WOMEN'S STUDIES 301-3
SPECIAL TOPICS

THE MUSIC OF WOMEN IN NORTH AMERICA

Fall Semester/1982
Instructor: Karlene Faith X3645
Assistant: Hildegard Westerkamp

Music has affected women's lives in all times and places. Through lectures, audio tapes, readings and tutorial discussion, this course will focus on music that has been composed, performed and appreciated by women of diverse cultures in North America, with emphasis on the 20th century. We will study "popular" music as well as classical, folk, jazz, "feminist," and various other traditional, contemporary and avant garde genres.

Course topics and themes of inquiry will include: music of social rituals--work, dance, worship, patriotism, protest; European and African influences on North American music traditions; lyrical themes of love and romance, nature and vision, toil and trouble; the music of Canadian cultural minorities; the dialectic of sending and receiving music; affects on music by media and technology; music as commercialized commodity; female imagery in song; musician/audience relationship; feminist aesthetics; environment as configuration of sounds and silence; music as a healing force; the discovery of music within our selves.

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Students will meet weekly for a two-hour lecture-with-music and a one-hour tutorial.

The course satisfies 3 upper division credits for a Women's Studies Minor and 3 upper division credits for Communication.

Prerequisite: 60 credit hours of undergraduate study in any discipline. Knowledge of music theory or developed musical ability are not prerequisites for this class.

Readings

A required Reading Packet of Selected Articles and Bibliography will be prepared for the course and will be available from the instructor at cost of duplication. Additional reading requirements, available from the campus bookstore and on library reserve, are as follows:

WOMEN IN MUSIC, Carol Neuls-Bates
BESSIE (Biography of Bessie Smith), Chris Albertson
WOMEN AND MUSIC, Heresies #10
BURIED ALIVE (Biography of Janis Joplin), Myra Friedman
Listening

Taped music will be integrated with the lectures. Additional audio tapes will be prepared for the course and will be available on library reserve.

Assignments and Evaluation

Each of the four assignments, as follows, will account for 25% of the final grade:

I. Biographical essay focused on any 20th century female composer and/or performer. (Minimum 5 double-spaced typed pages.)

II. Descriptive essay on the role of women in the musical expression of any North American sub-culture. (Minimum 5 pages.)

Students are encouraged, when feasible, to conduct first-hand interviews as part of the essay research, and to submit cassette music tapes to illustrate essay material.

Essays will be graded on the following criteria:
- resourcefulness in gathering material
- originality of perspective
- clarity of ideas
- analytical persuasion
- documentation of sources

III. Tutorial Project. Each student will give a 20-30 minute presentation to the tutorial group, with open choice of topic and method of presentation.

Projects could include, for example: facilitate tutorial discussion on some challenging issue; prepare audio tape with music and commentary; give an oral account of essay research—problems encountered, surprise discoveries, etc.; give a music performance; read and discuss selected lyric-poetry; slide show with soundtrack...

Students may collaborate on projects.

Grading of tutorial project will be based on:
- preparation effort, including use of the imagination
- effectiveness of delivery
- subjective responses elicited by the presentation

IV. Final Exam. There will be a take-home exam, consisting of objective questions, and brief narrative-answer questions, which will review material presented in lectures, readings and tapes.