**MSC/WMS 224: Women and Music**

**Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30 a.m.–12:45 p.m.**

**(Thursdays split into discussion groups at 11:30 and 12:10), Series K**

**Virtual study hall Wednesdays 9—10 p.m. beginning February 3**

**(see Sakai for Zoom link)**

**David H. Miller, Ph.D. (**[**dmille17@providence.edu**](mailto:dmille17@providence.edu)**)—he/him/his**

**Office hours by appointment**

**Required texts**:

* Dunbar, Julie C. *Women, Music, Culture: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2016. 2nd Edition. ISBN13: 978-1-138-81465-3 (*WMC*)
* Whitely, Sheila. *Women and Popular Music: Sexuality, Identity, and Subjectivity*. Routledge, 2000. ISBN 10: 0-415-21190-5 (*WPM*)

**Course description**:

This course studies the involvement of women in music within Western cultures from the Middle Ages to the present, including female composers, performers, educators, patrons, consumers, and listeners. We will consider both classical and popular music, with a special emphasis on music of the United States from the 20th and 21st centuries. Emphasis will also be placed on active listening skills and critical thinking about the power of perspective in historical narrative.

**Course requirements and grading:**

1. **Attendance and participation (20%)**—I don’t have a strict policy on attendance and participation, but I expect you to attend most classes and participate actively; the latter is especially important during Thursday discussion sections.
2. **Homework (25%)**—Weekly assignments over the course of the semester, usually *due at the beginning of class* on Thursdays. Your lowest homework grade will be dropped (thus, you may miss one assignment).
3. **Discussion section lead (10%)**—Lead discussion during one Thursday section over the course of the semester. Sign up for your date at the beginning of the semester (details will be distributed over email) and meet with me on Tuesday or Wednesday the week of to discuss your plans.
4. **Research project (25%)**—A research project and oral presentation on a topic, musician, and/or historical figure of your choice that is relevant to the themes of our course. Further details on this assignment will be distributed during Week 7 of the semester, when you all will start developing your topics. *Presentations will be delivered during the final two weeks of class and the final, written version of the project will be due on Friday, May 14.*
5. **Final exam (20%)**—An essay-based, open-book, and open-note take-home exam to be administered on *Tuesday, May 18*.

**Tentative course schedule:**

* Week 1—Introduction: Why “Women and Music”?
* Weeks 2–3—Unit 1: “Thinking from women’s lives”
  + Francesca Caccini
  + Joni Mitchell
  + Lauryn Hill
* Weeks 4–6—Unit 2: Gender and race in American music
  + Mitski
  + Florence Price and Marian Anderson
  + Jenni Rivera
* Week 7—Research project development week
* Weeks 8–10\*—Unit 3: Sexual politics
  + Comtessa de Dia
  + Georges Bizet and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
  + MC Lyte, Salt-N-Pepa, and Queen Latifah
* Weeks 11–12—Unit 4: Gender identity and expression
  + k.d. lang and Dolly Parton
  + Against Me! and Laura Jane Grace
* Weeks 13–14\*—Unit 5: Revolutionaries
  + Ruth Crawford Seeger
  + Pauline Oliveros
  + Tracy Chapman
* Weeks 15–16\*—Review, recap, and presentations

\**Note that, due to the unusual schedule this semester, weeks 9, 10, 14 and 16 have just one class meeting each.*

**A note on writing, proofreading, and citations:**

Please make every effort to ensure that your writing is clearly organized and free of typos. Before handing in any piece of writing, take a few moments to proofread what you have written. In addition, note that we will be using the Chicago Manual of Style in this course to format citations and references to musical works. For further details on this, please take a few moments to read “Music Writing Style Guide” (which is posted in the “Resources” section of Sakai) prior to completing your first writing assignment.

**How to listen to music in this course:**

This course will introduce you to a lot of great music, which you can access via our YouTube playlist (<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCjLxVmAF7FbxPTUXsxuMjP8T8EBE4Xwq>). But you can’t get to know it if you don’t listen to it! Here are some tips for making the most out of your listening:

1. Listen to each assigned song/work a minimum of three times, and on at least two different days—of course, it is always helpful to listen more than that!
2. Engage in “active” listening, setting aside time to listen without distractions. Follow along with the lyrics or score as appropriate to focus your listening.
3. While I generally recommend “active” listening, “passive” listening (that is, having the music on in the background) can also be helpful, so consider listening to the class playlist as you cook, exercise, or drive your car.

**Zoom stuff**:

Links to sign on for each class session can be found in the “Zoom” section of Sakai. Note that lectures (normally on Tuesdays, except for the first week) will be recorded and uploaded to Sakai for future reference. Discussion sections (most Thursdays) will not be recorded.

Please remember to have your microphone muted when you are not speaking. Also, feel free to turn off your camera as you feel is necessary, particularly during lectures. While I encourage you to have your camera on if you’re up for it (it helps me to see your faces!), I also understand that spending a lot of time on Zoom can take a toll. So if turning off your camera will help you feel more relaxed and able to focus on the material, go for it. *Your participation grade will not be impacted by turning your camera off.*

**Late work, extensions, and feedback:**

It is important to submit your weekly homework assignments prior to the beginning of class on Thursdays, so that you are prepared to participate fully in that day’s discussion. That being said, the occasional late submission of a homework assignment is not a big deal and will not result in the deduction of points; I typically keep the submission portals on Sakai open until midnight on the day after an assignment is due (so, midnight on Friday most weeks).

You may also ask for an extension if you need more time on an assignment—I will probably say yes! I understand that everyone has busy stretches, and that a few extra days to complete an assignment can sometimes make all the difference. So please do not feel shy about asking for an extension, particularly if you are able to give me a few days’ notice.

I will strive to provide useful and timely feedback on all of your assignments. During a typical week, I complete grading of the homework assignments by Friday or Saturday. Please remember to review this feedback—it will help you improve your work over the course of the semester!

**Support services:**

I encourage everyone to check out the website of PC’s Office of Academic Services (<https://academic-services.providence.edu/>) for information on various kinds of support that are available to you, including tutoring, help with writing, and programs focused on study skills.

**Statement on students with disabilities:**

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Providence College and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please let me know immediately. You must have official documentation from the University specifying that accommodations need to be made.

**University policy on academic integrity:**

Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person – be it a world-class philosopher or your lab partner – without proper acknowledgement of that source. Violations of the University policy on academic integrity, described on the webpage of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, may result in failure of the course or failure on the assignment. Please see the policy as it is outlined in the course catalog, <http://www.providence.edu/forms/college-relations/undergrad1012.pdf>, pages 58-62.

**Finally, a word on the upcoming semester:**

We’re now in semester 3 of the coronavirus pandemic, and (needless to say) there are a lot of other tumultuous and sometimes upsetting things happening in the world right now. We are all adapting to these rapidly changing circumstances, and that is probably going to make things hard at times. If you find yourself struggling in any way—missing classes, feeling like you don’t want to speak up in class, writing difficulties, or even something unrelated to this course—please let me know. I strive to be a generous and understanding teacher, and my first priority is your well-being. So if you need some help, write me an email: we’ll find a time to talk and figure out a plan together.