

The University of Western Ontario, London, Canada
Department of Music
Winter 2023

MUS3737B: Special Topics in Popular Music Industry - The Making of the Drag Industry

The department would like to recognize that we are located on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples.

Instructor: Sadie Hochman-Ruiz (Pronouns: she/her)

Mail: shochma@uwo.ca

Location: TC-202 W 7-10

Office Hours: Fridays 3-4pm, via Zoom.

Course Description: This course is a cultural history of the drag industry. Drag has been a part of the creative industries since their inception in the 1800s. The content focuses upon how and why the industries have assumed their forms, and the cultural assumptions that have informed them over decades. Topics include performance spaces, politics and legality, technology, and questions of identity. By the end of this course, you will be able to recognize the origins and evolution of drag, understand the causes and effects of change in the industry, map out its relationship to other creative industries, and consider where drag might head in the future.

Course Objectives:

- Become familiar with the history of drag and how its past informs, mirrors, and shapes debates in the industry today
- Explore the interrelationship between drag and the music industry as it has developed over time
- Examine the impact of race and gender norms have influenced the structure and products of the drag industry over time
- Understand the ways drag and transgender people have been policed and legislated over time
- Gain competency in writing analytical and or evaluative papers on selected topics
- Achieve confidence in simultaneously tapping into your capacity for creativity and critical reflection

Required Course Materials: Readings will be made available by the professor on OWL.

Course Evaluation:

Attendance and Participation (15%): Students are expected to attend each lecture and to be prepared, having read required material and willing to contribute in class discussions.

Seminar Presentations (10%): Between weeks 4 and 13, students will sign up (alone or in pairs) to present on one reading. There will be one presentation a week. Students are expected to summarize the reading and consider its connection to the topic of the week. End your presentation with a discussion question for the class. Presentations

should take no more than 10 minutes. Additional research is welcome but not necessary. Presentations will be graded on preparedness, quality of the information, and delivery.

Take Home Midterm (30%): The midterm consists of two sections. The first is terms to define. The second is short answer questions. Use proper citations for quotes. Estimated length of answers will be provided on the test.

Lip Synch Assignment (15%): Create a lip-synch of no more than 90 seconds and write a 500 word reflection on the experience. You will have to create an original mix of no less than three tracks. You are welcome to use any DAW, but I will lead a workshop in how to use Audacity—a free program. All DAWs contain similar controls and the techniques you learn should be transferable. At the end of week 11's class, you have the option to hand in a video of your lip-synch or perform it live in class.

Audacity download links: <https://www.audacityteam.org/download/>

Hand in a 1000 word reflection on your work. What did you mix? Why did you make the cuts in the audio that you did? Did the readings about lip-synching impact your process?

Assignments will be graded based on completeness, quality of writing, and depth of reflection. Bonus points will be awarded to highly creative lip-synchs.

Final Paper (30%): Write a final paper on a topic of your choice related to the course. Papers should be 3000-3500 words. Use no less than five scholarly sources and at least three sources not on the assigned reading list. If you submit a proposal, by week 10 at the latest, which includes your proposed topic, a preliminary bibliography, and 3 main points you would like to discuss, you will be awarded 5% extra credit (depending on the quality of the work). Papers will be graded on content, originality, and quality of writing.

If you would like to replace the final paper with a project (e.g. performance, podcast, recording, graphic art, zine) then you must discuss your ideas with me no later than week 9. Your creative project will need to include a 2000-2500 word accompanying written piece explaining the work, your creative decision process, and its connection to course material. Your written piece must still use five scholarly sources and at least three not on the assigned reading list.

Missed assignments and academic accommodation: Academic Accommodation must be requested within 28 days of the missed assignment. All assignments **MUST** be submitted by the deadlines noted on this syllabus. If you think you will not be able to submit your assignment in time (because of illness or bereavement), you must contact me as soon as you are aware of this. All assignments submitted late without documentation will be penalized 5% per day that they are late (including weekends). No assignments will be accepted two weeks after the due date.

Essay Format: All assignments must be typed and double-spaced with standard margins (1-inch side, top, and bottom margins). Do not forget to include your name, student number, course code,

and proper citation for all references. You may only use referencing and bibliographic formats from MLA or Chicago Style.

In accordance with the University of Western Ontario Undergraduate Calendar, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100
A = 80-89
B = 70-79
C = 60-79
D = 50-59
F = Below 50%

OTHER MATTERS:

- **Academic Consideration for Student Absence:** Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:
 - for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
 - absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
 - assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
 - if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are not met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office. For the Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

- **Academic Consideration for Missing Work:** In cases where students are unable to submit work due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if an online self-reported absence is submitted, or if appropriate supporting documentation is submitted to the Associate Dean's office, and the accommodation is granted, then the missed assessments may be rescheduled or discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course, at the discretion of the instructor. If neither a self-reported absence nor an appropriate supporting document is submitted to the appropriate office, then the missed assignments will receive a grade of zero.
- **Academic Offences:** Submission of work with which you have received help from someone else (other than the course instructor or TA) is an example of plagiarism, which is considered a major academic offence. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, as found at: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf
- **Mental Health & Wellness:** Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to the Health and Wellness at Western page (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or to go to the Wellness Education Centre located in UCC room 76. Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in UC11 or to click on the green "I Need Help Now" button on the Health and Wellness page above.
- **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Students work with Accessible Education Western (AEW, formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf
- **Religious Accommodation:** Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar. <http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

There are several services for students on campus to take advantage of:

- 1) **Counselling Services:** Students experiencing emotional or mental distress can drop-in at Psychological Services located on the 4th floor of the Student Development Centre. Alternatively, you can book an appointment by calling 519-661-3031.
- 2) **Writing Support Centre (Rm 4130, Student Development Centre)** can help you learn to write better papers. Tutors are graduate students from a range of departments who have been

trained to assist you at any stage in the writing process. You can make an appointment in person at the Writing Centre or call them at 519-661-3655.

- 3) Learning Skills Services (Rm 4100, Student Development Centre) can help develop better learning skills. To make an appointment, you can email them at learning@uwo.ca.

Weekly Topics Breakdown

Week/Date	Topic	Read
1 1/11	Introduction and Overview	
2 1/18	Origins of Creative Industries in America, Where does drag fit in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gebhardt, “There’s No Business Like Show Business.” • Toll, “The Female Impersonators.”
3 1/25	Race, Minstrelsy, and Vaudeville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garofolo and Waksman, “Constructing Tin Pan Alley” • https://www.black-face.com/minstrel-female-impersonators.htm • Casey, “The Jewish Girl with a Coloured Voice” • Morris, “The Blacks, the Jews, and the Gays.”
4 2/1	Female Impersonators and the Music Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grantmyre, “They lived their Life.” • Callen, Jeffrey, “Gender Crossings.” • Hamilton, “Sexual Politics and African-American Music.”
5 2/8	Legislating Performance Venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mumford, “Interracial Intersections” • Sutherland, “Why get involved?” • https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/sep/14/pansy-craze-the-wild-1930s-drag-parties-that-kickstarted-gay-nightlife
6 2/15	Gender, Class, and the Mass Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, “The somewhat different diva” • Senelick, “Putting On The Drag” • S.D., “The Palace Years”
7 2/22	Reading Week	Take home midterm
8 3/1	Amateurism and Labour Disputes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anderson, “Buried under the Fecundity of His Own Creations” • Senelick, “Queens of Clubs.” • Newton, “On The Job.”

Week/Date	Topic	Read
9 3/15	Drag as Protest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baker, “Frock Tactics.” • Hillman, “The Most Profoundly Revolutionary Act a Homosexual Can Do” • Frank, “Discophobia” <p>Audacity Workshop</p>
10 3/22	Art, Technology, and Lip-Synching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frith, “Art versus Technology” • Kaminsky and Taylor, “We’re Not Just Lip Synching.” • Byrd, “Air Apparent” • Bird, “Haptic Aurality.” <p>Final week to submit final paper proposal</p>
11 3/29	Race, Desire, and the New Minstrelsy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edgar, “Xtravaganza!” • McIntyre and Riggs, “North American Universalism in <i>RuPaul’s Drag Race</i>” in Brennan and Gudelunas <p>Lip Sync Assignment Due</p>
12 4/5	Reality Television and Music Careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vesey, “A Way to Sell Your Records.” • Stahl, “<i>American Idol</i> and Narratives of Meritocracy.” • Gudelunas, “Digital Extensions, Experiential Extensions, and Hair Extensions” in Brennan and Gudelunas
13 4/12	Legislating Gender and Performance in the 21st Century	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hankins, “Drag Tipping” • https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2022/11/texas-transgender-ban-drag-shows-criminalize-parents.html <p>Final Paper Due</p>

Full Citations

Anderson, Tim. ““Buried under the Fecundity of His Own Creations”: Reconsidering the Recording Ban of the American Federation of Musicians, 1942-1944 and 1948.” *American Music* 22:2. 2004. Pgs. 231-269.

Baker, Roger. *Drag: A History of Female Impersonation in the Performing Arts*. New York: New York University Press, 1994.

- Bird, Jacob Mallinson. "Haptic Aurality: On Touching the Voice in Drag Lip-Sync Performance." *Sound Studies* 6:1. Pgs. 45-64.
- Brennan, Neil and David Gudelunas, eds. *RuPaul's Drag Race and the Shifting Visibility of Drag Culture: The Boundaries of Reality TV*. Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017.
- Callen, Jeffrey. "Gender Crossings: A Neglected History in American American Music." *Queering the Popular Pitch* eds. Sheila Whitely, Jennifer Rycenga. New York: Routledge, 2013. Pgs. 185-198.
- Casey, Kathleen B. "'The Jewish Girl with the Colored Voice': Sophie Tucker and the Sounds of Race and Gender in Modern America." *The Journal of American Culture* 38:1. 2015. Pgs. 16-26.
- Edgar, Eir-Anne. 2011. "Xtravaganza!": Drag Representation and Articulation in RuPaul's Drag Race." *Studies in Popular Culture* 34:1. Pgs. 133-146.
- Frank, Gillian. "Discophobia: Anti-Gay Prejudice and the 1979 Backlash against Disco." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 16: 2 (2007): 276-306.
- Frith, Simon. "Art versus Technology: The Strange Case of Popular Music." *Media, Culture and Society*." 8 (1986). Pgs. 261-79.
- Garofalo, Reebee and Steve Waksman. *Rockin Out': Popular Music in the U.S.A.* 6th ed. Somerville: Pearson, 2014.
- Gebhardt, Nicholas. *Vaudeville Melodies: Popular Musicians and Mass Entertainment in American Culture 1870-1929*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.
- Grantmyre, Laura. "The Lived Their Life and They Didn't Bother Anybody": African American Female Impersonators and Pittsburgh's Hill District, 1920-1960. *American Quarterly* 63:3. 2011. Pgs. 983-1011.
- Hamilton, Marybeth. "Sexual Politics and African-American Music; or, Placing Little Richard in History." *History Workshop Journal* 46 (1998). Pgs. 160-176.
- Hankins, Sarah. "'I'm a Cross between a Clown, a Stripper, and a Streetwalker': Drag Tipping, Sex Work, and A Queer Sociosexual economy." *Signs* 40:2. 2015. Pgs. 441-466.
- Hillman, Betty Luther. 2011. "The Most Profoundly Revolutionary Act a Homosexual Can Engage In": Drag and the Politics of Gender Presentation in the San Francisco Gay Liberation Movement." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20:1, 153-181.

- Kaminski, Elizabeth and Verta Taylor. ““We’re Not Just Lip-Synching Up Here”: Music and Collective Identity in Drag Performances.” *Identity Work in Social Movements* eds. Jo Reger, Daniel J. Myers, and Rachel Einwohner. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.
- McDaniel, Byrd. “Air Apparent: Amplifying the History of Air Guitar, Air Bands, and Air Playing in the Twentieth Century.” *American Quarterly* 70:4 (2018): 807-829
- Morris, Mitchell. “The Blacks, the Jews, and the Gays: Bette Midler’s Third-Order Vaudeville.” *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 22. 2018. Pgs. 108-106.
- Mumford, Kevin J. *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
- S.D., Trav. 2005. *No Applause Just Throw Money: The Book that made Vaudeville Famous*. New York: Faber and Faber, Inc.
- Senelick, Laurence. *The Changing Room: Sex, Drag, and Theatre*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Sutherland, Richard. “Why get involved? Finding Reasons for Municipal Interventions in the Canadian Music Industry.” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 19:3, 2013. Pgs. 366-381.
- Stahl, Matt. *Unfree Masters: Recording Artists and the Politics of Work*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013.
- Toll, Robert C. *On With The Show: The First Century of Show Business in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.
- Vesey, Alyxandra. “A Way to Sell Your Records”: Pop Stardom and the Politics of Drag Professionalization on *RuPaul’s Drag Race*.” *Television & New Media* 18:7. 2017. Pgs. 589-604.
- Wilson, James F. “The somewhat different diva: Impersonation, ambivalence and the musical comedy.”: *Studies in Musical Theatre* 12:1. 2018. Pgs. 9-23.