

**Music 208D: Music in Asian America**  
**Summer 2006 – Session III**

OCH 107  
Instructor: Wendy Hsu  
wendyhsu@virginia.edu

MTWRF 10:30 – 12:45pm  
Office: OCH 211  
Office hours by appointment

---

**Course description**

Where is “Asian America” in the musical lives and imagination in the US? What is the relationship between music and Asian American identity? How does music shape and reflect the racial relations and inequalities in the US? This course investigates the musical sounds, icons, lives, and practices in Asian American communities in 20th and 21st century US. We will read ethnographic and historical studies of musical practices of Asian Americans. We will also read criticism of mainstream Asian American musical representations while analyzing their music and image. By the end of this course, you will gain a sense of the role of music in the lives of Asian Americans and how music relates to the low-visibility of Asian American representation in the cultural and political landscape in the US.

**Readings**

Most of the readings will come from a *Course Pack* that can be obtained at Brillig Bookstore on Elliwood Av (on the corner across from Biltmore’s).

Also, there is one book – *Speak It Louder* by Deborah Wong - required for the course.

**Grading**

Attendance and participation	20%
Journal responses	20%
Creative assignment	10%
Midterm exam	25%
Final exam	25%

Attendance & Participation – 20%

You will be graded for each class session. This grade will not be based upon your attendance. Rather it is based upon your preparedness and your overall effort and contribution to the session. At the end of the semester, the grades for each session will be averaged. Come to class prepared to engage in discussion—*this means you need to have done the reading prior to the session*. Bring the week’s readings to class for reference. While your participation will be greatly defined by your willingness to talk in class, there

will be different formats for discussion in both large and small groups, as well as opportunities for individual and written reflection.

#### Journal responses – 20%

You will write a journal entry in response (1 or 2 paragraphs) to reading and listening assigned for the day. These responses will be graded on the level of understanding of the reading you have demonstrated and how much thought you've given to listening assignment. Feel free to incorporate anything that may be covered in class discussion. It's advised to focus on one or two (no more than two) ideas in the daily responses. Quality is more important than quantity.

#### Creative assignment – 10%

The creative assignment should reflect what you've learned from the Asian American culture and experiences and how you personally may relate to it. It could take the form of a song, lyrics, a poem, melody, beat, criticism, short video, which will be shared with the class on the last meeting day. The preparation for this assignment should replace two journal entries of dates most convenient to your own schedule.

#### Midterm exam - 15%

This will be an assessment of what you have learned so far in the course. It will consist of short answer questions on the readings and class discussions.

#### Final exam – 25%

The final is a take-home essay. The objective of the final reflection paper is to reflect on what you've learned over the semester. It will ask you to apply concepts learned from readings and discussion to musical material.

#### **Enrollment**

Enrollment is solely the responsibility of the student and will occur through ISIS. Any students who are unable to register but need the credits to graduate should speak to their advisor or to the summer chair in the music department. Visit the music office in Old Cabell Hall to find these people.

#### **Attendance**

You are expected to attend all classes. There are no excused absences. If you miss a class, you will receive a zero for that day's participation grade. And if you miss, you must arrange to turn in any assignments before class. Each student may replace ONE missed day of participation by designing his or her own make-up assignment of about 2 pages in length. The assignment must be approved by the instructor. This should be arranged in advance where possible, or after-the-fact for an absence due to illness.

*NOTE: if you anticipate missing more than a total of three classes this semester, you should not sign up for this course.*

### **Classroom Community**

We learn better when we know and trust each other. We will work hard the first few days to learn each other's names and to get to know each other. We will also foster community with occasional food, with small group activity, and through discussions, structured debates and presentations.

### **Late Assignments and Presentations**

No late assignments or delayed presentations will be accepted for any assignment.

### **Honor Policy**

I expect you to uphold the University Honor Policy at all times. You are expected to have read and agreed to the Honor Policy Statement provided on the class homepage (<http://www.toolkit.virginia.edu>)

### **Grading**

Wherever possible I will emphasize written feedback, yet I use grades to compare your performance to the ideal performance. Ideal performance is something just above an A. An 'A' for an assignment in this class requires consistent and satisfactory attention to all requirements **plus** a substantial demonstration of creativity and originality. A 'B' for an assignment in this class requires consistent and satisfactory attention to all requirements and some indication of creativity and originality. A 'C' for an assignment in this class would either 1) have consistent and satisfactory attention to all requirements, but no creativity and originality, or 2) have some creativity and originality but an inconsistent attention to the details. A 'D' for an assignment would lack creativity and originality and miss several of the requirements. An 'F' for an assignment would have fallen short on all points.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Week 1: What is Asian America**

---

Thursday 12 July: *music and culture: the Asian America issue*

Introductions

The Asian Americanist perspective

Friday 13 July: *Music, race and ethnicity*

**Read:** Shank, Barry. "From Rice to Ice"

**Read:** Wang, Oliver. "Between the Notes"

#### **Week 2: Asian American Musical Practices**

---

Monday 16 July: *Orientalism: the historical musical presence*

**Read:** Yang, Mina. "Orientalism and the Music...California"

**Read:** Asai, Susan. "Transformations of Tradition"

Tuesday 17 July: *Playing with traditions: taiko*

**Read:** Wong, Deborah. "Taiko in Asian America"

**Read:** Yoon, Paul. "She's Really Become Japanese Now!"

**In-class Screening:** clips from *Rising Sun*

Wednesday 18 July: *Consuming music: karaoke*

**Read:** Wong, Deborah. "Karaoke... Vietnamese American Popular Music"

**Read:** Lum, Casey. "Karaoke and the Construction of Identity"

Thursday 19 July: *Consuming and making pop music: hip hop, etc*

**Read:** Maira, Sunaina. "Indian Dub"

**Read:** Wong, Deborah. "Just Being There"

Friday 20 July: *Displaying Culture: culture festival*

**Read:** Wong, Deborah. "Making Space, Making Noise"

**Explore:** Asian culture heritage sites...

### **Week 3: Asian American Representations in Media**

---

Monday 23 July: *Asian American femininity and sexuality: Cibo Matto, Yoko Ono*

**Read:** Park, Jane. "Cibo Matto's Stereotype A"

**Read:** Levitz, Tamara. "Yoko Ono and the Unfinished... 'John and Yoko'"

Tuesday 24 July: *the Model Minority Myth: William Hung*

**Read:** Lee, Robert G. chapters 5 and 6

**Read:** Hsu, Wendy. "William Hung"

Wednesday 25 July: *Midterm Exam!!!*

Thursday 26 July: *Music journalism: listening, writing & organizing*

**Read:** Wong, Deborah. "Finding an Asian American Audience"

**Read:** Nguyen, Mimi. "Tales of an Asiatic Geek Girl"

**Explore:** <http://www.worsethanqueer.com>

**Explore:** <http://www.o-dub.com/>

Friday 27 July: *Film representations: Better Luck Tomorrow*

**Read:** Feng, Peter. "Being Chinese American. Being Asian American"

**In-class screening:** "Better Luck tomorrow"

### **Week 4: Interracial/Interethnic/International Relations**

---

Monday 30 July: *Afro-Asian Connections I: hip hop, take one*

**Read:** Okiihiro, Gary. "Afterword: Toward a Black Pacific"

**Read:** Wong, Deborah. "The Asian American Body in Performance"

Tuesday 31 July: *Afro-Asian Connections II: hip hop, take two*

**Read:** De Leon, Lakandiwa. "Filipinotown and the DJ Scene"

**Read:** Wang, Oliver. "There are the Breaks"

Wednesday 1 August: *Afro-Asian Connections III: Jazz*

**Read:** Fellezs, Kevin. "Silenced But Not Silent"

**Read:** Ho, Fred. "Beyond Asian American Jazz"

Thursday 2 August: *the Asian Diaspora: the British "Asian Invasion"*

**Read:** Gopinath, Gayatri. "Bombay, U.K., Yuba City"

**Read:** Sharma, Sanjay. "Noisy Asians or 'Asian Noise'?"

Friday 3 August: *Transnational music production, circulation and reception*

**Read:** Valverde, Kieu. "Making Transnational Vietnamese music"

## **Week 5: Presentations and Exam**

---

Monday 6 August: *review & creative project presentations*

Tuesday 7 August: NO CLASS (reading day)

Wednesday 8 August: NO CLASS (reading day)

Thursday 9 August: FINAL EXAM (8 – 10:30am)