

ISSUES IN EAST ASIAN POPULAR MUSIC (HUMA 5950)

Fall 2024, Tues & Thurs, 12-13:20 pm, LSK 1026

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Approach & Objectives: In different parts of the world, the production, consumption, and distribution of popular music are shaped by a society's distinct encounter with modernity and cultural-specific ways of negotiating it. This course will look at various popular music genres in East Asia, and explore issues related to the emergence of each one and their localized meanings using insights and methods from various modes of theoretical analysis. Beginning with the question of what makes a music “pop” and what constitutes “popular music”, this course will examine popular music within “greater China” (including Hong Kong and Taiwan) and Chinese diasporic communities, Japan and Korea while also looking at issues related to the music industry, sound technologies, the mass media, diasporas and nationalism, globalization, transculturation and hybridity. In the process, students will learn some factual details about the history and musical characteristics of different popular musics in specific East Asian countries or cultural contexts, while also becoming acquainted with the social, cultural, and political issues pertinent to each one.

Readings & Listenings: Much of the information needed for understanding the content of this course is based on information contained in the reading and listening assignments as well as in class lectures. Material will be drawn from lecture-discussions, audio recordings, videos, and weekly assigned readings. The readings **are required** and are meant to supplement the lecture-discussions, as well as serve as important source materials for the occasional short written assignments, research proposal and final term paper. The PDF copy of most journal articles and chapter readings from anthologies or monographs will be posted on Canvas; if not, they will be on reserve at the library.

Music listening is a major requirement for this course and will constitute a portion of the class discussions and short written assignments. Audio recordings and video recordings (or their online links) corresponding to the topics that will be covered will be posted in Canvas.

Canvas Course Website: To ease administration of the class and facilitate communication, a Canvas website will be set up for this course. Registered students are enrolled and listed as authorized users with access to the site. Make it a point to log on to our Canvas course site regularly every week to access the required readings and PowerPoint slides as well as read any assignment announcements, postings and/or discussion threads in preparation for class.

Course Requirements: Students are expected to complete all reading and listening assignments **before the class period for which they are assigned.**

1. Class attendance & active participation – 10%

- Attendance is mandatory and will be checked during each class throughout the semester.
- You may miss 2 classes without penalty, but starting from your second absence, one percent will be deducted for each absence.
- Participation in class will also play a factor in a student's overall grade for this course because physical presence is not enough; students are expected to actively participate and engage in discussions and activities during class as well as in any online discussions.

2. Written assignments – 10%

- There will be occasional short written assignments. These will be based on the material covered in the class lectures, the readings, or on the audio and/or video recordings.
- Details about each written assignment will be posted online and students are required to submit what they had written **by the assignment due date.** 1% will be automatically deducted from the grade of each assignment for each day that it is late.

3. Presentation – 15%

- Students will take turns making a short presentation and leading a discussion, possibly in a group setting (depending on final enrollment figures), about the readings contained within a topic module. In this way, students will learn to engage with the subject and materials at hand critically and learn how to formulate questions which would lead to insightful and meaningful discussions.
- Each student's contribution should last no more than 20 minutes. Presentations should assume that everyone has done the reading. A brief summary and recapitulation of facts may be given, but presentations should focus on providing an overview of the argument of the text(s) in question, comparing and contrasting with other readings in the same module or from other modules in the course.
- Audio or video music examples mentioned or relevant to the readings are encouraged to be played for everyone to see and listen to. PowerPoint presentations are welcome but not required.
- Presentations will be assigned after the end of the add/drop period.

4. Midterm (due Nov. 2) – 25%

- For the midterm assessment, each student will compile and submit a set of 5 recorded audio or video pop music examples (these should ideally be a mixture of examples from China, Japan and Korea) based on the theme of the module whose readings that s/he had presented on or is still scheduled to present.
- The compilation must be accompanied by explanatory notes about each recorded musical example and how each one is related to or illustrates a relevant issue discussed in the module of readings that the student is responsible for presenting on.
- The explanatory notes must fill 5 double-spaced pages formatted in Times New Roman 12 point with 1.5 spacing and 1-inch margins (ideally, 1 page should be devoted to each recorded music example).

5. Final paper (due Dec. 16) – 40%

- By the 9th week of the semester (Nov. 1), each student must have chosen an issue and a popular music case study from any East Asian culture area or a combination of East Asian culture areas as a topic for **a paper investigating how the chosen popular music(s) under study has been impacted by that issue.** You may choose to write your paper based on the theme of your class presentation and/or your midterm audio/video pop music compilation project.
- Write and submit (due Nov. 11) a statement **of no less than 50 words** briefly describing what your planned paper will be about. **Include a list of at least 7 relevant published scholarly sources, each with a brief written annotation as to how the source is relevant to your topic. Among your listed scholarly sources, you are allowed only 1 Wiki entry, 2 website sources, and 2 Chinese-language sources. The rest must be in English and come from academic journals, anthology/book chapters, and/or books.** The grade for this statement and accompanying annotated list or bibliography will go towards “Written Assignment”. Its purpose is to give the professor an idea of the actual direction that each student’s paper is headed so that the student may be given the
- Your written paper must fill 12 double-spaced pages formatted in Times New Roman 12 pt. font with 1-inch margins.
- Each paper will be graded according to its factual accuracy, interpretive content, clarity of meaning, and structural coherence.

Sample Readings:

Jones, Andrew. 1992. “Chapter 1, Ideology and Genre in Chinese Popular Music.” In *Like a Knife: Ideology and Genre in Contemporary Chinese Popular Music*.

Fuhr, Michael. 2016. “Producing the Global Imaginary: A K-Pop Tropology.” In *Globalization and Popular Music in South Korea: Sound Out K-Pop*, pp. 59-124.

Manabe, Noriko. 2008. "New Technologies, Industrial Structure, and the Consumption of Music in Japan," *Asian Music* 39(1): 81-107.

COURSE OUTLINE & TENTATIVE READINGS

Weeks 1 & 2: Defining Popular Music (Sept. 3, 5, 10, 11)

- Definitions, issues and perspectives

Week 3-4: The Music Industry (Sept. 17, 19, 24, 26)

- the creative process and the production of success; the political process and the control and management of musical production; the big music industries; regulation of music industries; copyrights; musicians' status in the corporate industry; cooptation.

Week 5-6: Technology (Oct. 3, 8, 10)

- the role of technology in popular music; historical context of technology and sound-making; mass culture debates; politics of sampling; rethinking time and space.

Weeks 7-8: Mass Media (Oct. 15, 17, 22)

- mediations; encoding/decoding, music programming and radio formats; constructing an audience; popular music as a product.

Weeks 9 & 10: Globalization (Oct. 24, 29, 31)

- hybridity; transculturation; homogenization and innovation; circulation of cultural forms.

Week 10-11: Diasporas and Transnationalism (Nov. 5, 7, 12)

- migration and flow of people, ideas, capital, and music cultures; musical transformations and cross-pollinations.

Week 11-12: Regional and Cultural Identity (Nov. 14, 19, 21)

Week 13: Cultural Appropriation and Copyright Infringement (Nov. 26, 28)