

## MDIA 410 Special Topic: Popular Music Studies

### Trimester 1 2012

5 March to 4 July 2012

30 Points

#### TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates: 5 March to 8 June 2012

Mid-trimester break: 6 to 22 April 2012

Study week: 11 to 15 June 2012

#### WITHDRAWAL DATES

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

#### NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Roy Shuker      roy.shuker@vuw.ac.nz      04 463 6821      83 Fairlie Terrace, Room 302

Office Hours:      Tuesday 10.00am – 12.00 noon, or by appointment.

#### CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

##### Lectures

Wednesday      2.10pm – 4.00pm      81 Fairlie Terrace, Room 103

#### COURSE DELIVERY

There will be 11 two-hour-seminars. The class will be conducted, in part, on a discussion basis, and will include the presentation of student seminars (on their major assignment).

## COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All course related information, and any additional information that students may find useful, will be available on the MDIA 410 Blackboard site.

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

## COURSE PRESCRIPTION

The course critically examines, from a sociological point of view, the historical construction and contemporary critical status of selected popular music genres and sub genres. Particular consideration is given to the role of the music press and music critics in shaping the discourse around the construction and status of the selected genres.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The general aim of the course is to critically engage with the discourse around popular music genres, at a level commensurate with graduate study.

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- (1) Identify and critically discuss the nature and influence of selected theoretical paradigms, in relation to debates surrounding the development and contemporary status of selected popular music genres.
- (2) Demonstrate the relative importance of 'history', economics, technology, geographic, and social/cultural factors in the discourse around these.

Primarily through the 'project', students will demonstrate the ability to:

- (3) Articulate a research question and an understanding of relevant methodological/theoretical approaches to it.
- (4) Critically evaluate existing research from an informed perspective;
- (5) Collect, analyse, and organise information and ideas and to convey those ideas clearly and fluently (in written and spoken forms)

## EXPECTED WORKLOAD

This course is worth 30 points. The expectation is that this equates to approximately 15+ hours of work per week, over a twelve-week trimester. Obviously, individual effort will vary, depending on when you have pieces of work due, and the nature of these assessment points.

## READINGS

### Essential texts:

There is no textbook or book of readings; references to essential readings will be given for each class.

### Preliminary recommended reading:

Borthwick, S. and Moy, R. (2004) *Popular Music Genres: An Introduction*, Edinburgh:

Edinburgh University Press.

Fabbri, F. (1999) *Browsing Music Spaces: Categories and the Musical Mind*. Reproduced online by permission of the author at [www.tagg.org](http://www.tagg.org)

Frith, S. (1996) *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music*, Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press. pp.79-95.

Holt, F. (2007) *Genre in Popular Music*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Lena, J. And Peterson, R. (2008) "Classification as Culture: Types and Trajectories of Music Genres", *American Sociological Review*, 73, 5: 697-718.

## ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

The course is internally assessed. There are three written assignments. To pass the course, you must complete all three assignments, and undertake the seminar presentation.

### Assignment 1: Review 1,500 words; 20% DUE: THURSDAY 29 MARCH

Critically assess the article by Kronengold (reference below), in terms of:

- What is its core argument?
- What issues and/or concepts does the author utilize in order to construct their argument?
- What evidence does the author use?
- Is the argument persuasive? If so, why? If not, why not?

The emphasis should be on the fourth question, your evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the article.

Kronengold, C. (2008) "Exchange Theories in Disco, New Wave, and Album-Oriented Rock", *Criticism*, 50, 1: 43-82.

(Relates to course objectives 1 and 2)

**Assignment 2: Essay 2,500 words; 30% DUE FRIDAY 27 APRIL**

“Women (as performers, fans, consumers) and their interests are marginalized by the popular music press”.  
With reference to ONE popular music genre, critically discuss this assertion.

(Your discussion will need to refer to specific examples from relevant publications).

(Relates to course objectives 1, 2 and 5)

---

**Assignment 3: Project, 4,000 word; 50% DUE FRIDAY 8 JUNE**

(Relates particularly to course objectives 3 and 4).

Choose ONE popular music genre from the following list, and examine the role of the music press (as defined in the first class) in shaping changing perceptions of its nature, history and (changing) importance. Your treatment will need to be selective, identifying key contributions to the discourse (and justifying why they are indeed ‘key’).

Genre options:

EDM: electronic dance music

Rap, Hip Hop

Reggae

Indie Rock

World Music

---

**STUDENT SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS**

These presentations are each allocated 20 minutes, and will be held in the final weeks of the course (specific dates are dependent on enrolment numbers). They are to enable you to organize your material and ideas for the written presentation of your project; to clarify the scope of your topic and possible approaches to it; to get feedback on progress, and obtain suggestions of further possible source materials, etc.

- I suggest you leave part of the time for questions/comments.
- You can use whatever mode, etc that you are comfortable with (let me know in advance if you require anything additional to the present equipment in the room).
- This presentation is a compulsory part of the course.

(The seminar relates to course objective 5, although it is **not** assessed).

**Note:** Marks for Honours level assignments and final course grades are not finalised until feedback from the external examiner has been considered. Note also that honours grades gained in individual courses remain provisional until the overall final classification made by the Honours programme examination committee.

### **ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS**

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Programme office, 83 Fairlie Terrace. Remember to fill in your tutor's name.

### **EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES**

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

### **MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

To gain a pass in this course you must:

- Submit the written work specified for this course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work)
- Attend at least 9 of the 11 classes.

### **STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY**

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course (i. e. work that is internally assessed) should be typed or prepared on a computer. Where handwritten work is required you are expected to write clearly. If this is deemed 'illegible', you will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

## WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study).

Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress). Most statutes and policies are available at

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy), except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx) (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcacademic](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic).

School of English, Film, Theatre, & Media Studies  
MEDIA STUDIES PROGRAMME COURSE OUTLINE MDIA 410

**COURSE PROGRAMME**

Week 1    Date        Wednesday 7 March  
Course introduction; scope, requirements, resources.

Week 2    Date        Wednesday 14 March  
Popular music and genre studies; sites of construction (esp. the music press).

Week 3    Date        Wednesday 21 March    Genre, authorship and authenticity: rock and pop.

Week 4    Date        Wednesday 28 March    'Classic Rock' and the Canon.

ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE: THURSDAY 29 MARCH

Week 5    Date        Wednesday 4 April    Genre and gender.

**Mid Trimester Break:**    Friday 6 April to Sunday 22 April 2012

Week 6    Date        ANZAC Day, Wednesday 25 April: NO CLASS  
ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE: FRIDAY 27 APRIL

Week 7    Date        Wednesday 2 May    Genre and crossover.

Week 8    Date        Wednesday 9 May    Genre, location and identity.

Week 9    Date        Wednesday 16 May    Genre and Ethnicity.

Week 10    Date        Wednesday 23 May: Genre and Class.

Week 11    Date        Wednesday 30 May: Student presentations.

Week 12    Date        Wednesday 6 June  
Final considerations: what have we learned?  
ASSIGNMENT 3 PROJECT DUE: FRIDAY 8 JUNE