

Ethnic Studies 189

Bob Marley and the Global Caribbean

University of California, San Diego

Spring 2008

Tuesday/Thursday | 9:30-10:50am | Pepper Canyon Hall 122

Instructor:

Jason Robinson, Ph.D.

Email: jarobins@ucsd.edu

Office: H&SS 1050

Office Hours: Tu/Thu 11am-12:30pm

Course Description:

Since the 1970's, Jamaican popular music has been a dominant musical voice in the Caribbean and beyond. The 1972 partnership of Island Records, the British-based record label, and reggae icon Bob Marley, signaled a new and important presence in the international pop music world and a rising voice of Third World consciousness. The commercial viability of reggae led to the globalization of a music and culture with a complex semiotics and particularity to Jamaican society. Musically and sociologically, the influence of ska, reggae, Jamaican DJ culture, and Rastafarianism has been a significant factor in multiple continents, creating a web of relationships between communities in Jamaica, the United States, Great Britain and many countries in Africa.

This course will utilize the music and life of Bob Marley to generate a number of questions about the role of popular music in the globalization of culture and the creation, continuation, and challenging of racial and ethnic identities. We will explore the roots and development of Afro-Jamaican popular music and culture, its leading figures and styles, and its enduring influence throughout the world. Attention will be given to the African and Jamaican diasporas, Jamaican immigrant communities in the United States and Great Britain, pan-African/pan-West Indian identity, the intersection of culture and politics, the complex matrix of race and class, the trans-national popular music industry, and in its most general sense, the role of music in identity. We will view music as a social formation whose analysis illustrates the connection between emergent post/neo-colonial identities and shifting attitudes about race and ethnicity.

Materials:

Texts:

Required texts:

1) White, Timothy – *Catch a Fire: The Life of Bob Marley*

2) Course Reader

The Timothy White book is the definitive biography of Bob Marley, and will be used throughout the quarter. It is available for purchase at Groundwork Books (452-9625). A copy of the Timothy White book will be available through the Course Reserves of Geisel Library. The Course Reader is a wide-ranging compilation of articles and chapters from important sources on race and ethnicity, music and culture, Jamaican music, Rastafarianism, reggae in the United States, Europe, and Africa, globalization, and other issues. The Course Reader will be made available online through UCSD's Dokutek E-Reserves. You do not need to purchase a Course Reader.

Optional text:

Bradley, Lloyd – *This is Reggae Music: The Story of Jamaica’s Music*

This book is an interesting companion to the Marley biography and provides alternative perspectives on the development of Jamaican popular music. Although it is not “required,” this text will help you to develop a wide-ranging, nuanced approach to much of the material of this course. This book is on reserve at Geisel Library and can be purchased through Groundwork Books.

Listening:

We will interpret recorded sound as a “text” capable of detailed critical analysis relating to a wide variety of theoretical, social, and cultural issues. Important listening examples are available online through DAR (Digital Audio Reserves), accessible through UCSD’s Dokutek E-Reserves. Each lecture is accompanied by a “listening list” indicated on the course schedule. You are expected to engage the listening as a form of homework. DAR examples may appear on the midterm and final exams.

Additional Reserve Items:

A few additional items have been placed on reserve at on reserve at Geisel Library or at the Film and Video Reserves. More items will be added to the reserve list throughout the quarter (check the course website for updated reserve listings).

Course Reader / Articles – Various required and supplementary readings are included in the Course Reader. Available through Dokutek E-Reserves.

Books – Available at the Course Reserves, Geisel Library
Bradley, Lloyd. *Bass Culture: When Reggae Was King*
Davis, Stephen. *Reggae Bloodlines: In Search of the Music and Culture of Jamaica*
White, Timothy. *Catch A Fire: The Life of Bob Marley*

Videos – Available for viewing at Film and Video Reserves, first floor of Geisel Library.
The Harder They Come
Rockers: It’s Dangerous
Life and Debt

Grade Breakdown:

Midterm Exam	25%
Paper	25%
Final Essay	20%
Final Exam	30%

Grading Scale:

97-100	A+	87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+
94-96	A	84-86	B	74-76	C	64-66	D
90-93	A-	80-83	B-	70-73	C-	60-63	D-
						0-59	F

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance and completion of reading and listening assignments are fundamental aspects of the learning process. It is expected that you come to class prepared to discuss the key ideas of the readings. There will be no make-up allowed for exams, essays or other assigned work. If you foresee a scheduling issue with the tests or assignment due dates, please contact me and we will work things out (in advance). If you miss a lecture, it is best to come to my office hours to learn about the material you missed (rather than requesting information over email).

Paper:

You will be required to write a 5-8 page essay using many of the analytical tools that will be developed through lectures, readings, and listening. The essay prompt will be distributed during week 2. The essay must be written in clear, grammatical English, typed and double-spaced (no larger than 12 point Times New Roman font, or equivalent), and must include citations and a bibliography.

Midterm and Final Exams:

The midterm and final will consist of short answer and essay questions. These exams are intended to determine your depth of critical engagement with the concepts, personalities, readings and recordings discussed in class and homework. A significant portion of each exam will be based on listening examples.

Final Essay:

A final essay of 4-5 pages will be assigned and discussed during 10th week and will be due at the beginning of the Final Exam. This essay must be typed and double-spaced.

Class Schedule:

3/31-4/6 Course Introduction:

The case for understanding Bob Marley in the globalization of culture

Readings:

- White. *Catch a Fire*. Chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-48)
- Kenneth Bilby. "Jamaica."
- Linton Kwesi Johnson. "Jamaican Rebel Music."
- Paul Gilroy. Excerpts from *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*.

Listening:

"Introduction and early Jamaican music"

4/7-4/13 "If you don't know your past, you don't know your future"

Jamaica's historical emergence in the African diaspora

Readings:

- White. *Catch a Fire*. Chapters 3-4 (pp. 49-96)
- Arjun Appadurai. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy."
- Stuart Hall. "New Ethnicities."
- Daniel Neely. "Long Time Gal."

Listening:

"Introduction and early Jamaican music"

4/14-4/20 Babylon Cast I Inna Fiya

Pan-Africanism in the Caribbean context

Readings:

- White. *Catch a Fire*. Chapters 5-6 (pp. 97-143)
- Robert A. Hill. "Walter Rodney and the Restatement of Pan-Africanism in Theory and Practice."
- Rex Nettleford, Roy Augier and M. G. Smith. "The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica: Part I and Part 2."
- Frank Jan Van Dijk. "Chanting Down Babylon Outernational: The Rise of Rastafari in Europe, the Caribbean, and the Pacific."

Listening:

"Mento and Rasta"

4/21-4/27 African American Popular Music, Ska, and the Search for Jamaican National Identity

Readings:

- White. *Catch a Fire*. Chapters 7-8 (pp. 144-187)
- Stuart Hall. "What is This 'Black' in Black Popular Culture?"
- bell hooks. "Performance Practice as a Site of Opposition."

Listening:

"Ska"

Videos: *The Harder They Come* and *Rockers: It's Dangerous*

4/28-5/4 **MIDTERM EXAM**, and *The Harder They Come*

Readings:

- White. *Catch a Fire*. Chapters 9-11 (pp. 188-215)
- Peter Manuel. "Music as Symbol, Music as Simulacrum: Postmodern, Pre-Modern, and Modern Aesthetics in Subcultural Popular Musics."
- John Storey. "The Politics of the Popular."

Listening:

"Ska"

5/5-5/11 **Bob Marley:**
Roots reggae and the internationalization of Rastafarianism

Readings:

- White. *Catch a Fire*. Chapters 12-13 (pp. 216-256)
- Jones, Simon. "UK Version." (Course Reader)
- Savishinsky, Neil J. "Rastafari in the Promised Land: The Spread of a Jamaican Socioreligious Movement Among the Youth of West Africa." (Course Reader)
- Weber, Bruce. "Reggae Rhythms Speak to an Insular Tribe." (Course Reader)

Listening:

"Marley and Roots reggae"

5/12-5/18 **Bob Marley - continued**

Readings:

- White. *Catch a Fire*. Chapters 14-15 (pp. 257-292)
- Gilroy, Paul. "Sounds Authentic: Black Music, Ethnicity, and the Challenge of a *Changing Same*." (Course Reader)
- Rose, Tricia. "Cultural Survivalisms and Marketplace Subversions: Black Popular Culture and Politics into the Twenty First Century." (Course Reader)

Listening:

"Marley and Roots reggae"

5/19-5/25 **The Politics of Recognition**
Jamaica's shifting cultural identity and the emergence of dub, dancehall,
and reggae outernational

Readings:

- White. *Catch a Fire*. Chapters 16-17 (pp. 293-419)
- Charles Taylor. "The Politics of Recognition."
- Louis Chude-Sokei. "The Sound of Culture: Dread Discourse and Jamaican Sound Systems."
- Carolyn Cooper. "'Lyrical Gun': Metaphor and Role Play in Jamaican Dancehall Culture."

Listening:

"Marley and Roots reggae"

5/26-6/1 From 'Roots' to 'Routes' – Theorizing the Global Context
Globalization and the transformation of the "local" in world music

Paper due

Readings:

- White. *Catch a Fire*. Chapters 16-17 (pp. 293-419)
- Louis Chude-Sokei. "Post-Nationalist Geographies: Rasta, Ragga, and Reinventing Africa."
- Veit Erlmann. "Communities of Style: Musical Figures of Black Diasporic Identity."
- Jocelyne Guilbault. "On Redefining the 'Local' through World Music."

Listening:

"International Roots"

Video: Stephanie Black. *Life and Debt*.

6/2-6/8 Dubbing the Reggae Nation – Course Conclusion
Discuss FINAL TAKE-HOME ESSAY

Readings:

- Ross, Andrew. "Mr. Reggae DJ, Meet the International Monetary Fund." (Course Reader)
- Alleyne, Mike. "White Reggae: Cultural Dilution in the Record Industry." (Course Reader)

Listening:

"International Roots"

FINAL EXAM – Tuesday June 10, 8am-11am, location TBA

Final Essay due at beginning of exam