

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

MODULE HANDBOOK

2013

RACE, CLASS AND JAZZ



Convenor: Dr Roger Fagge (Room 341)

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Context of Module

This module, taught in the Spring Term, may be taken by students on relevant MA courses in History, or taught Master's students outside the Department.

Module Aims

This is a one term module, offering the opportunity to explore the historical significance of what has sometimes been described as 'America's classical music.' Students will study the development and diversity of Jazz music, and its relationship to the wider patterns of social and culture change in C20th America. Attention will be paid to the debate over racial 'ownership' of music, white appropriation and interaction within the Jazz subculture, and the wider consideration of minority artists operating within a white-dominated capitalist industry. Class and Gender will also be analysed, and the module will conclude with consideration given to of the different representations of Jazz (in film, fiction and history) , and their connection with concepts of 'authenticity', 'nostalgia', and racial stereotyping. This analysis will involve the use and evaluation of a range of sources, including the music itself, alongside primary materials (memoirs, oral history, contemporary accounts, letters), and secondary works, as well as literary sources, and film.

Intended Learning Outcomes

- An appreciation of the significance of music, and musical subcultures, as a legitimate, and important area of historical research.
- A capacity to handle cultural evidence, including listening to music, and relate this to more conventional historical sources.
- The opportunity, through the independent preparation and writing of 5,000 word essays, to choose and frame a topic worthy of analysis in the light of the advanced literature in the relevant area of study; to construct your own bibliographies from books, articles and websites; to gather evidence and use it to shape a cogent and coherent extended analytical discussion; and where appropriate to deploy evidence from primary sources.
- An understanding why 'it don't mean a thing (if it aint got that swing)'

Seminar Listing

Seminar 1: *Jazz: Origins and definition.* What is Jazz? What were the precursors for Jazz? What was the relationship between Jazz and Blues (and other musical forms)?

Seminar 2: *Swing: Jazz as popular music.* Why did big band swing emerge? Why did the music develop in Chicago and New York? What role did Kansas City play? What role did race play in the big band era?

Seminar 3: *The Bebop Revolution.* What role did World War II have on popular music? Why was there a move away from big bands? What was new about Bebop? To what extent did it represent a more confident African American community?

Seminar 4: *Jazz, the Beat generation and the 'Birth of the Cool'.* What was the relationship between Jazz and the Beats? Was Jazz part of a post war counterculture? What role did Jazz play in the emergence of the concept of 'cool' and the hipster?

Seminar 5: *Jazz, civil rights and black power.* What role did Jazz play in the Black Freedom struggle? What was the relationship between Black nationalism and Free Jazz? Can we see John Coltrane as a political performer?

[Week 6: Reading Week]

Seminar 7: *Jazz as labour history: work, class and gender.* What were the working conditions for Jazz musicians? What role did class play in Jazz? How difficult was it for women to be accepted in the Jazz world. The case of Billie Holiday.

Seminar 8: *Jazz on screen.* How has Hollywood presented Jazz? What was the relationship between West Coast Jazz and the film industry? How has Jazz been shown on television?

Seminar 9: *Jazz and the wider world.* What impact did Jazz have on the Americas? To what extent was Jazz part of the Americanisation of Europe? What problems did Jazz musicians and audiences face under totalitarian regimes?

Seminar 10: *Writing Jazz.* What is the relationship between fiction and Jazz? r. How has academic writing on Jazz developed? How have critics shaped our understanding of Jazz?

Bibliography.

Race, Class and Jazz: A Reading List

General works/Interpretations

- David Andrew Ake, Jazz Cultures (2002)
- Patrick Burke, Come in and Hear the Truth: Jazz and Race on 52nd Street (2008) ***
- James Campbell (ed.), The Picador History of Blues and Jazz (1995)
- James Lincoln Collier, The Making of Jazz (1978)
- James Lincoln Collier, Jazz: The American Theme Song (1993)
- Scott DeVeaux, 'Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography', Black American Literature Forum, Vol. 25, No. 3, Literature of Jazz Issue. (Autumn, 1991), pp. 525-560.
- Daniel Fischlin and Ajay Heble, The Other Side of Nowhere: Jazz, Improvisation and Communities in Dialogue (2004)
- Krin Gabbard (ed.), Representing Jazz (1995)
- Ted Gioia, The History of Jazz (1999) ***
- Ted Gioia, Jazz Standards (2012) ***
- Gary Giddins, Visions of Jazz (2000) ***
- Robert Gottlieb, Reading Jazz: A Gathering of Autobiography, reportage, and Criticism from 1919 to Now (1999) ***
- Guardian and Richard Nelsson, Jazz from New Orleans to the New Generation (2011)
- Wil Haygood, Sweet Thunder: The life and Times of Sugar Ray Robinson (2011)***
- Robin D.G. Kelley, Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination (2002)***
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- Robin D.G. Kelley, Africa Speaks, America Answers: Modern Jazz in Revolutionary Times (2012)***
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- Lawrence Levine, 'Jazz and American Culture', in Levine, The Unpredictable Past (1993)
- Mezz Mezzrow, Really the Blues (1946)
- Dan Morgenstern, Jazz People (1976)
- Francis Newton (Eric Hobsbawm), The Jazz Scene (1959)
- David Nicholls (ed), The Cambridge History of American Music (1998)
- Robert G. O'Meally et al., Uptown Conversation: the new jazz studies (2004)
- Burton Peretti, The Creation of Jazz: Music, Race and Culture in Urban America (1994)
- Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentof, Hear Me Talkin' To Ya, the Story of Jazz As Told By the Men Who Made It (1966)
- Arnold Shaw, Black Popular Music in America (1986)
- Alyn Shipton, A New History of Jazz (2001)
- Marshall W. Stearns, The Story of Jazz (1956)
- W. Royal Stokes, The Jazz Scene (1991)
- Arthur Taylor, Musician to musician Interviews (1993) ***
- Frank Tirro, Jazz: A History (1993 edn.)

Regions/Styles

- Scott Deveaux, The Birth of Bebop: A social and musical history (1999)
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- Ted Gioia, West Coast Jazz: Modern Jazz In California, 1945-60 (1992)
- William H. Kenney, Chicago Jazz: A Cultural History (1993)
- George E. Lewis, A Power Stronger than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music (2008) ***
- Lewis MacAdams, Birth of the Cool: Beat, Bebop and the American Avant-Garde (2002)
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- Thomas Owens, Bebop: The Music and its Players (1995)
- David H. Rosenthal, Hard Bop: Jazz and Black music, 1955-65 (1992)

David Stowe, Swing Changes: Big Band Jazz in New Deal America (1994)
Richard Williams, Blue Moment: Miles Davis' Kind of Blue and the Remaking of Modern Music (2010) ***

Biographies/Autobiographies

Julie Blackburn, With Billie (2006)
Leonard L. Brown (ed.), John Coltrane and Black America's Quest for Freedom: Spirituality and the Music (2010)
Ian Carr, Miles Davis (Rev. edn., 1998)
Donald Clarke, Wishing on the Moon: The Life and Times of Billie Holiday (1994)
Bill Crow, From Birdland to Broadway: Scenes from a Jazz Life (1992)
Miles Davis, Miles: The Autobiography (1989)
Chris Devito, Coltrane on Coltrane: The John Coltrane Interviews (2010) ***
Ralph Ellison, Shadow and Act (1967) – see chapter on Charlie Parker
David Hajdu, Lush Life: A Biography of Billy Strayhorn (1998)
Ashley Kahn, Kind of Blue: The Making of the Miles Davis Masterpiece (2000)
Ashley Kahn, A Love Supreme: The Creation of John Coltrane's Classic Album (2002)
Barry McRae, Miles Davis (1988)
Charles Mingus, Beneath the Underdog (1971)
Art and Laurie Pepper, Straight Life ! The Story of Art Pepper (1979)
Peter Pettinger, Bill Evans: How my heart sings (1999)
Lewis Porter, John Coltrane (1999)
Ros Russell, Bird Lives ! The High Life and Hard Times of Charlie 'Yardbird' Parker (1973)
Gene Santoro, Myself when I am real: The Life and Music of Charles Mingus (2001)
John Szwed, So What: The Life of Miles Davis (2002)
John Szwed, Space is the Place: The Lives and Times of Sun Ra (1998)***
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Richard M. Sudhalter, Lost Chords : White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz, 1915-1945 (2001)

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- Matthew F. Jordan, Jazz and French Cultural Identity (2010)
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- S. Frederick Starr, Red and Hot: Fate and Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917-91 (1994)
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- Penny Von Eschen, Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War (2004)

Representing Jazz

- James Baldwin, 'Sonny's Blues', in Baldwin, Going to Meet the Man (1991 edn.)
- Marcela Breton (ed.), Hot and Cool: Jazz Short Stories (1990)
- Roddy Doyle, Oh Play that Thing (2004)
- Geoff Dyer, But Beautiful: A Book About Jazz (1991)
- John Clellon Holmes, The Horn (1952)
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- Toni Morrison, Jazz (1992)
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- Peter Stanfield, Body and Soul: Jazz, Blues and Race in American Film, 1927-63 (2005) ***
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Multimedia

Jazz (Dir. Ken Burns) (a series recorded for PBS and shown on BBC 2. Available in Video collection of library). See accompanying website <http://www.pbs.org/jazz/>

Various podcasts including BBC Radio 3 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/jazz/>

See youtube for a variety of Jazz visual sources

<http://www.nationaljazzarchive.org.uk/>

<http://ejazznews.com/>

<http://www.allaboutjazz.com/>

<http://www.downbeat.com>

<http://www.thejazzpage.de/index1.html>

<http://www.jazzcorner.com/>

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<http://www.pbs.org/jazz/>

<http://twitjazz.net/>

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<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wghtml/wghome.html>

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