

MUSIC OF AFRICA: MUET 5050

Syllabus

Course Information:

This course will take a critical approach to the study of musical experience in African cultures. How does music function in everyday life, in ritual and ceremony? When does music happen and for what reasons? What are the social and political horizons of musical events? How has musical experience changed in contemporary life? Not only will we be addressing these questions in our study of particular African music cultures, but we will also be exploring the theoretical underpinnings of how anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have approached the study of African music, and how these various theories and paradigms have affected analysis.

Grade Evaluation:

There are two components to this course, each one of equal importance.

Class participation:

It is expected that you will be prepared to discuss the relevant readings and assignments in class. If you are not in class then you cannot participate; therefore, absences will affect your grade.

As part of class participation, each week a discussion forum will be posted on Blackboard on which you will create a thread with a 200-250 word comment/response to that week's readings or assignments. Included in the comment/response should be at least one question that can be used as a springboard for class discussion. **Responses must be posted by 5:00 p.m. Monday before class.** You are required to read all posts and be prepared to discuss them in class. By participating in the posts you are engaging in an academic dialogue with your colleagues, and simultaneously presenting yourself as a scholar. It is expected that posts, therefore, will be professional in content and presentation. Before posting, act as your own copy editor and read for mistakes. Both content and presentation count toward evaluation.

Final Project

A project of your choice will be due the last day of class before the final. This project has several components:

1. A 15-20 page paper on a subject of your choice. The paper must be in 12-point font, Times New Roman, double-spaced, following The University of Chicago Press formatting style.
2. A 2-page proposal due on October 7. In addition to the 2-page proposal, a minimum of 5 annotated references. Each annotation should summarize the article and its main conclusions (1-2 paragraphs each).

Before proposals may be submitted, it is required to have a consultation with me in order to approve the topic.

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SCHEDULE of CLASSES

(The following is a tentative schedule of class content)

Class Meeting	TOPIC	Reading
Class Meeting 1 8/26	Introduction to class and general overview	Readings #1 (posted on Blackboard)
Class Meeting 2 9/2	African Music: A History	
Class Meeting 3 9/9	Africa and her Drums: Ngoma	<i>Dancing Prophets</i>
Class Meeting 4 9/16		
Class Meeting 5 9/23	Africa and her Drums: Ewe	<i>African Rhythm and African Sensibility</i>
Class Meeting 6 9/30	cont.	
Class Meeting 7 10/7		
Class Meeting 8 10/14	South Africa: Zulu/Venda	
Class Meeting 9 10/21	Guest speaker: Zulu	
Class Meeting 10 10/28	Afrobeat and Juju	

Class Meeting 11 11/4	cont.	
Class Meeting 11 11/11		

Class Meeting 12 11/18	Griots of West Africa: Praise for Patronage	
Class Meeting 13 11/25	Buganda Kingdom	
Class Meeting 14 12/2	Kuba kingdom	
Class Meeting 15 12/9	Hunter gatherers	

Unit 1: Hunter/Gatherers of Africa (CD 1)

Unit 2: Bantu Agriculturists (CD 2)

Mid-Term

Unit 3: East and South Africa (CD 3)

Unit 4: West Africa (CD 4)

Final

Required texts for this course:

Berliner, Paul. 1978. *The Soul of Mbira: Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Chernoff, John M. 1979. *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Friedson, Steven. 1996. *Dancing Prophets: Musical Experience in Tumbuka Healing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Nketia, J. H. Kwabena. 1974. *Music of Africa*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Additional readings will be assigned in class.