

**Division of Humanities  
Tentative Course Syllabus**

**Course Code:** HUMA 5950  
**Course Title:** Issues in East Asian Popular Music  
**Course Offered in:** Fall 2023  
**Course Instructor:** Dr. Mercedes Dujunco

**Course Description:** What does it mean for a music to be "popular" and how does it become that way? In different parts of the world, the production, consumption, and distribution of popular music are shaped by a society's distinct encounter with and cultural-specific ways of negotiating modernity. They have to do with mediations of identity, space, and place that result in local scenes, global trends, musical hybridity, and cross-pollination. This course will look at various popular music genres in East Asia – namely, China, Japan, and Korea, and explore issues related to the emergence of each one and their localized meanings. Using insights and methods from various modes of theoretical analysis, (structuralism, poststructuralism, semiotics, critical theory, etc.), students will understand how meanings are produced, mediated, negotiated, subverted, and celebrated in popular music. Through discussions based on a combination of selected readings, films/videos, and music recordings, students will not only get acquainted with popular musics well beyond their own or what they normally listen to; they will also gain alternative perspectives on what constitutes "popular music" in various East Asian contexts and their significance.

**Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):**

On successful completion of the proposed course, students will be able to:
1. Recognize and define/identify the different East Asian popular music genres and styles covered in class.
2. Intelligently talk & write about the historical development, distinct features, performance contexts and sociocultural issues pertaining to some, if not all, of the East Asian popular music genres and styles studied in class.
3. Appreciate some, if not all, of the East Asian popular music genre and styles discussed in class
4. Understand the different theoretical approaches and perspectives discussed in the class readings and how each one was used to consider and analyze various issues relevant to popular music in different East Asian contexts.
5. Utilize their observation and analytical skills regarding musical phenomena and their intertextual and interdisciplinary relationships with other art/cultural forms and structures.

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**Course Outline:**

**Weeks 1 & 2: Defining Popular Music**

**Week 3-4: The Music Industry**

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: Technology**

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 6: Mass Media**

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

**Weeks 7 & 8: Globalization**

Hybridity; transculturation; homogenization and innovation; circulation of cultural forms.

**Week 9: Diasporas and Transnationalism**

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

**Week 10-11: Regional and Cultural Identity**

**Week 12: Cultural Appropriation and Copyright Infringement**

**Week: 13: Gender and Otherness**

**Planned Assessment Tasks:**

Attendance:	10%
Written assignments:	15%
Midterm:	25%
Presentation:	10%
Final paper:	40%

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**Three Samples of Readings:**

Adorno, Theodor and George Simpson. 1990 [1941]. "On Popular Music," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 9(1): 17-48.

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

Stevens, Carolyn. "Definitions of Japanese Pop Music." In *Japanese Popular Music: Culture, Authenticity and Power*.