“Music, Media, Modernity”

MS-9325/PMC-9733 Fall 2015, Weds., 1:30-4:20, Middlesex MC-15
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Cicero: “Not to know what happened before one was born is always to be a child”
Oscar Wilde: “The one duty we owe to history is to rewrite it”
Mark Twain (attr.): “History doesn’t repeat itself, but it does rhyme”

This course explores the recent efflorescence of historical research on modernity. While there will be an emphasis on sound media, attention will also be paid to intersections with the visual dimensions of the modern. Topics will include minstrelsy, Tin Pan Alley, vaudeville, advertising, journalism and comics, the rise of sound recording, radio and cinema, and the new forms of intermediality that characterize the period between roughly 1850 and 1970. A key focus of the course will be the advent of mass media culture and its relationship to “the popular.”

Readings
Assigned readings will be available in the Graduate Resource Centre on the second floor of the North Campus Building or online. I have ordered copies of the required course text, Raymond Williams’s Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, at the UWO bookstore.

Evaluation
Participation (20%):
Students will be expected to do the readings, attend the seminars, participate in discussions.

Seminar Presentation (20%):
Depending on class size students will present one brief seminar presentation (approx. 20 mins.) based on one reading from that week’s required readings; dates TBA.

Digital Research Assignment (10%):
Students will write a 3-5 pp. paper outlining the results of researching a keyword concept via digital periodical databases; details (including due date) will be circulated on a separate handout.

Final paper (50%):
Students will conceive, research and write a final course paper in consultation with the instructor, 20-25 pp., due January 13th, 2016.
Outline of Topics and Readings

Sept. 9th  Intro Q: Where's Popular Music? A: Always Already Intermedial
Recommended Readings:


Sept. 16th  Moderns


Sept. 23rd  Historicizing


Recommended Reading:
Sept. 30th  **The Sacred and the Kitsch**  


Recommended Readings:

Sam Binkley “Kitsch as a Repetitive System: A Problem for the Theory of Taste Hierarchy” *Journal of Material Culture* July 2000 vol. 5 no. 2 131-152


Oct. 7th  **Charivari and Carnival Noise**  


Recommended Readings:


Oct. 14th  Minstrels and Coons


Patricia R. Schroeder “Passing for Black: Coon Songs and the Performance of Race” Journal of American Culture 33.2, pages 139–153, June 2010

Oct. 21st  Tin Pan Alley


Recommended Readings:


Craig Roell, The Piano in America, 1890-1940 (Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 1989

Oct. 28th Vaudeville into Cinema


Recommended Readings:


Nov. 4th Jazz

Bernard Gendron “Moldy Figs and Modernists: Jazz at War (1942-1946)” Discourse Vol. 15, No. 3 (Spring 1993), pp. 130-157


Recommended Readings:


**Nov. 11th Phonograph, Microphone, Crooner**


Recommended Readings:


Recommended Reading:  Cristina Magaldi “Cosmopolitanisma and World Music in Rio de Janeiro at the Turn of the Twentieth Century” Musical Quarterly 2009.


Dec. 9th  Conclusions