

## **BHP 225**

### **Music and Literature**

This course fulfills the Literature or Fine Arts Disciplinary Perspectives requirement.

Instructors:

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### **Course Description**

Developing music literacy can help us become better readers, and, on the other hand, literary methodologies can help us become better listeners. In this class we will study music and literary terminology in order to recognize and analyze patterns and forms in both sonic and linguistic artworks. We will investigate these works in their social and political context in order to gain an understanding of the art informed by interdisciplinary practice.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

- Students will analyze sound and music in its social and political context.
- Students will analyze literature in its social and political context.
- Students will compare overlapping sonic and literary themes.
- Students will synthesize their analysis through writing.

<b>Course Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>University Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Sample Assignments</b>
Students will analyze sound and music in its social and political context.	Critical Thinking Oral Communication Ethics and Social Responsibility Connected Learning	Expert for a day
Students will analyze literature in its social and political context.	Critical Thinking Written Communication Ethics and Social Responsibility	Essay

Students will compare overlapping sonic and literary themes.	Critical Thinking Written Communication Ethics and Social Responsibility	Reading/ listening journals
Students will synthesize their analysis through writing.	Critical Thinking Ethics and Social Responsibility Global and Multicultural Perspectives	Essay & Reading/listening journals

### Assignments and Grade Breakdown

*Reading/listening journals (25 points):* Throughout the semester, students will maintain a journal of music related to the themes we discuss in class. Each entry should include 1) the name of the song/book (or work in whatever form), 2) 150-300 words explaining the connection to our unit, and 3) analysis that demonstrates the sonic and literary analysis techniques we use in class. Students should have a minimum of three entries per unit. At least a third of the entries should be music, and at least a third should be readings.

*Expert for a day (25 points):* Students will be the “Expert of the Day” in class. The day’s expert will 1) do some broad research about an assigned topic, 2) present the information they find in the first 5-10 minutes of class, 3) provide a short bibliography that can be used to access the information presented, and 4) help answer questions related to the topic that arise during our class discussion.

*Essay (25 points):* In lieu of a final exam, students will submit a 3000-word essay that analyzes a literary work alongside a sonic work. The essay should include 1) a clear central argument, 2) evidence to support the argument, and 3) demonstration of literary and sonic analysis.

*Final presentation (25 points):* Students will present the content of their essays in class. Each presentation should include 1) a clear central argument, 2) evidence to support the argument, 3) demonstration of literary and sonic analysis, and 4) a multimedia presentation (including slides and sonic examples).

## **Calendar**

### **Week 1: Introductions; Analyzing music, analyzing literature**

Reading: excerpts from *Bedford Glossary of Literary Terms*

Listening: How to listen to music (timbre, texture, frequency, rhythm, structure)

### **Unit 1: Improvisation and Form**

#### **Weeks 2-4**

Reading: Toni Morrison, *Jazz*

Listening: Selections from Leadbelly, Ma Rainey, Roberta Flack, Notorious BIG, Nicki Minaj

### **Unit 2: Ontologies**

#### **Week 5**

Reading: *To Be Young, Gifted, and Black: Lorraine Hansbury in her Own Words*

Listening: Nina Simone, "To Be Young, Gifted and Black" (and covers by Donny Hathaway, Aretha Franklin, and Bob & Marcia)

#### **Week 6:**

Reading: Emily Lordi, "James Baldwin and the Sound of Soul," *The New Centennial Review* 16:2 (2016): 31-45.

Listening: Selections from Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin, Isaac Hayes, Rance Allen

#### **Week 7:**

Reading: James Baldwin, "The Uses of the Blues,"

Listening: Selections from Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday

### **Unit 3: Connection, Community, and Loss**

#### **Week 8:**

Reading: Regina Bradley, *Boondock Kollage*

Listening: Selections from OutKast

### **Week 9:**

Reading: Kiese Laymon, *Long Division*

Listening: Selections from Sun Ra, Parliament Funkadelic, LaBelle, Big K.R.I.T.

### **Weeks 10-11:**

Reading: Patti Smith, *Just Kids*

Listening: Selections from Lou Reed, Stooges, Ramones, Blondie, Patti Smith

Field Trip: East Village

### **Unit 4: Queerer Than You Think**

#### **Week 12:**

Viewing: *Pitch Perfect* (dir. Jason Moore)

Listening: Esther Dean (“Superbass” performed by Nicki Minaj, “S&M” performed by Rihanna),  
Soundtrack/Movie audio comparisons

#### **Week 13: Project presentations**

#### **Finals**