.20.2.biamonte.html
- Butler, Mark. 2006. Unlocking the Groove: Rhythm, Meter, and Musical Design in Electronic Dance Music. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hesselink, Nathan. 2013. "Radiohead's 'Pyramid Song': Ambiguity, Rhythm, and Participation." Music Theory Online 19 (1).
- Osborn, Brad. 2013. "Subverting the Verse-Chorus Paradigm: Terminally Climactic Forms in Recent Rock Music." Music Theory Spectrum 35: 23-47.

Week 7 – Intertextuality:

- Burns, Lori, Alyssa Woods, and Marc Lafrance. 2014. "The Genealogy of a Song: Lady Gaga's Musical Intertexts on The Fame Monster (2009)." Twentieth-Century Music 12 (1): 3–35.
- Holm-Hudson, Kevin. 2001. "The Future Is Now ... and Then: Sonic Historiography in Post-1960s Rock." Genre 34: 243-65.
- Lacasse, Serge. 2000. "Intertextuality and Hypertextuality in Recorded Popular Music." In The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?, edited by Michael Talbot, 35–58. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Leydon, Rebecca. 2010. "Recombinant Style Topics: The Past and Future of Sampling." In Sounding Out Pop: Analytical Essays in Popular Music, 193–213. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
- Spicer, Mark. 2009. "Strategic Intertextuality in Three of John Lennon's Late Beatles Songs." Gamut 2 (1): 347–75.

Week 8 – Gender and Sexuality:

- Butler, Judith. 1988. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." Theatre Journal 40 (4): 519-31.
- Hubbs, Nadine. 2007. "I Will Survive': Musical Mappings of Queer Social Space in a Disco Anthem." Popular Music 26 (2): 231–44.
- —. 2011. "Redneck Woman' and the Gendered Poetics of Class Rebellion." Southern Cultures 17 (4): 44–70.
- -. 2015. "Jolene,' Genre, and the Everyday Homoerotics of Country Music." Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture 19: 71–76.
- Johnson-Grau, Brenda. 2002. "Sweet Nothings: Presentation of Women Musicians in Pop Journalism." In Pop Music and the Press, edited by Steve Jones, 202–18. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- McLeod, Kembrew. 2002. "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Gender and Rock Criticism." In Pop Music and the Press, edited by Steve Jones, 93–113. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Week 9 – Race

- Floyd, Samuel A. 1997. The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hagstrom Miller, Karl. 2010. Segregating Sound: Inventing Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Rose, Tricia. 1990. "Never Trust a Big Butt and a Smile." Camera Obscura 8 (2 23): 108-31.

Analysis of Pop Mon.6:40-9:10p Roosevelt Extension: 400E

Week 10 – Audio/Visual (Guest: Paula Harper)

Kaplan, E. Ann. 1987. Rocking Around the Clock: Music Television, Post Modernism and Consumer Culture. London: Methuen.

Cook, Nicholas. 1998. Analysing Musical Multimedia. New York: Oxford University Press.

Nyong'o, Tavia. 2010. "Lady Gaga's Lesbian Phallus." Bully Bloggers. March 16.

Week 11 – Genre

Brackett, David. 2016. Categorizing Sound: Genre and Twentieth-Century Popular Music. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 12 – Timbre (Guest: Megan Lavengood)

Lavengood, Megan. 2017. "A New Approach to the Analysis of Timbre." PhD Dissertation, New York: CUNY Graduate Center.

Week 13 – Tonality and Summary

Spicer, Mark. 2017. "Fragile, Emergent, and Absent Tonics in Pop and Rock Songs." Music Theory Online.

FULL CLASS BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Kyle. 2009. "On the Metrical Techniques of Flow in Rap Music." Music Theory Online 15 (5). http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.09.15.5/mto.09.15.5.adams.html.
- Attas, Robin. 2015. "Form as Process: The Buildup Introduction in Popular Music." Music Theory *Spectrum* 37 (2): 275–96.
- Austerlitz, Saul. 2014. "The Pernicious Rise of Poptimism." The Pernicious Rise of Poptimism, April 4. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/06/magazine/the-pernicious-rise-of-poptimism.html.
- Biamonte, Nicole. 2010. "Triadic Modal and Pentatonic Patterns in Rock Music." Music Theory Spectrum 32 (2): 95–110.
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- Brackett, David. 2016. Categorizing Sound: Genre and Twentieth-Century Popular Music. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Burns, Lori. 2002. "Close Readings' of Popular Song: Intersections among Socioultural, Musical, and Lyrical Meanings." In Disruptive Divas: Feminism, Identity, and Popular Music, edited by Lori Burns and Mélisse Lafrance, 31-61. New York: Routledge.

- —. 2010. "Vocal Authority and Listener Engagement: Musical and Narrative Expressive Strategies in the Songs of Female Pop-Rock Artists, 1993-95." In Sounding Out Pop: Analytical Essays in Popular Music, edited by John Covach and Mark Spicer, 154–92. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
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- Butler, Judith. 1988. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." Theatre Journal 40 (4): 519–31.
- Butler, Mark. 2006. Unlocking the Groove: Rhythm, Meter, and Musical Design in Electronic Dance Music. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Capuzzo, Guy. 2004. "Neo-Riemannian Theory and the Analysis of Pop-Rock Music." Music Theory Spectrum 26 (2): 177–200.
- Covach, John. 1997. "We Won't Get Fooled Again: Rock Music and Musical Analysis." In Theory Only 13 (1-4): 117-42.
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- Cook, Nicholas. 1998. Analysing Musical Multimedia. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Doll, Christopher. 2007. "Listening to Rock Harmony." PhD Dissertation, New York: Columbia University.
- Everett, Walter. 2000. "Confessions from Blueberry Hell, Or, Pitch Can Be a Sticky Substance." In Expression in Pop-Rock Music: A Collection of Critical and Analytical Essays, edited by Walter Everett, 269-345. New York: Garland.
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- Floyd, Samuel A. 1997. The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hagstrom Miller, Karl. 2010. Segregating Sound: Inventing Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow. Durham: Duke University Press.
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- Harrison, Daniel. 1997. "After Sundown: The Beach Boys' Experimental Music." In Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis, edited by John Covach and Graeme M. Boone, 33-57. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hesselink, Nathan. 2013. "Radiohead's 'Pyramid Song': Ambiguity, Rhythm, and Participation." Music Theory Online 19 (1). http://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.13.19.1/mto.13.19.1.hesselink.html.
- Holm-Hudson, Kevin. 2001. "The Future Is Now ... and Then: Sonic Historiography in Post-1960s Rock." Genre 34: 243-65.

- Hubbs, Nadine. 2007. "I Will Survive': Musical Mappings of Queer Social Space in a Disco Anthem." Popular Music 26 (2): 231-44.
- -. 2011. "Redneck Woman' and the Gendered Poetics of Class Rebellion." Southern Cultures 17 (4): 44-70.
- -. 2015. "Jolene,' Genre, and the Everyday Homoerotics of Country Music." Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture 19: 71–76.
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- Kaplan, E. Ann. 1987. Rocking Around the Clock: Music Television, Post Modernism and Consumer Culture. London: Methuen.
- Lacasse, Serge. 2000. "Intertextuality and Hypertextuality in Recorded Popular Music." In The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?, edited by Michael Talbot, 35-58. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Lavengood, Megan. 2017. "A New Approach to the Analysis of Timbre." PhD Dissertation, New York: CUNY Graduate Center.
- Leydon, Rebecca. 2010. "Recombinant Style Topics: The Past and Future of Sampling." In Sounding Out Pop: Analytical Essays in Popular Music, 193–213. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- McClary, Susan, and Robert Walser. 1990. "Start Making Sense! Musicology Wrestles with Rock." In On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word, edited by Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin, 277-92. New York: Pantheon Books.
- McLeod, Kembrew. 2002. "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Gender and Rock Criticism." In Pop Music and the Press, edited by Steve Jones, 93–113. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Moore, Allan F. 2001. Rock: The Primary Text. Burlington: Ashgate.
- Neal, Jocelyn. 2007. "Narrative Paradigms, Musical Signifiers, and Form as Function in Country Music." Music Theory Spectrum 29 (1): 41–72.
- Nobile, Drew. 2016. "Harmonic Function in Rock Music: A Syntactical Approach." Journal of Music Theory 60 (2): 149-80.
- Nyong'o, Tavia. 2010. "Lady Gaga's Lesbian Phallus." Bully Bloggers. March 16.
- Osborn, Brad. 2013. "Subverting the Verse-Chorus Paradigm: Terminally Climactic Forms in Recent Rock Music." Music Theory Spectrum 35: 23–47.
- –. 2014. "Kid Algebra: Radiohead's Euclidean and Maximally Even Rhythms." Perspectives of New Music 52 (1): 81–105.
- Rose, Tricia. 1990. "Never Trust a Big Butt and a Smile." Camera Obscura 8 (2 23): 108-31.
- Spicer, Mark. 2004. "(Ac)cumulative Form in Pop-Rock Music." Twentieth-Century Music 1 (1): 29-64.
- ——. 2009. "Strategic Intertextuality in Three of John Lennon's Late Beatles Songs." Gamut 2 (1): 347-75.
- -. 2017. "Fragile, Emergent, and Absent Tonics in Pop and Rock Songs." Music Theory Online. Stanyek, Jason. 2014. "Forum on Transcription." Twentieth-Century Music 11 (1): 101-61.

Tagg, Philip. 1982. "Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice (Revised 2015)." Popular *Music* 2: 37–65.

Temperley, David. 2007. "The Melodic-Harmonic Divorce in Rock." Popular Music 26 (2): 323-42.

2011. "The Cadential IV in Rock." Music Theory Online 17 (1). http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.11.17.1/mto.11.17.1.temperley.html.