

Columbia University
Anthropology
Fall 2005

ANTHROPOLOGY OF JAZZ

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Robin D. G. Kelley

This course explores the “jazz world” broadly speaking, from an anthropological/ ethnographic perspective. Covering a variety of different periods in the history of this modern music, we will examine memoirs, autobiographies, films and recorded music, as well as scholarly anthropological and ethnographic accounts of what has been popularly called the “jazz life.” The course is partly organized around space and location (e.g., the club, the recording studio, the dance hall, the “industry”), but the scope is global. We will extend our sights beyond the U.S. and look at local jazz cultures in other parts of the world, notably Japan.

Throughout we will examine tensions of race, gender, class, and sexuality. And we will pay particular attention to the way musicians themselves understood and narrated their world. Hopefully, students will come away from this course with a better understanding of jazz as well as the discipline of anthropology.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are responsible for keeping up with the reading assignments and participating fully in discussion. The final grade will be based on two short essays, a group research/creative project based on site-specific field work, and class participation. The project will be worth one-third of your grade, the two papers combined account for one-third, and class participation will make up the remaining one-third of your final grade. The short papers will assess and critique the reading assignments for whatever week for which you are responsible. These papers must be posted on Courseworks at least 24 hours in advance of class (i.e., by 2:00PM each Monday).

Because this is a seminar, you are expected to contribute to discussion—informed, of course, by the week’s reading. I generally do not tolerate late papers without a plausible excuse. Late papers will be docked one-half of a grade for each day it is late. In order to participate fully in class discussions you must keep abreast of the reading assignments.

I encourage all students to read beyond the assigned readings (particularly from works on the suggested reading list) and contribute any additional insights or information to class discussion.

REQUIRED READING

Books

Sidney Bechet, *Treat it Gentle* (New York: Da Capo, 2002)

Horace Tapscott, *Songs of the Unsung The Musical and Social Journey of Horace Tapscott* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

Mezz Mezzrow, *Really the Blues* (New York: Carol Publishing, 1991)

Frank Kofsky, *Black Music, White Business* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1998).

Articles

NOTE: Suggested readings will be included under each weekly topic. For general background on the history of this music, you might want to consult: Amiri Baraka, *Blues People* (1963); Samuel Floyd, *The Power of Black Music* (1998); Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans* (3rd ed., 1997); John Szwed, *Jazz 101* (2000); Robert O'Meally, ed. *The Jazz Cadence of American Culture* (1998); Robert G. O'Meally, Brent Hayes Edwards, and Farah Jasmine Griffin, eds., *Uptown Conversations: The New Jazz Studies* (2004); Christopher Small, *Music of the Common Tongue* (1987); Art Taylor, *Notes and Tones: Musician to Musician Interviews* (1971); Alyn Shipton, *A New History of Jazz* (2001); Krin Gabbard, ed., *Jazz Among the Discourses* (1995); Krin Gabbard, ed., *Representing Jazz* (1995); Ingrid Monson, *Saying Something* (1996); Paul Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz* (1994).

SUGGESTED READING

Louis Armstrong, *Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans* (1954)

Danny Barker, *A Life in Jazz* (1986)

David Ake, *Jazz Cultures* (2002)

Eric Porter, *What is this Thing Called Jazz?: African American Musicians and their Ideas* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001)

Graham Lock, *Blutopia: Visions of the Future and Revisions of the Past in the Work of Sun Ra, Duke Ellington, and Anthony Braxton* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).

Farah Griffin, *If You Can't be Free, Be a Mystery: In Search of Billie Holiday* (New York: The Free Press, 2001)

Kevin Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early 20th Century* (1997)

Angela Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* (1998).

Hazel Carby, "'It Jus Be's Dat Way Sometime': The Sexual Politics of Women's Blues," *Radical America* 20, no. 4 (1987).

Paul Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz* (1994)

George Lewis, "Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives." *Black Music Research Journal*, 16, no. 1 (Spring 1996), 91-122.

Robert O'Meally, ed. *The Jazz Cadence of American Culture* (1998)

Robert G. O'Meally, Brent Hayes Edwards, and Farah Jasmine Griffin, eds., *Uptown Conversations: The New Jazz Studies* (2004)

Krin Gabbard, ed., *Jazz Among the Discourses* (1995)

Krin Gabbard, ed., *Representing Jazz* (1995)

Scott DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History* (1997).

Ira Gitler, *Swing to Bop: An Oral History of the Transition in Jazz in the 1940's* (1985).

George Lipsitz *A Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (1994).

Guthrie Ramsey, *Race Music* (2003)

John Storm Roberts, *Latin Jazz* (1999).

Michael H. Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (1992).

Ben Sidran, *Black Talk* (1971).

Sherrie Tucker, *Swing Shift: All Girl Bands of the 1940s* (Durham: Duke University Press).

Linda Dahl, *Stormy Weather: The Music and Lives of a Century of Jazzwomen* (1984).

Tammy Kernodle, *Soul on Soul: The Life and Music of Mary Lou Williams* (2004)

Sally Placksin, *Jazzwomen, 1900 to the Present: Their Words, Lives, and Music* (1985).

Susan Cavin. "Missing Women: On the Voodoo Trail to Jazz," *Journal of Jazz Studies* 3, no. 1 (Autumn 1975).

Christopher Ballantine, *Marabi Nights: Early South African Jazz and Vaudeville* (Johannesburg, 1993)

Chief Basseya Ita, *Jazz in Nigeria: An Outline Cultural History* (Lagos: A Radical House

Publication, 1984)

Gerhard Kubik, *Africa and the Blues* (1999)

Norman Weinstein, *A Night in Tunisia* (1993)

Charles Mingus, *Beneath the Underdog* (1971)

Brian Priestley, *Mingus: A Critical Biography* (1982)

David Ake, "Regendering Jazz: Ornette Coleman and the New York Scene in the Late 1950s," in *Jazz Cultures* (2002)

Ingrid Monson, "The Problem with White Hipness: Race, Gender, and Cultural Conceptions in Jazz Historical Discourse," *Journal of American Musicological Society* 18, no. 3 (Fall 1995), 396-422.

John Szwed. *Space is the Place: The Lives and Times of Sun Ra*. (1997).

A.B. Spellman, *Four Lives in the Bebop Business* (1985).

Amiri Baraka, *Black Music* (1967).

Frank Kofsky, *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music* (1970).

John Litweiler, *The Freedom Principle: Jazz After 1958* (1984)

Valerie Wilmer, *As Serious as Your Life: The Story of the New Jazz* (1977).

Philippe Carles and Jean-Louis Comolli. *Free Jazz/Black Power* (1971).

WEEKLY TOPICS

Week 1: Introductions

No reading assigned

Week 2: Omar's Song: Stories of Origins

Sidney Bechet, *Treat it Gentle*, chaps. 1-4

Week 3: Social and Musical Meanings of Jazz Performance

Ingrid Monson, "Chapter 2: Grooving & Feeling Chapter 3: Music, Language & Cultural Styles" from *Saying Something* [excerpts]

Guthrie P Ramsey Jr. Chapter 2 "Disciplining Black Music: On History, Memory & Contemporary Theories" from *Race Music*

Dana Reason "Navigable Structures & Transforming Mirrors: Improvisation and Interactivity" from *The Other Side of Nowhere*

Week 4: The Jazz Club/The Concert Hall

Mezzrow, *Really the Blues*, Chapters 1-7

Sidney Bechet, *Treat it Gentle*, chaps. 5-7

Eric Porter, Chapter 7 "The Majesty of the Blues" from *What is This Thing Called Jazz*

Week 4: Policing Jazz Musicians

Paul Chevigny, Chapter 3 "The Music in the Clubs" Chapter 4 "Regulation as Denigration" from *Gigs* [excerpt]

Week 5: CASE STUDY: Race Men and Jazz: Sidney Bechet's World

Sidney Bechet, *Treat it Gentle*, [remaining chapters]

Horace Tapscott, *Songs of the Unsung*, chaps. 1 - 2

Week 6: The Business: Anatomy of Political Economy of Jazz

Frank Kofsky, *Black Music, White Business*

Michael Jarrett, "Cutting Sides: Jazz Record Producers" from *The Other Side of Nowhere*

Week 7: Ethnographies of Swing: Dance and the Dance Hall

Joel Dinnerstein, Chapter 7: "America's National Folk Dance: The Lindy Hop" from *Swinging the Machine* [excerpt]

Tapscott, *Songs of the Unsung*, chaps. 3-6

Week 8: CASE STUDY: Problem of Hipness and the White Negro – Mezz Mezzrow's World

Mezz Mezzrow, *Really the Blues*, [remaining chapters]

FILM: "Paris Blues" and "Young Man with a Horn" [excerpts]

Week 9: NO CLASS

Week 10: "Can She Play?": The Life of Women Instrumentalists in the Jazz World

"Melba Liston" and "Clora Bryant," in *Central Avenue Sounds: Jazz in Los Angeles* (1998), available on line either through E-books or access through CLIO. Here is the site. <http://ets.umdl.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?type=simple;sort=freq;c=acls;cc=acls;sid=26bc8ee194d3ee50cebf06c48d8d5b27;rgn=full%20text;q1=clora%20bryant;view=toc;subview=short;start=1;size=25;idno=heb00026.0001.001>

Pauline Oliveros "Harmonic Anatomy: Women in Improvisation" from *The Other Side of Nowhere*, eds. Daniel Fischlin & Ajay Heble

FILMS: "International Sweethearts of Rhythm"

Week 11: Jazz Cultures in Japan

E. Taylor Atkins, *Blue Nippon* [excerpts from book]

FILM: "Jazz is My Native Language"

Week 12: CASE STUDY: The 'Collective' as Radical Alternative– The World According to Horace Tapscott

Horace Tapscott, *Songs of the Unsung* [remaining chapters]

Week 13: Class Presentation of Ethnographies