Courses for Fall 2022

Beyond Bossa Nova: The Social Power of Brazilian Music
NRH
Thursday 2:30-5:25
Tshombe Miles, Black and Latino Studies
Gisele Regatao, Journalism

How does popular music serve as a mirror to understanding racial identity, gender relations and class dynamics? How does it help popularize political movements?

Brazil is a country with one of the most diverse racial and ethnic populations in the world. And it has created one of the richest and most diverse forms of popular music -- both in urban and rural settings.

From the birth of samba in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro in the early 1900s to the radical Tropicalia movement in the 1960s, the Black Soul movement of the 1970s and the baile funk in the 1990s, Brazilian music has always responded to and often triggered social and political change. We’ll look at the history of popular music in Brazil and analyze how it influenced racial and gender relations, shaped labor organizations like the Landless Workers’ Movement, highlighted social disparities and catapulted neglected areas of the country into national attention, like the mangue beat movement of Recife. We’ll interview local artists, read and discuss articles, documentaries, audio features and, at the end of the semester, potentially produce a music podcast.

Climate Change, Ethics, and Literature
NMH
Monday 2:30-5:25
Steven Swarbrick, English
Elizabeth Edenberg, Philosophy

In this course, we will explore the pressing moral challenge of climate change through the lens of literature, poetry, literary criticism, and philosophy. These different disciplines will be used to understand how humans have understood their relationship with the natural world and explore different possible futures.

The course will begin by looking at representations of the natural world (from literature and philosophy) in history. We will then investigate the distinct ethical challenges posed by climate change. For example: how do global inequalities impact the way people are affected by climate change? How does this bear on the distribution of responsibility for addressing climate change? What is environmental racism and how can we address it? We will also then begin to imagine
different potential futures for tackling climate change as well as exploring dystopian visions of what might happen if we fail to successfully act.

After laying out some theoretical backgrounds, students will begin exploring their own research project aimed at addressing climate change as a significant moral challenge. These research projects should reflect both a clear understanding of the issues we’ve explored as a class and independent research into the student’s area of focus, but the format of the final product could include research papers as well as creative explorations.