MLAS 260-64: Music, Gender, and Sexuality
Spring 2017
Tuesday evening, 7:00-9:30 in Blair 1167

Instructor: Melanie Lowe
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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description:
MLAS 260-64 is an exploration of Gender and Sexuality in Western music, both art and vernacular traditions. We will consider such topics as musical constructions is an exploration of gender and sexuality in western music, both popular and classical traditions (e.g. rock, opera, dance, country, hip hop, orchestral, pop, etc.). Topics include musical constructions of masculinity, femininity, and sexuality; expressions of gender and sexuality in a variety of musical genres; feminist music criticism; queer theory; “deviant” sexualities in music; and music as sexual politics.

Class Participation and Attendance:
To ensure a lively and engaging class, participants must attend all class meetings (unless excused ahead of time by me), be on time, actively engage the material, issues, and questions outside of class, and be prepared to discuss them in class.

Required Materials:
I will provide all required materials. Supplemental materials and streaming audio reserves will be on reserve on Blackboard.

Reading and Writing Assignments:
There will be weekly reading assignments. For each reading assignment there will be an accompanying worksheet to direct you toward a critical engagement with the essay(s) and to help you prepare for the in-class discussion of the issues and questions raised by the author. For three of the reading assignments there will be an accompanying writing assignment in the form of a response essay.

Final Paper/Project:
There will be one final paper and/or project, due during the last two week of class, on a topic of your choosing and my agreement. I will hand out details about the final paper/project about midway through the semester.

Evaluation:
Class Participation 50%
Response Essays 30%
Final Paper/Project 20%

Disabilities:
If you need disability related accommodations for this course; if you have emergency medical information to share with me; or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment to speak with me, as well as the Opportunity Development Center (2-4705), as soon as possible.
Course Outline

Week 1  Read: Syllabus
        Handouts on “feminine” and “masculine”
Write: Opening exercise

Introduction and discussion of critical issues
Discussion of sex vs. gender
Examples of “feminine,” “masculine,” “straight,” and “gay” music

Week 2  Read: Fred Maus, “Music, Gender, and Sexuality”
        Simon Reynolds and Joy Press, “Angry Young Men: Precursors and
        Prototypes for Rock Rebellion”
        Ian Biddle and Freya Jarman-Ivens, “Oh Boy! Making Masculinity in
        Popular Music”
Write: Critical Engagement/Discussion Worksheet

Discussion of Maus, Reynolds/Press essay, Biddle/Jarman-Ivens essay,
and Masculinity
Introduction to Emo

Week 3  Read: Sarah F. Williams, “‘A Walking Open Wound’: Emo Rock and the ‘Crisis’
        of Masculinity in America”
        Sam de Boise, “Cheer Up Emo Kid: Rethinking the ‘Crisis of Masculinity’ in Emo”
Listen: Emo selections on Blackboard

Discussion of Williams and de Boise essays and Emo
Set-up for McClary essay

Week 4  Read: Susan McClary, “Getting Down Off the Beanstalk: The Presence of a
        Woman’s Voice in Janika Vandervelde’s Genesis II”
Listen: Beethoven, Symphony No. 9, First Movement
        Vandervelde, Genesis II
Write: Response Essay #1

Discussion of McClary essay
Introduction to Feminism and Feminist Theory
Set-up for van den Toorn/Quick intro to the politics of Music Theory

Week 5  Read: Pieter van den Toorn, “Politics, Feminism, and Contemporary Music Theory”
        Ruth Solie, “What Do Feminists Want? A Reply to Pieter van den Toorn”
        Suzanne L. Cataldi, “Reflections on ‘Male Bashing’”
Write: Critical Engagement/Discussion Worksheet

Discussion of van den Toorn, Solie, and Cataldi essays
Introduction to Covers
Week 6  Read:  Victoria Malawey, “‘Find Out What it Means to Me’: Aretha Franklin’s Gendered Re-authoring of Otis Redding’s ‘Respect’”
Write: Critical Engagement/Discussion Worksheet
Discussion of Malawey
Discussion of Taylor Swift/Ryan Adams 1989
Introduction to Madonna

Week 7  Read:  Susan McClary, “Living to Tell: Madonna’s Resurrection of the Fleshly”
Patricia Pisters, “Madonna’s girls in the mix: Performance of femininity beyond the beautiful”
Corinna Herr, “Where is the female body? Androgyny and other strategies of disappearance in Madonna’s music videos”
Karlene Faith, “Grist for Feminist Thinking”
View: Madonna, “Express Yourself,” “Justify My Love,” and “What It Feels Like for a Girl”
Write: Madonna video interpretations and response to Pisters
Discussion of Madonna videos and essays
Preliminary Thoughts on Lesbian and Gay Music: Handel and Pet Shop Boys

Week 8  Read:  Gary C. Thomas, “‘Was George Frideric Handel Gay?’: On Closet Questions and Cultural Politics”
Philip Brett and Elizabeth Wood, “Lesbian and Gay Music”
John Gill, “Pet Shop Boys, Naturally”
Martha Mockus, “Queer Thoughts on Country Music and k.d. lang”
Write: Critical Engagement/Discussion Worksheet
Discussion of Thomas, Brett and Wood, Gill, and Mockus essays
Introduction to The Cliks, Lucas Silveira, and Transgender Studies

Week 9  Read:  Elias Krell, “Contours through Covers: Voice and Affect in the Music of Lucas Silveira”
Write: Critical Engagement/Discussion Question Set
Discussion of Krell
Riot Acts

Week 10  Write: Final project proposal
Introduction to Queer Theory
Rocky Horror Picture Show
Marilyn Manson
Queen, “Bohemian Rhapsody”
Set-up for Hedwig
Week 11  *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*

Week 12  **Read:**  Jordy Jones, “Gender Without Genitals: Hedwig’s Six Inches”  
Judy Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens*, Chapter 5  
**Write:**  Critical Engagement/Discussion Question Sets  
(Peraino Question Set counts as Response Essay #3)  
Discussion of Peraino, Jones, and *Hedwig* and *Hedwig* Reviews

Week 13  **Prepare Final Projects**

4/16  Project Presentations

Week 14  **Prepare Final Projects**

4/23  Project Presentations
Course Readings


