This research seminar takes its cues from Simon During’s observation that “popular music is crucial to cultural studies” and from Richard Middleton’s belief that “a breakthrough in popular music studies would [...] reorientate cultural studies in a fundamental way.”

Following such leads, the purpose of the seminar will not only be to better understand the music or the practices attending it. Rather, we propose using popular music culture as a productive provocation – a provocation that invites us to re-think the tenets of cultural theory and to test the purchase of its concepts. Opening our ears to the music and being attentive to the moves and visuals inspired by it, we will thus embark on a journey to important sites of cultural theory and methodology.

It is strongly suggested that participants use the semester break for self-directed INTRODUCTORY READING (see the PROGRAMME and BIBLIOGRAPHY below for suggestions).

The Cultural Studies Colloquia

The course is an instalment of our Cultural Studies Colloquia. These are a combined project of American and British Cultural Studies at JMU Würzburg. (Since MaryAnn Snyder-Körber is on research leave, however, this semester’s colloquium will be singlehandedly taught by Zeno Ackermann.)

The format of the colloquia is discussion-based. While the course is particularly geared to advanced students as well as to students with theoretical interests, our project profits from a range of insights and experiences. We love to integrate perspectives from students with backgrounds in ethnological and performance disciplines, as well as in philosophy and history, for example.
Enrolling

This is a RESEARCH SEMINAR. To help create a committed and cohesive thinking community for the CSC courses, students are asked to compose a brief STATEMENT OF INTEREST in which they (1) introduce themselves and (2) outline their interest/s in this semester's topic. Please mail your statement (c. 1,5 pages) to zeno.ackermann@uni-wuerzburg.de within the first half of April (DEADLINE: 13/04). After submission of the statements of interest, I will get in touch with you and register you for the course. There is no self-registration for this course.

Please check out this syllabus not only before sending your statements of interest but also in preparation for the first meeting and all subsequent meetings.

Contributions / Assessment

Participants are required to write at least THREE RESPONSE ESSAYS dealing with texts from the seminar’s reading list as well as a CONCLUDING REFLECTION or PROJECT REPORT at the end of the seminar. RESPONSE ESSAYS are prepared during the study & writing weeks integrated into the course. We ask that essays be submitted on the Friday before our shared seminar session so that seminar participants have time to read the responses as part of their focused preparation for the session in addition to the core assigned readings. The length of the RESPONSE ESSAYS and CONCLUDING REFLECTION or PROJECT REPORT can be freely allocated by individual participants as long as the combined length of all texts (including the statement of interest) will finally constitute a PORTFOLIO of approximately 20 pages.
 PROGRAMME

There will be an introductory meeting on the 27th of April. After our second meeting (on the 4th of May), new texts will usually be scheduled for reading and discussion EVERY OTHER WEEK. The time in-between (‘study & writing weeks’) enables coordinated reflection, study, writing and exchange. At the same time, seminar meetings are regularly scheduled for two full hours, from 10 s.t. to 12 s.t.

Please make sure to have read and studied at least the ‘assigned reading’ [AR] texts by the time indicated. The ‘additional texts’ [AT] constitute recommended but optional reading. If not otherwise noted, all texts assigned for the course are accessible online through the university library.

I. GETTING STARTED

27/04 Introduction:
Establishing PERSPECTIVES on popular music culture & its study

• ‘Statements of interest’ sent in by the participants [these will be available on Wue-Campus]. [AR]


➢ Diverse textual & audio/visual specimens from popular music & popular music culture.

04/05 A Way In:
GENDER-critical and GENRE-critical perspectives on popular music culture
& on the HISTORY of popular music studies

• Sheila Whiteley, introduction, Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender, ed. Whiteley (Routledge, 1997) xiii-xxxvi. [AT]

• Glenn Fosbraey and Nicola Puckey, eds. Misogyny, Toxic Masculinity, and Heteronormativity in Post-2000 Popular Music (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021); focus on:
  - Nicola Puckey, introduction (1-13). [AR]
  - Coco d’Hont, “How Female is the Future? Undoing Sexism in Contemporary Metal Music” (95-112). [AR]

➢ Diverse audio/visual specimens mentioned in the readings.
II. FRAMEWORKS

11/05  Study & writing week – Please submit RESPONSE ESSAYS by 13/05

18/05  ANTHROPOLOGICAL and ETHNOLOGICAL approaches to ‘MUSIC,’ ‘the POPULAR,’ and ‘the SACRED’


- Antti-Ville Kärjä, *The Popular and the Sacred in Music* (Routledge, 2022); focus on “Introduction” (1-29) and “Conclusion” (156-165). [AR]

- Natalie Fritz and Anna-Katharina Hopflinger, eds., *Religion and Popular Music*, special issue of *JRFM – Journal for Religion, Film And Media* 6.2 (2020); focus on:
  - Fritz and Höpflinger, “‘You Need a Big God’: Fascinating Interactions between Music and Religion” (7-20). [AT]
  - Fritz and Höpflinger, “‘And God Is Never Far Away’ Or the Sum of this Issue” (91-102). [AT]

  ➢ Diverse audio/visual specimens mentioned in the readings or to be suggested by the participants.

25/05  Study & writing week – Please submit RESPONSE ESSAYS by 27/05

01/06  Mixing MUSICOLOGY and CULTURAL STUDIES

- Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Open University Press, 1990); focus on:
  - “‘Roll over Beethoven’? – Sites and Soundings on the Music-Historical Map” (3-33) [WueCampus]. [AT]

- Allan F. Moore, ed., *Analyzing Popular Music* (Cambridge UP, 2003); focus on:

  ➢ Diverse audio/visual specimens mentioned in the readings or to be suggested by the participants.
III. AESTHETICS, PERFORMANCE, VISUALITY

08/06 Study & writing week – Please submit RESPONSE ESSAYS by 10/06

15/06 HISTORY & AESTHETICS

- Ronald Schleifer, *Modernism and Popular Music* (Cambridge UP, 2011); focus on:
  - “Preface” (xi-xvi). [AT]

  ➢ Diverse audio/visual specimens mentioned in the readings or to be suggested by the participants.

22/06 Study & writing week – Please submit RESPONSE ESSAYS by 24/06

29/06 PERFORMANCE & VOICE

- Nick Coleman, *Voices: How a Great Singer Can Change Your Life* (Jonathan Cape, 2017); focus on:
  - “Introduction: Hearing Voices” (1-11) [AR for both options]

  ➤ Option 1: Focus on ETHNICITY:

  ➢ Diverse audio/visual specimens mentioned in the readings or to be suggested by the participants.

OR

➤ Option 2: Focus on GENDER:


  ➢ Diverse audio/visual specimens mentioned in the readings or to be suggested by the participants.

06/07 Study & writing week – Please submit RESPONSE ESSAYS by 08/07
VISUALITY / TRANSMEDIALITY

Option 1: MASCULINITY in Music Videos

- Diane Railton and Paul Watson, *Music Video and the Politics of Representation* (Edinburgh UP, 2011); focus on:
  - “Introduction: The Kleenexes of Popular Culture?” (1-14) [AR]
  - “Masculinity and the Absent Presence of the Male Body” (122-140) [AR]

- Diverse audio/visual specimens mentioned in the readings or to be suggested by the participants.


- Audio/visual specimens from *Dirty Computer* / Please watch the whole “emotion picture” in preparation for the meeting) [AR]

Option 3: Larger TRANSMEDIA Projects – Pink Floyd’s *The Wall* – Album, Stage Show, Film (1979-82)


- Audio/visual specimens from *Pink Floyd’s The Wall* / Please watch the whole film in preparation for the meeting) [AR]

Option 4: K-Pop – Globality, Digital Media, and Performance

- Kim, Suk-Young. *K-Pop Live: Fans, Idols, and Multimedia Performance* (Stanford University Press, 2018); focus on “Introduction” (1-24) and “Conclusion” (199-208). [AR]

- John Lie, K-Pop: *Popular Music, Cultural Amnesia, and Economic Innovation in South Korea* (U of California P, 2015); focus on “Prelude” and “Postlude” (n.p.).

- Diverse audio/visual specimens mentioned in the readings or to be suggested by the participants.
IV. THE PARTICIPANTS’ PROJECTS

20/07, 10-16 s.t.: STUDY DAY (= workshop conference in which some of the participants will present short talks on their projects)

Selected Bibliography

This highly selective bibliography features reading that I consider worthwhile. The selection comprises only texts that have not made it onto the reading list for the seminar (see above). This bibliography also serves to alert us to topics and perspectives that are not – or not fully – covered in the programme.


Brooks, Daphne A. “Nina Simone’s Triple Play.” *Callaloo* 34.1 (2011): 176-197. [Accessible online through UBW.]


Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. 1845. [Accessible online, e.g. at *Documenting the American South*: LINK] → See esp. ch. 2 (on the role of music in the lives of North American slaves).


Magowan, Fiona, and Louise Wrazen, eds. *Performing Gender, Place, and Emotion in Music: Global Perspectives.* U of Rochester P, 2013. [Accessible online through UBW.]


Novak, David, and Matt Sakakeeny, eds. *Keywords in Sound.* Duke UP, 2015. [Accessible online through UBW.]


Tuzcu, Pinar. “*Ich bin eine Kanackin*“: Decolonizing Popfeminism – Transcultural Perspectives on Lady Bitch Ray. Transcript, 2017. [Accessible online through UBW.]

Whiteley, Sheila, and Jedediah Sklower, eds. *Countercultures and Popular Music.* Ashgate, 2014. [Accessible online through UBW.]