**Syllabus**

**Introduction**

This introductory session will introduce the key themes or concepts running throughout the 12 sessions accompanying the book Trajectories and Themes in World Popular Music, namely globalization, capitalism, and identity. It will illustrate how these themes or concepts are interconnected in complex and arbitrary ways. The introductory session will also establish the idea that we can study and understand globalization, capitalism, and identity through the lens of world popular music.

**Context Session**

This context-setting session aims to introduce students to the way that globalization has been defined over the past twenty or so years. How can processes of globalisation be defined and grasped? The context session will provide a brief introduction to the history of modern globalization and how it links with capitalism.

**Session 1. The “Birth” of Popular Music under Liberal Capitalism**

To understand the beginnings of modern globalization, we need to consider the processes surrounding (cultural) modernization under the influence of liberal capitalism from the late nineteenth century. In particular, musical modernization meant to balance advantages of west and east, old and new, including the adoption and integration of western sound recording and broadcasting technology and other products of western culture. New technologies and mass media aided the wide dissemination of popular music and its commodification for profit. The phase of musical modernization has transformed indigenous and national cultural formations under the impact of the spread of western culture on musical practices since the nineteenth century.

**Session 2. Popular Music during the Golden Age of (Organized) Capitalism**

During the Golden Age of Capitalism (1945 until mid-1970s), the US was able to build a successful economy, including a dominating music recording industry, which became driven by the logic of organized capitalism and Fordism as an economic practice, and led toward a “democratic moment” in Western Europe and the US. Since the 1960s, nations in Western Europe and Asia adopted similar economic models and witnessed a huge economic rise. This time marked the beginnings of an increasingly integrated and concentrated music recording industry, while “youth” emerged as a new social class and became a new target market for youth-oriented popular music. The era marked the enormous success of rock ’n’ roll in the 1950s and of rock in the 1960s, while electric instruments transformed the sound of popular music. The electronic musical revolution, along with western pop-rock music, spread globally and has affected music cultures all over the world.

**Session 3. The Other in Popular Music**

In considering the economic and technological dimensions of globalization and their impact upon society and culture, this session is concerned with the politics of othering in popular music under liberal and organized capitalism, as these have been born out of historical, economic, social, and cultural manifestations of modern globalization. We will discuss the politics of othering through racialized and gendered representations in popular music since its beginnings in the late nineteenth century.

**Session 4. Neoliberalism and the Global Music Industry (in 2 parts)**

This session moves on to the phase of neoliberalism that began in the 1970s. The 1980s marked a new, most recent era and regime of globalization, which was driven by the emergence of new technologies, the “truly” global reach of transnational corporations, and the evolution of neoliberal capitalism. This period is marked by more intense globalizing tendencies, intensified musical commodification and cultural homogenization, and the consolidation of neoliberal capitalism in major industrial economies. The structures and workings of the global music industry illustrate this, dominated by the growth of transnational music corporations and their expansionist strategy in the name of corporate capitalism. Much academic thinking during the 1970s and 1980s was dominated by the idea of cultural imperialism, drawing neo-Gramscian conclusions about the resultant musical diversity, or lack thereof. We will deconstruct the structure and workings of the economically powerful music/media industry in neoliberal capitalism.

The 1980s also marked a shift toward a global preoccupation with “image” (notably on Music Television) and the sexualized female form that serves to objectify women. Concepts in feminist media analyses like the “male gaze” and “controlling images” became powerful tools for analyzing and critiquing traditional white supremacist patriarchy, including the representation of black women and femininities. In considering the politics of othering in neoliberal culture, it is equally critical to highlight that the remnants of racist identity constructions still reverberated throughout this phase. While obvious racist stereotypes in mediated representations became rare, more subtle and hidden racialized narratives continued to be expressed in popular music.

**Session 5. Musical Transnationalism**

Since the late 1980s/early 1990s, academic thinking gradually moved toward explanations of globalizing trends through the lens of hybridization, conceptualized through the idea of “expressive isomorphism”. We now live in a world marked by global cultural interconnectedness, cultural hybridization, and musical participation, through which the global becomes received in new and different ways in different locales. Global Hip Hop and Bollywood will serve as examples to illustrate the intercultural crossings. Here, we will look at the ways in which discourses on globalization have marginalized the importance of ‘place’ and ‘locality’, and consider the ways in which “aesthetic cosmopolitanism” is reflected and represented in current musical forms.

**Session 6. Globalization and World Music**

This session is rooted in the 1980s when many music consumers in the west yearned for new, more authentic and meaningful music as rock and punk’s appeal began to wane and popular culture was dominated by a glitzy, artificial world of chart-friendly pop. The “new” soundtrack of globalization was the commercial pseudo-genre of World Music, which was constructed on notions surrounding authenticity, difference, and otherness. Using the notion of genre as a sociocultural framework, the World Music genre is seen here as a sub-field referring to specific musical and extra-musical conventions that are pertaining primarily to the sphere of production. The branding of World Music illustrates the way that popular music is organized and maintained as genres as a means for music industries to streamline production, and as a source of pleasure or identification for audiences and consumers. The commodification practices surrounding World Music discourses were shaped by concepts of authenticity, difference, and otherness. Genre is thereby a constructed, flux concept, and this is well illustrated by how and why musicians become constructed and (in some cases) successful as World Music stars within the World Music brand. Commercial interests in World Music were characterized by a certain academicism among consumers coupled with a “serious” educational interest in the music cultures they encountered, thereby distinguishing themselves from others through their specialized musical knowledge and cultural interests in more “authentic” musics. Yet World Music is characteristic of both hybridity and authenticity, which resembles some kind of paradox between the mixing of musical styles, on the one hand, and a desire to leave a musical “tradition” intact, on the other. Artists who “make it” as World Music stars must therefore navigate carefully between hybridity and authenticity, western consumers’ ideas and expectations of “authentic hybridity”.

**Session 7. The Cool Culture of Neoliberal Capitalism**

This session explores the way that popular music consumption of the noughties became influenced by a new cultural logic—the cool and the hip. We will first explore the origins of cool and establish the idea that neoliberal capitalism is cool capitalism. In the age of neoliberal capitalism, the ideology of cool determines cultural production and consumption, and has thereby become the focal point of popular culture globally, influencing a diverse range of contemporary trends and fields from food, music, and fashion, to technology and cinema. The hip and the cool are examples of non-economic forms of value created through branding practices. Coolness has become an incredibly powerful concept within business and marketing. It is a universal motivator for teens and youths, as well as for a large range of other age groups. Coolness excites consumers, adds symbolic value to products, and drives consumer trends. Coolness and consumption are intrinsically linked. Consumption in postmodern popular culture is central to identity formation and acquisition of status—cool, triggering in consumers the desire to achieve a cool lifestyle through consumption. The cool culture of neoliberal capitalism is clearly evident in the branding processes surrounding the “cool celebrity personae”, and the mechanisms of brand extension and brand endorsement.

**Session 8. Cool Masculinities**

This session continues to conceptualize cool capitalism and illustrates the way that coolness is gendered, since it is theoretically ascribed to masculinity rather than femininity. It is determined by “male” individualism that requires distance from the feminine and particularly from maternal notions. The concept of cool is thereby often (but not exclusively) regarded to be a male phenomenon. Today coolness is often intrinsically linked to black popular culture, providing a powerful explanation for the current popularity of hip hop and its huge branding potential. Even so, coolness is not unique to Hip Hop alone. It is global and colourless today. Coolness has also been hugely relevant in the success of earlier “hyper-masculine” and queer musical styles, including rock and heavy metal, as well as World Music.

**Session 9. Postfeminism as an Ideology of Cool**

In popular culture, coolness is also linked to postfeminism, which emerged in late 1980s/early 1990s. Postfeminism is often criticized as “anti-feminist” in that its theories and practices naturalize and commodify feminism for use in popular culture. Indeed, the 1990s was an era when the popular music business presented many female artists who seemingly waved the flag of feminism. Postfeminist popular music also reflects the way that “’cool’ has traversed the political landscape from the Left to the Right, thereby reversing its meaning. This is a feature of cool postfeminism in neoliberal culture, in which white femininity ideals have become iconic and marketable as cool, as have notions of female hyper-sexuality. Postfeminism, then, enabled a new mode of femininity that entailed narratives of emancipation and hyper-femininity, individuality and makeover, irony, and consumerism. Combined, these narratives--feminist, anti-feminist, capitalist—are the gendered manifestation of neoliberal governmentality, which have been vividly evident in pop music since the 1990s and are markers of cool postfeminism in contemporary popular culture.

**Session 10. Popular Music in Postdemocracy: Citizenship and Democracy**

Neoliberalism has thoroughly undermined egalitarianism, which calls into question the legitimacy of globalization and global hegemonic capitalism. We are in an age of interregnum, the historical point of postdemocracy, which raises questions about the idea of active democratic citizenship, and how this activism is mobilized though and manifested in world popular music practices. This session focuses on the postdemocratic conditions of today’s neoliberal culture and asks important questions about the role of social democratic citizenship, conceptualized here through the role of popular music in democracy and citizenship. Real World, The Elders, and Witness charity are all examples of social democratic citizenship that show that a more optimistic, moral stance toward globalization is possible.

**Session 11: Feminism, Resistance, and Popular Music**

This session continues the focus on the postdemocratic conditions of today’s neoliberal culture and asks important questions about the role of social democratic citizenship, conceptualized here through the role of popular music in democracy and resistance. Resistance is at play particularly through the role played by feminism in popular music within the hegemonic order of the global music business and wider society. Popular music here indeed functions in opposition to the cultural hegemonic norm. Unequal power structures and stereotypical and oppressive role models are being revealed, challenged, and resisted by feminist musical practices, which reminds us of the way that gender and sexuality have assumed constructed meanings that are applied to identity characteristics of others, highlighting the ways in which inequality and prejudice are constructed in the representations of popular music. This session highlights local forms of resistance that challenge global capitalism’s commodification of the gendered other.

**Session 12: Black and White Nationalism in Popular Music**

We are at the historical point of postdemocracy, which raises questions about the idea of active democratic citizenship, and how this activism is mobilized though and manifested in world popular music practices. Democracy and resistance are at play through the role played by the civil rights and anti-racism movements in popular music within the hegemonic order of the global music business and wider society. Anti-racist, anti-capitalist popular music indeed functions in opposition to the cultural hegemonic norm, challenging unequal power structures and stereotypical racialized role models. This session highlights local forms of resistance to the spread of white supremacist patriarchal culture, beliefs, practices, and norms, considering musicians animated by social justice, who challenge global capitalism’s commodification of the racialized other. Yet, troubling as it may seem, neoliberalism has also led to periodic outbreaks of conservative, nationalist, right-wing socialism, and some popular music has served as a powerful means to negotiate, express, and model ethnocentric political identities. When aligned politically with the “Right”, such popular music is often most directly concerned with right-wing socialism and white nationalism. Some of these movements do, of course, raise concern and questions regards their compatibility with democracy. Yet they do share with the anti-globalization movement a discontent with postdemocracy, internationalism, and the consequences of uncontrolled global capitalism.

**Concluding Session: After Globalization**

What has been called “globalization” is in reality an extreme concentration of a US-European empire, which has become undermined by the 2008 financial crisis and the emergence of new global players in the global capitalist economy. Globalization, as we knew it, has come to an end, also described as a post-American world. We have entered something like a third stage of globalization discourse, a “post-western world” that is less western than in the past. The new epoch – after globalization – is being born out of uncertainty. What will shape the post-western world is unclear, and so is the way that world popular music will be produced, ideologically manipulated, distributed, and consumed in the future. Yet, what is at stake here is to consider an after globalization in terms of freedom, democracy, individualism, liberty, safety, and other political categories. World popular music will surely play a critical role in this after globalization.