

**City University of Hong Kong  
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of English  
with effect from Semester A 2016/17**

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**Part I Course Overview**

**Course Title:** Popular Music and Social Life

**Course Code:** EN2832

**Course Duration:** 1 semester

**Credit Units:** 3

**Level:** B2

**Proposed Area:**  Arts and Humanities  
(for GE courses only)  Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations  
 Science and Technology

**Medium of Instruction:** English

**Medium of Assessment:** English

**Prerequisites:** Nil  
(Course Code and Title)

**Precursors:** Nil  
(Course Code and Title)

**Equivalent Courses:** Nil  
(Course Code and Title)

**Exclusive Courses:** Nil  
(Course Code and Title)

## Part II Course Details

### 1. Abstract

This course aims at enabling students to identify the social role of commercial popular music in consumer society. The central focus is on helping students to analyse how popular music articulates sub-cultures in general and youth culture in particular, through patterns of consumption, ideology, emotional appeal, and practices of resistance. Students will examine genre history, intertextual meanings, iconography and performance, exploring the relationship between popular music and the formation of social identities including: gender, racial, youth, political and religious identities. Students are encouraged to discover, create and innovate not only through discussion, analysis and argument, but also through practice and performance.

### 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting* (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Describe and understand key concepts in studies of popular music and society.		✓	✓	
2.	Apply these concepts to analyse and evaluate the role played by popular music in social life, by analysing and evaluating the intertextual meanings of lyrics, iconography, genres, and popular music industry in national and international settings.			✓	✓
3.	Apply these concepts to analyse and evaluate the relationship between popular music and the formation of social identities, including gender and racial identities, youth identities, and political identities.			✓	✓
4.	Critically evaluate and articulate objective and subjective elements of popular music and its relationship to social life.			✓	✓
* If weighting is assigned to CILOs, they should add up to 100%.		100%			

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### 3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.						Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4			
Class work participation	Attendance, participation and contribution to in-class discussions and activities Students are assessed according to how actively they engage in and contribute to the weekly in-class discussions and online learning activities.							
Interactive analysis and critique.	Interactive lectures and activities to introduce and exemplify key concepts . Assigned readings are discussed and analysed in detail. Students contribute, share and evaluate music and other textual materials.							
Group collaboration and presentation.	Students work in collaborative small groups to discover and identify forms of popular musical practice. Students present their work and receive feedback from peers and instructors. Students are encouraged to be creative and are expected to base their investigation on comparison between local and international practices.			✓	✓			
Written work.	Students must write a critical review of at least one pop song, and a peer critique of the group video project.			✓	✓			
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### 4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.						Weighting*	Remarks
	1	2	3	4				
Continuous Assessment: 100 %								
Class work participation	√	√	√	√			20%	
Song analysis and review	√	√	√	√			20%	
Group video project		√	√	√			40%	
Peer critique		√	√	√			20%	
							100%	

\* The weightings should add up to 100%.

## 5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Adequate (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Class work participation.		Excellent attendance, participation and contribution to in-class discussions and activities. Articulate, insightful comments displaying mastery of language.	Good attendance, participation and contribution to in-class discussions and activities. Articulate, insightful comments displaying good use of language.	Mostly good, participation and contribution to in-class discussions and activities. Some articulate, insightful comments displaying generally good use of language.	Adequate attendance, participation and contribution to in-class discussions and activities. Sometimes articulate, insightful comments displaying partially good of language.	Poor attendance, participation and contribution to in-class discussions and activities. Inarticulate, lack of insight, unable to express ideas.
2. Song analysis and review.		Able to evaluate and synthesize observations to create a coherent, critical and insightful analysis. Able to express objective and subjective impressions in succinct, coherent, clear and accurate English.	Mostly able to evaluate and synthesize observations to create a mostly coherent, critical and insightful analysis. Able to express objective and subjective impressions in generally succinct, coherent, clear and accurate English.	Moderately able to evaluate and synthesize observations to create a generally coherent, critical and occasionally insightful analysis. Moderately able to express objective and subjective impressions in intermittently succinct, coherent, clear and accurate English.	Partially able to evaluate and synthesize observations to create an intermittently coherent, critical and occasionally insightful analysis. Partially able to express objective and subjective impressions in intermittently succinct, coherent, clear and accurate English.	Unable to evaluate and synthesize observations. Unable to express objective and subjective impressions in coherent, clear and accurate English.
3. Group video project.		Able to select an appropriate topic, identify and collect appropriate data, identify key	Mostly able to select an appropriate topic, identify and collect appropriate	Generally able to select an appropriate topic, identify and collect mostly appropriate	Partially able to select an appropriate topic, identify and collect data, identify some key features, apply	Unable to choose an appropriate topic, collect data or apply principles and tools to analyze it.

		<p>features, apply principles, concepts and tools of analysis accurately and appropriately, and evaluate findings in a coherent and insightful analysis. Able, through personal discovery, to generate new and critical insights from the reading and understanding of popular musical practices. Able to express ideas in cohesive, accurate English with a minimum of errors, in an appropriate style and format.</p>	<p>data, identify key features, apply principles, concepts and tools of analysis appropriately, and evaluate findings in a mostly coherent and insightful analysis. Able, through group discovery, to generate critical insights from the reading and understanding of popular musical practices. Able to express ideas in cohesive, accurate English with some errors, in a mostly appropriate style and format.</p>	<p>data, identify some key features, apply principles, concepts and tools of analysis appropriately, and evaluate findings in a mostly coherent and occasionally insightful analysis. Able to generate some insights from the reading and understanding of popular musical practices. Mostly able to express ideas in mostly cohesive, accurate English with some errors, in a moderately appropriate style and format.</p>	<p>principles, concepts and tools of analysis, and evaluate findings in an intermittently coherent and occasionally insightful analysis. Partially able to generate a few insights from the reading and understanding of popular musical practices. Partially able to express ideas in moderately accurate English with many errors, in an intermittently appropriate format.</p>	<p>Unable to express ideas in clear and accurate English.</p>
4. Peer critique.		<p>Able to analyse critically and objectively. Able to express ideas and opinions in clear, coherent and accurate English.</p>	<p>Mostly able to analyse critically and objectively. Mostly able to express ideas and opinions in clear, coherent and accurate English.</p>	<p>Moderately able to analyse critically and objectively. Moderately able to express ideas and opinions in clear, coherent and accurate English.</p>	<p>Partially able to analyse critically and objectively. Partially able to express ideas and opinions in clear, coherent and accurate English.</p>	<p>Unable to analyse critically and objectively. Unable to express ideas and opinions in clear, coherent and accurate English.</p>

### Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

#### 1. Keyword Syllabus

Popular music

Music industry

Youth culture

Consumerism

Society

#### 2. Reading List

##### 2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1.	Horner, Bruce, and Thomas Swiss, eds. 1999. <i>Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture</i> . Malden, MA: Blackwell.
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##### 2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

1.	Burns, Gary. 1997. <i>Popular Music and Society</i> and the evolving discipline of popular music studies. <i>Popular Music and Society</i> 21(1): 123-131.
2.	Cooper, B. Lee. 1997. It's still rock and roll to me: Reflections on the evolution of popular music and rock scholarship. <i>Popular Music and Society</i> 21(1): 101-108.
3.	Erni, John Nguyet. 1998. "Like a Culture: Notes on Pop Music and Popular Sensibility in Decolonized Hong Kong," <i>Hong Kong Cultural Studies Bulletin</i> , 8/9 (Spring/Summer): 55-63.
4.	Hakanen, Ernest A. 1998. Counting down to number one: The evolution of the meaning of popular music charts. <i>Popular Music</i> 17(1): 95-111.
5.	Jones, Steve, and Martin Sorger. 1999/2000. Covering music: A brief history and analysis of album cover design. <i>Journal of Popular Music Studies</i> 11/12: 68-102.
6.	Lent, John (ed.) 1995. <i>Asian Popular Culture</i> . Boulder: Westview Press.
7.	McIntyre, Bruce. 2000. "Cantopop: The voice of Hong Kong." Paper presented at the Second International Conference on Hong Kong Culture, Hong Kong Polytechnic University.
8.	Sanjek, David. 1999/2000. Navigating the "channel": Recent scholarship on African-American popular music. <i>Journal of Popular Music Studies</i> 11/12: 167-192.
9.	Schowalter, Daniel F. 2000. Remembering the dangers of rock and roll: Toward a historical narrative of the rock festival. <i>Critical Studies in Media Communication</i> 17(1): 86-102.
10.	Tang, Wai Man. 1998. <i>Hong Kong Popular Music: Determinants of Popularity of Pop Songs</i> . Unpublished M.Phil Thesis. Hong Kong: [Dept. of Marketing], City University of Hong Kong.
11.	Wald, Gayle. 1998. Just a girl?: Rock music, feminism, and the cultural construction of female youth. <i>Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society</i> 23(3): 585-610.