

**MUH 3530: Popular and Traditional Music of Africa**  
**Syllabus Spring 2021**

**Professor:** Sarah Politz, spolitz@ufl.edu

**Course Time:** MWF 11:45 am-12:35 pm

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 2-4 pm via Zoom

**Teaching Assistant (TA):** Holly Tumblin, htumblin@ufl.edu

Course Description: This course examines selected topics in African music. Class periods include short lectures, discussions, music listening, video viewing, live presentations, and interactive participatory sessions involving music making among students. The course begins by introducing several broad issues including the representation of African music, the role of music in African social life, and the ways in which African musical traditions have impacted and been impacted by colonialism and globalization. The course then focuses on selected musical traditions linked (geographically and historically) to various areas of Africa. Several themes run through the course: interconnection of traditional and popular forms of music, colonial and post-colonial contexts of music making, the impact of mass media and global circulation of African music, and music's role in shaping African identities. Over the semester we will spend time reading about, discussing, and listening to a wide variety of musical sounds created by Africans. Pre-requisite: MUH 2501 or permission by the instructor.

This course satisfies Humanities (H) and International (N) general education requirements. As such, the course will explore how African music expresses and embodies the values and beliefs of different people and communities in Africa and in African diasporas in Europe and the Americas (especially in relation to the diversity of cultural norms and values in the United States). It will also investigate how academic scholars, journalists, politicians, and the music industry represent African music. Many of the readings for the class will highlight divergent interpretations of African music among American and African scholars from diverse socio-cultural perspectives, as well as connections between Africa and the diaspora.

Course Objectives:

- Increase students' knowledge and enjoyment of African music;
- Explore how African musics embody the values, beliefs, and cultural differences of a variety people, periods, and places in Africa and its diaspora;
- Introduce students to a diverse set of African musical traditions and instruments;
- Improve students' ability to recognize, discuss, and describe African musical styles, structures, using the terms, methods, and theoretical concepts of ethnomusicology;
- Enhance students' knowledge of African musical history in relation to major historical events and geopolitical global influences.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Gain an intellectual basis for understanding African music in diverse cultural contexts;
- Learn methods, theoretical concepts, and terms of the discipline of ethnomusicology and how the biases of both African and non-African scholars have shaped thought within the discipline;
- Develop critical thinking and listening skills in analyzing cultural values and orientations of African peoples in relation to the values and orientations of communities in the United States;
- Improve their abilities to communicate about African music clearly and effectively in small and large group contexts.

### Requirements:

- Attend class regularly,
- Complete required reading, listening, and viewing assignments,
- Participate in class discussions,
- Take three quizzes,
- Research, produce, and present a term paper or media/performance project.

### Course materials:

There is no required text purchase for this class. Assigned readings will come from sources made available online through the Canvas E-Learning site for the class and through the UF Library. A useful link for key resources in conducting music research and is <http://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/music>.

### Listening/viewing materials:

Listening to music outside of class periods is required for this class. For the topics we cover, you will be assigned selected listening examples that are available on the Canvas E-learning site for this class. Occasional viewing/listening examples may be available through the UF Library.

### Quizzes:

There will be three quizzes during the semester. Exams will include a combination of objective, short answer, listening identification, and essay portions. Make-ups will be given for excused absences only (see class attendance below).

### Online discussion questions:

Before 5 pm each Thursday, post a question or questions to that week's discussion board on Canvas that has come up for you from the readings and class discussions earlier in the week. You do not need to do this in weeks where there is a quiz.

### Term paper or media/performance project:

Each student must research and write a term paper or produce a media project, a component of which will be an oral presentation of the paper/project to the class. Students will be required to submit a paper or project proposal outlining the topic (due March 15). The final paper should be approximately 10 pages in length and follow proper formatting and citation as prescribed by the instructor. Media project such as a documentary video, radio podcast or PowerPoint presentation etc. must include a shorter paper of approximately 5 pages describing how the research was conducted. (Final written paper/media project due April 28).

### Grades:

Grades are based on the following percentages:

Participation 15%

Quiz 1 20%

Quiz 2 20%  
Quiz 3 20%  
Term Paper/Project 25%

Total 100%

### Grading Scale

A 95%  
A- 90%  
B+ 87%  
B 83%  
B- 80%  
C+ 77%  
C 73%  
C- 70%  
D+ 67%  
D 63%  
D- 60%  
E 0-59%

Information on current UF grading policies and grade points may be found at  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

### **Outline of Class Work:**

#### Week 1 – Introduction to African Music

1/11 Course introduction

1/13 An African Scholar's Perspective

Nketia, Kwabena. 1974. "The Musical Traditions of Africa." In *The Music of Africa*, 1-20. New York: WW Norton.

1/15 Confronting African Rhythmic Complexity: An American Scholar's Perspective

Chernoff, John Miller. 1991. "The Rhythmic Medium in African Music." *New Literary History* 22(4):1093-1102.

Stone, Ruth. 2000. "Part I: Intro to African Music." In *The Garland Handbook of African Music*, 1-21.

#### Week 2 – African Music, Globalization, and the Legacy of Colonialism

1/18 Martin Luther King Jr. Day – No class

1/20 Agawu, Kofi. 2003. "Colonialism's Impact." In *Representing African Music*, 1-22. New York: Routledge.

1/22 Taylor, Timothy. 1997. "Popular Musics and Globalization" ("Authenticity") in *Global Pop*. 21-38.

#### Week 3 – South African Music: Apartheid, Migration, Musical Meaning

1/25 Viewing: *Amandla!* (DVD on reserve)

1/27 Muller, Carol. 2004. "Music and Migrancy." In *South African Music: A Century of Traditions in Transformation*. 118-152.

1/29 Meintjes, Louise. 1990. "Paul Simon's Graceland, South Africa, and the Mediation of Musical Meaning." *Ethnomusicology*, 34(1):37-73.

#### Week 4 – Musical Instruments in Africa

2/1 Bakan, Michael. 2007. "Music Instruments," in *World Music: Traditions and Transformations*, 61-73. New York: McGraw-Hill.

2/3 Nketia, Kwabena. 1989. "The Aesthetic Dimensions of African Musical Instruments." In Marie-Therese Brincard (ed.), *Sounding Forms: African Musical Instruments*, 21-30. New York: American Federation of the Arts.

2/5 Eyre, Banning. 2003. "African Reinventions of the Guitar." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Guitar*, Victor Coelho (ed.), 44-64 and notes 234-235. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

#### Week 5 – Jeli Traditions in Mali

2/8 Charry, Eric. 2000. "Mali and the Jeliya" in *Mande Music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

2/10 Charry, Eric. 2000. "Jeli Instruments: Kora," "Koni," In *Mande Music*.

2/12 No class – Dr. Politz away at conference

#### Week 6 – Malian Popular Music

2/15 Charry. "Bala," and "Jembe" in *Mande Music*.

2/17 Charry, Eric. 2000. "The Guitar and the Modern Era." In *Mande Music*. 242-283.

Listening: Ali Farka Toure, Salif Keita, Oumou Sangare

2/19 \*Quiz 1

#### Week 7 – Traditional and Popular Music in Ghana

2/22 Locke, David. 2008. "Agbekor: Music and Dance of the Ewe People." In *Worlds of Music*, ed. Jeff Todd Titon.

2/24 Collins, John. 1989. "The Early History of West African Highlife Music," *Popular Music*, 8(3):221-230.

2/26 Amoah-Ramey, Nana Amena. 2018. Introduction and ch. 1-2. *Female Highlife Performers in Ghana: Expression, Resistance, and Advocacy*. 1-40.

#### Week 8 – Hiplife in Ghana

3/1 Viewing: *Living the Hiplife* (DVD on reserve)

3/3 Shipley, Jesse. 2012. "The Birth of Ghanaian Hiplife: Urban Style, Black Thought, Proverbial Speech," in *Hip Hop Africa*. 29-56.

3/5 Charry, Eric. 2012. "A Capsule History of African Rap," in *Hip Hop Africa*. 1-28.

#### Week 9 – Afrobeat and Fela Kuti

3/8 Waterman, Christopher. 1990. "Our Tradition Is a Very Modern Tradition: Popular Music and the Construction of Pan-Yoruba Identity." *Ethnomusicology*, 34(3):367-79.

Optional: Alaja-Browne, Afolabi. 1989. "A Diachronic Study of Change in Juju Music." *Popular Music* 8(3):231-242.

Viewing: *Juju Music*

3/10 Grass, Randall. 1986. "Fela Anikulapo-Kuti: The Art of an Afrobeat Rebel." *The Drama Review* 30(1): 131-148.

3/12 Stewart, Alexander. 2003. "Make It Funky: Fela Kuti, James Brown, and the Invention of Afrobeat," *American Studies*, 52(4):99-118.

Viewing: *Finding Fela* (DVD on reserve)

#### Week 10 – Popular Music in Benin: Brass Bands, Angelique Kidjo

3/15 \*Final project/paper proposals due

Kidjo, Angélique. 2014. "Back to Benin." In *Spirit Rising*. 113-136.

Viewing: *Gangbe!* (video on course site)

3/17 \*Class visit from Jomion and the Uklos

3/19 Politz, Sarah. 2018. "We Don't Want to Be Jazz-Jazz: Afro-Modernism, Jazz, and Brass Band Music in Benin," *Jazz and Culture*, 1:12-48.

#### Week 11 – Traditional and Popular Music in Nigeria

3/22 Aremu, PSO. 1993. "Drums, Drumming and Drummers: The Cultural Manifestation of the Yorubas." In *Drums: The Heartbeat of Africa*, ed. Esther A. Dagan, 109-114. Montreal, Canada: Galerie Amrad African Art Production.

Nigerian Afrobeats

3/24 Student Recharge Day

3/26 \*Quiz 2

#### Week 12 – Zimbabwe: Mbira and Chimurenga

3/29 Berliner, Paul. 1978. Chapters 1 and 2, *Soul of Mbira*, 1-27.

3/31 Turino, Thomas. 1998. "The Mbira, Worldbeat, and the International Imagination," *The World of Music* 40(2): 85-106.

Viewing: *Mbira: Spirit of the People* (link on course site)

4/2 Kyker, Jennifer. 2014. "Learning in Secret: Entanglements Between Gender and Age in Women's Experiences with the Zimbabwean Mbira Dzavadzimu," *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 23(1):110-134.

#### Week 13 – Central Africa

4/5 Turnbull, Colin and Michelle Kisliuk: Liner Notes to *Mbuti Pygmies of the Ituri Rain Forest*.

4/7 Feld, Steven. 1996. "Pygmy Pop: A Genealogy of Schizophonic Mimesis," *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 28:1-35 (read pp. 1-12 only)

4/9 Listening: *Voices of the Rainforest* (on course site)

#### Week 14 – Congolese Music

4/12 Stewart, Gary. 2003. *Rumba on the River*. 1-22.

4/14 Stewart, Gary. 2003. *Rumba on the River*. 34-48 and selections.

4/16 \*Quiz 3

#### Week 15 – Conclusions

4/19 Student presentations

4/21 Student presentations

**Final papers and projects due Wednesday, April 28 by 5 pm**

#### **Policies**

The in-person section of this course will take place face-to-face to accomplish the student learning objectives of this course. In response to COVID-19, the following policies and requirements are in place to maintain your learning environment and to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions.

- You are required to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings. Following and enforcing these policies and requirements are all of our

responsibility. Failure to do so will lead to a report to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

- This course has been assigned a physical classroom with enough capacity to maintain physical distancing (6 feet between individuals) requirements. Please utilize designated seats and maintain appropriate spacing between students. Please do not move desks or stations.
- Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
- Follow your instructor's guidance on how to enter and exit the classroom. Practice physical distancing to the extent possible when entering and exiting the classroom.
- During class breaks, please exit the building entirely and observe physical distancing of 6 feet. Please do not congregate in the classroom or in the hallways. You should come prepared with outerwear, umbrella, etc. to take the break outdoors.
- It is strongly recommended that students in the in-person section bring a device (laptop, tablet, smartphone) and earbuds/headphones with microphone to class to participate in Zoom video and chat sessions. Please speak with the professor if you need access to a device for class.
- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms ([Click here for guidance from the CDC on symptoms of coronavirus](#)), please use the UF Health screening system and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. [Click here for UF Health guidance on what to do if you have been exposed to or are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms](#).
  - Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. [Find more information in the university attendance policies](#).

The online section of this course takes place on Zoom and Canvas concurrently with the in-person section. You should participate actively in discussion on Zoom, using video and audio as appropriate, and keeping your microphone muted when not speaking. Remember that you can also participate using the chat function in Zoom. You may mute your video after the beginning of class if you wish, but you are encouraged to keep it on. You may find that earbuds or headphones, as well as a quiet, private space, improve your experience.

Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your image, video, or voice recorded, please speak with the professor about your concerns. You also have the option of using the chat function to participate. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Resources for confronting the challenges of COVID-19, including dealing with precarious home and work environments, mental health issues, and displacement, can be found here:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/11IYAeLIZEGexvmxanpQjTOE4xw\\_wsMQgS4uwt7GohvM/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/11IYAeLIZEGexvmxanpQjTOE4xw_wsMQgS4uwt7GohvM/edit)

Please do not multitask during class, become distracted by your phone or other devices, browse the web, etc. You should arrive on time, and notify Dr. Politz if you need to be absent, late, or leave early.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

For UF grading policies, including grades and grade points, please see here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/> ([Links to an external site.](#)).

#### **Academic Resources:**

Technical support (including Zoom and internet trouble), [helpdesk.ufl.edu](http://helpdesk.ufl.edu), 352-392-4357

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.  
<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.  
<http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

Career Connections Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.  
<https://career.ufl.edu/> ([Links to an external site.](#))

Office of Graduate Professional Development. Workshops and career advising on job searches, writing and research, personal and professional development for graduate students.

<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/about-us/offices/division-of-graduate-student-affairs-dgsa/professional-development-ogpd/>

E-learning technical support (for Canvas), 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu). <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

#### **Wellness Resources:**

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.